



Pragmatic Competence of Young Children in Persian: A Case Study of Thanking, Requesting, and Apologizing

 Ali Darabi Bazvand,¹

 Alireza Khoram,²

¹College of Languages,
University of Human
Development, Kurdistan, *Iraq*

²Department of English
Language and Literature,
Faculty of Letters and
Humanities, Shahid Chamran
University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz,
Iran

Corresponding Author: Alireza
Khoram

Phone: +98-916-3722056

e-mail: arkhoram2017@gmail.com

Article citation: Darabi Bazvand,
A. & Khoram, A. (2019). Pragmatic
competence of young children in
Persian: A case study of thanking,
requesting, and apologizing, *Applied
Linguistics Research Journal*, 3(5):
76–86.

Received Date: June 23, 2019

Accepted Date: July 7, 2019

Online Date: November 5, 2019

Publisher: Kare Publishing

© 2018 Applied Linguistics Research Journal

E-ISSN: 2651-2629

ABSTRACT

Effective communication requires pragmatic competence. Such competence involves the correct use of conversational norms and extends beyond the literal meanings of words and sentences. This paper examined the pragmatic competence of elementary school children who spoke Persian as their native language. It investigated three types of speech acts (Thanking, Requesting, and Apologizing) represented in young children's performance (N=10) by answering to a discourse completion test (DCT) questionnaire. Qualitative analysis of the data shows that children like adults use different strategies of politeness in the form of both Face Enhancing Act (FEA) and Face Threatening Act (FTA). Positive direction strategies were adopted in the FEAs for thanking and apologizing, whilst negative direction strategies were embraced in FTAs for requesting. It was also shown that in some instances, children's linguistic and pragmatic ability is immature. It was concluded that Persian young children like adults follow universal rules regarding the acquisition of pragmatic features, irrespective of the cultural or environmental contexts in which they embark on pragmatic rules. Implications of the study are also presented.

Keywords: Face Enhancing Act; Face Threatening Act; Pragmatic Competence; Politeness; Speech Acts.

1. Introduction

The fundamental conception of speech act is that language is used to accomplish actions (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1975). According to Austin's theory, communicative actions are realized in speech acts which are represented in pragmatic rules. Among the differing speech acts, *thank*, *request* and *apology* were selected for the current study, since they are very crucial in speech act communication. For instance, Jautz (2008) argues that *thanking* expressions are used "when a speaker wants the addressee to know that s/he is grateful for what the addressee has said or done" (Jautz, 2008, p. 142). As another instance of speech act, *request*, is a directive on the part of the speaker to convince the hearer to do some action which is desired by the speaker (Byon, 2004). The speech act of *apology* is claimed to support the hearer who was potentially or negatively affected by harm (Olshtain, 1989). It is offered when someone causes harm or discomfort on someone else. In other words, *apologizing* is a strategy for restoring the relationship between the interactants (Leech, 1983).

Literature calls for expanding the research on speech acts across differing contexts. For example, findings from research across a variety of languages are needed to make claims about the universality of speech acts (i.e., when they are produced in different languages in similar ways) or culture specificity of the speech acts (i.e., every culture and language has its own way of speech act production). Research on speech acts shows that most of studies on this area are generally focused on the investigation of isolated aspects of children's pragmatic competence but underemphasized ability for use in social interaction (e.g., Roever, 2011). Further to the meager heed paid to the ability for use in social interaction in a Persian context, it is interesting to observe that the L2 literature on the speech act development with Persian learners of English is richer than the L1 literature on the same topic (e.g., Abedi, 2017; Alemi & Khanlarzadeh, 2016; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Harooni & Pourdana, 2017; Jalilifar, Hashemian & Tabatabaee, 2011; Saadatmandi, Modarres Khiabani & Pourdana, 2018; Tajvidi, 2000). Therefore, little is known about how young children speaking Persian as their native language make appropriate use of speech acts in a social context and whether such uses of speech act are in line with FEA or FTA. Hence, the present study tries to attend to this void by investigating three cases of speech act such as *thanking, requesting and apologizing*.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Thanking, requesting, and apologizing and the concept of face

Brown and Levinson (1987) put forth a politeness theory based upon the notion of 'face'. They defined 'face' as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987, p. 61). The realization of any speech act necessitates much contemplation since speech acts are inherently Face Threatening Acts (FTA), according to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. For example, when a *request* speech act is realized the hearer's negative face (the desire not to be impeded by others) along with speaker's positive face (the desire to be respected and liked by others) is imperiled. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), *requests* are inherently face-threatening because they are anticipated to threaten the addressee's negative face (i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition). Consequently, there is a need to deploy politeness strategies so as to diminish the threat and to refrain from the possibility of losing face. To achieve the speech act of *requests* in order to sustain or create a friendly relationship with the hearer, there is an inclination for indirectness on the part of the request maker to ease the spoken communication.

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that *apologies* are acts that express negative politeness. They indicate the speaker's understanding of having encroached on the hearer's negative face, constraining hearer's freedom of action in some way. *Apologizing*, unlike face attacks such as insults, has a positive impact on the part of the hearer (Holmes, 1995, p. 155). The speaker tries to appease or sustain hearer's face through apologizing; as a result, it is an inherent face-saving act for hearer (Edmondson, House, Kasper & Stemmer, 1984).

According to Leech (1983), *thanking* can be considered as one of those acts that, "tend to be convivial, and therefore intrinsically polite" (p. 106), implying there is a relationship between the illocutionary function of thanking and its social goal of conveying civility and establishing relationships. In light of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, *thanking* can be classified as a face threatening act, jeopardizing the speaker's negative face, in which the speaker acknowledges a debt to the hearer whose face in so doing is abased; at the same time, however, it is suggested that thanking is a face-enhancing act which maintains the hearer's positive face, since it gives the hearer an indication that the favor s/he granted is respected and cherished.

2.2. Previous research on thanking, requesting, and apologizing

Some studies have been carried out within the Persian context to investigate the L2 use of *thanking* (e.g., Ahar & Eslami-Rasekh, 2011; Farashiyan & Hua, 2012; Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009; Pishghadam & Zarei 2011, 2012), *requesting* (e.g., Eslami-Rasekh, 1993; Hashemian, 2014; Jalilifar, 2009; Shahrokhi, 2012; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2008; Tabatabaee, 2008) and *apologizing* (e.g., Chamani & Zareipur, 2010; Farashiyan & Amirkhiz, 2011; Ghanbaran, Rahimi & Eslami-Rasekh, 2014;

PejmanFard, 2004). Yoosefvand and Eslami-Rasekh (2014), for example, investigated how native speakers of English and Persian made use of gratitude expressions in different contexts. Results indicated that Persian native speakers used *thanking* strategy more than English native speakers. Furthermore, repayment and alerter strategies were the second most frequently used strategies for native speakers of English whereas repayment was the second most frequently used strategy for Persian native speakers. There was roughly the same percentage in the use of alerter strategy for both groups. English native speakers' employment of apology, acknowledgment of imposition and other strategies was more than that of Persian speakers.

Yusefi, Gowhary, Azizifar&Esmaeili, 2015 (2015) explored the most frequently- used *thanking* strategies in Ilami Kurdish language. The 117 participants representing people from different areas of life, poor or rich, educated or uneducated, young or old, were required to write down the terms they use to thank others in a discourse completion task. The results demonstrated that '*thanking*', 'positive feeling' and 'appreciation' were the most frequently used strategies amid subjects of under 30 years respectively and '*thanking*', 'positive feeling' and 'appreciation' were common used strategies among subjects of above 30 years respectively. Concerning the gender of participants '*thanking*', 'positive feeling' and 'appreciation' were the most frequently used strategies among male subjects respectively and in responding to thanking strategies 'thanking' and 'positive feeling' were the general tendency of females.

Salmani-Nodoushan (2008) explored the concept of indirectness in the speech act of requests among native speakers of Persian ranging from formal to informal degrees of perceived situational seriousness. Results revealed that native speakers of Persian had a preference for conventionally indirect strategies when making requests. Social distance was found to prompt indirectness in the requestive speech acts and solidarity was found to increase addressors' tendency towards directness in requests. It was further shown that pragmatic knowledge leads to Persian native speakers' inclination towards non-conventionally indirect strategies in requests.

Shahrokhi (2012) explored the realization of *request* speech acts among 70 Persian male university students to classify the request strategies performed by speakers as well as the linguistic preferences regarding context-external and context-internal factors in terms of social dominance, social distance and imposition of a request. A Persian translation of a written questionnaire in the form of the Discourse Completion Test was employed. Findings indicated that Persian males make use of most of strategies of request speech acts recognized by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) to be universal. The request strategies identified based on the order of frequency included Mood derivable, Query Preparatory, Need Statement, Suggestory Formula, Hint, Performative, and Obligation Statement.

Afghari (2007) explored the variety of strategies employed in performing the speech act of apology in Persian. The results of the study revealed that in Persian – like other languages of western societies (Olshtain& Cohen 1983; Blum-Kulka &Olshtain 1984), apologies commonly conform to the framework of the categories examined and disclosed by such western investigations. Moreover, the most frequently used apology formulas across the most of the apology contexts involve a direct statement of apology and an acceptance of responsibility. The findings also indicated that the most intensified apologies were conveyed to close friends with no domination over the apologizer and the least intensified apologies were conveyed to strangers with no domination over the apologizer. It was demonstrated that the most intensified apologies are given to friends and the least intensified apologies are given to strangers. Likewise, the addressee's domination over the speaker also appears to lead to more intensified apology expressions.

An influential study on apologies is that of Shariati and Chamani (2010). They investigated the realization of apology speech act as well as the frequency, combination, and sequential status of apology strategies in Persian .The findings revealed that explicit expression of apology with a demand for forgiveness (*bebaxšid*) was the most frequent apology strategy in Persian and that this strategy along with acceptance of responsibility comprised the most common combination of apology strategies. Despite the commonality of apology strategies in Persian as in other explored languages, inclinations for applying these strategies proved to be culture-specific.

The studies mentioned so far have mostly investigated the realization and the use of different strategies pertaining to the speech acts of *thanking*, *requesting* and *apologizing* by older speakers. Little research however, has been undertaken regarding the young children's use of such strategies in their native language across a social context. The present study is, hence, an attempt to investigate the pragmatic and linguistic features observed in young children's performance on a DCT questionnaire. Thus, based on the purpose of this study, the following research question is raised:

To what extent are the speech acts of *thanking*, *requesting*, and *apologizing* used appropriately by Persian-speaker children as elementary schoolers?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Young children participating in this study were 10 elementary school boys who were speaking Persian as their native language. They came from middle-class families and were aged between 10 and 11 years. They were non-randomly selected from a population of 120 fifth grade elementary school children studying at a primary school in Shiraz, Iran.

3.2. Instruments

The discourse completion test (DCT) has been accepted as the most common method of doing research in second-language pragmatics (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Moreover, Golato (2003) writes that DCTs "are widely used in the fields of pragmatics, intercultural communication, and second language acquisition, mainly because their simplicity of use and high degree of control over variables lead to easy replicability" (p. 93). As such, the principal instrument used to collect the data for this study was a DCT questionnaire that elicited the linguistic and pragmatic competence of young children in the form of speech acts. The DCT questionnaire consisted of six open-ended items which were developed based on three types of speech acts including *Thanking*, *Requesting*, and *Apologizing* (see Table 1 for more information on DCT items).

Table 1. Children's utterances in the form of compliments

No	Name	Persian Utterance	English Translation	English DCT
1	Alireza	<i>Motshakeram</i>	Thank you	The teacher tells you that you have improved in your Math. What do you tell him in response?
2	Abas	<i>Kheili motshakeram</i>	Thank you very much	
3	Mostafa	<i>Mamnoon</i>	Thank you	
4	Mohammad	<i>Shoma be man komak kardid</i>	You helped me	
5	Mohamad Reza	<i>Mamnoon</i>	Thank you	
6	Sajad	<i>Az shoma kheily tashkor mikonam</i>	Thank you very much	
7	Mehdi	<i>Mamnoon Agha</i>	Thank you sir	
8	Karim	<i>Man be shoma madion hastam</i>	I owe you	
9	Reza	<i>Dast shoma dard nakoneh</i>	Thank you	
10	Sadegh	<i>Mamnoon Agha</i>	Thank you sir	

3.3. Procedure

First, permission was obtained from the school principal and their respective teachers. Before the students began responding to the questionnaire, the researchers explained every detail of the instructions. The languages of both oral and written instructions were in Persian. One of the researchers passed out the DCT questionnaire to participants. Once the students started

responding to the questionnaire items, neither the researcher nor the instructor intervened in their productions. The participants were allowed 30 minutes to respond to the three speech acts (*Thanking, Requesting, and Apologizing*), though some of the participants finished the tasks earlier. Finally, the elicited data were analyzed based on linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of speech acts produced by participants.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on a discourse-completion test (DCT), the linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of three types of speech acts performed by young children are analyzed. Each will be discussed below.

4.1. Thank

A close look at the data provided in table 1 shows that, compared to other types of speech acts, *Thanking* seems to be simpler and is performed by children using main strategies of *thanks* and *thank you* in most cases. It seems that in most cases, simple thanking was the most convenient way of showing gratitude. The general finding of this study corresponds with the results of Pishghadam and Zarei (2011) and Yusefi et.al. (2015) who also found that adult Persian speakers like children in the current study used more thanking and positive feeling in their interactions.

However, some sub-strategies such as *specifying a reason for thanking* (e.g., *thank you, you helped me*) and *intensification in expressing thank* (e.g. *thank you very much*) are used. It is, however, uncertain whether the use of these sub-strategies is due to some contextual factors which affect young children's performance or it is because of their linguistic ability which influences their performance (Suzuki, 2010).

Moreover, the data shows that in two instances some intensifying devices are observed. The children decided on to appreciate the hearer directly with the intention of intensifying their expression of gratitude. Intensification creates "more polite" (Aijmer, 1996) and even "more credible" (Jautz, 2013, p.90) gratitude expressions. Due to the fact that *thanking* is another type of FEA (Face Enhancing Act), such intensifiers are mainly used to strengthen the polite intention of the informants. Children's didn't use any *direct strategy* and this is enough to show that they make use of *clarity* in expressing meaning as a partial fulfillment of the *positive direction*.

One more explanation for the results obtained for *thanking* is that Iranian society, as a non-western country, is argued to be traditionally non-egalitarian society (Beeman, 1988). Therefore, a speaker selects his/her strategy in accordance with the hierarchical distinctions (e.g. social status, social distance) between the speaker and his/her interlocutor. That is to say, their preference for a strategy hinges on whether they are performing speech acts with a professor, a neighbor, a teacher, an intimate friend, or a stranger. Following the hierarchy component, they employ analogous strategies in various social environments.

Table 2. Linguistic Strategies Observed

Lexical	Adverbs (very much)
	Verbs: Thank, help, owe
Grammatical	Declarative
	S+V+O(You helped me, I owe you)
Discourse/Politeness	Positive direction
	Intensification

4.2. Request

Requesting belongs to Searle's Directive and Leech's Competitive and is a type of Face Threatening Act (FTA). Thus, this speech act, when performed, requires *mitigation* which according to Suzuki (2010) has been achieved by interrogative forms and modal auxiliary, asking about a precondition for the fulfillment of this speech act (*can*). Looking at the data reported in Table 3, it can be shown that most of the utterances performed within this speech act are in the form of interrogatives.

This is a widely used strategy for the performance of this speech act, since a question provides the hearer with choices as to whether s/he will meet Ss request (Suzuki, 2010).

Table 3. Children's Utterances in the form of Requests

No	Name	Persian Utterance	English Translation	English DCT
1	Alireza	Lotfan yek medad be man bedahid	Please give me a pen	If you ask your friend to give you a pen, what do you say?
2	Abas	Bebekhshid mishe yek medad be man bedid	Excuse me can you give me a pen	
3	Mostafa	Bebekhshid medad ezafi darid?	Excuse me, do you have extra pen?	
4	Mohammad	Medad ezafi dari?	Do you have an extra pen?	
5	Mohamadrezza	Mishe yek medadezafi be man bedid?	Can you give me an extra pen?	
6	Sajad	Doost azizam medad dari?	My dear friend do you have a pen?	
7	Mehdi	Yek medad be man bedeh	Give me a pen	
8	Karim	Lotfan medaddari?	Do you have a pen please?	
9	Reza	Medad ezafi dari be man bedi?	Do you have an extra pen?	
10	Sadegh	Age medad ezafi dari be man bede	If you have an extra pen give me one	

Compared to *thanking* in which we have positive direction, in *Requesting* we observe the strategies for *negative direction* as the informant is trying to show the tentativeness by the use of indirectness. Thus, based on the data, it can be observed that most of the utterances begin with the form *can you.....* showing that children at a young age are inclined to show a moderate speaking manner or some tinges of politeness which may come to surface due to their pragmatic ability or because of cultural context in which the action is performed. This is in accordance with Salmani-Nodoushan (2008) and Jalilifar (2009) who found that the Persian speakers used more indirect strategy. However, the results are incongruent with those of Zarepour (2016) in whose study the respondents used more direct strategies. One possible reason is that in the Iranian society the children were taught to save the face of the hearer and perform request as politely as possible.

The conventionally indirect strategy might be a highly favored requesting option employed by the speaker (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). It is argued that the negative politeness strategy, or the indirect strategy, is pertinent to politeness, and the higher degree of indirectness shows more politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). From the foregoing illustrations, it seems that indirect strategy is preferred among children to their friends in their requests.

Table 4. Linguistic Strategies Observed

Lexical	Addressing terms
	Can
	Please
Grammatical	Interrogative
	V+S+O (can you.....? /Do you.....?)
	V+O+O(Give me a pen)
Discourse/Politeness	Negative direction
	Mitigation/Hedge/indirectness

4.3. Apology

In this speech act we observe core phrases such as *sorry* or *I'm sorry* with some sub-strategies which were also observed in other speech acts. Something which should be noted in young

children's performance of this speech act is that in almost all of the utterances no *specification for the reason* of being sorry is observed. Therefore, one can argue that this may stem from children's linguistic immaturity or as we mentioned in other speech acts, it may happen as a result of contextual factors in which performance occurs. Still one important factor contributing to children's lack of specifying the reasons may be due to the inclusion of the type of instrument used (here, DCT) for the elicitation of these speech acts. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to make use of other instruments such as *picture prompts* or *video prompts* for eliciting the pragmatic data.

Apologizing like *thanking* is considered to be a FEA (Face Enhancing Act) in which a *positive direction* is pursued together with the clarity of meaning. Unlike in other speech acts, however, in *apologizing* no instances of intensifiers are observed. Since the use of intensifiers contribute to FEA, one can say that children's inability to use these strategies represents their immaturity in pragmatic and linguistic abilities. Asking for forgiveness (*bebaxšid*) was frequently used by children. This is in line with Afghari (2007) and Shariati and Chamani (2010), yet, not Eslami-Rasekh (2004) and PejmanFard (2004) who found offer of apology (*?ozr/ma?zerat mikham*) as the most frequent in Persian. Therefore, whenever Iranian Persian speakers feel that they have done something wrong or something not in accordance with other people's dignity, that may threaten their face, they use 'bebaxšid' to make an apology as a face saving speech act.

Table 5. Children's Utterances in the Form of Apologizes

No	Name	Persian Utterance	English Translation	English DCT
1	Alireza	Bebaxšid	Excuse me	If you are late for your class, what do you say to your teacher?
2	Abas	Bebaxšid	Excuse me	
3	Mostafa	Sharmande	I'm sorry	
4	Mohammad	Ejازه midahid vared shavam?	Do you let me enter the class?	
5	Mohamadreza	Bebaxšid	Excuse me	
6	Sajad	Agha ejازه hast	Do you allow me sir?	
7	Mehdi	Bebaxšid	Excuse me	
8	Karim	Sharmande hastam	I'm sorry	
9	Reza	Agha ejازه hast	Do you allow me sir?	
10	Sadegh	Mazeratmikham	I'm sorry	

Table 6. Linguistic Strategies Observed

Lexical	Addressing terms
	Sorry
	Excuse
	Allow/let
Grammatical	Declarative
	S+V+C(I'm sorry)
Discourse/Politeness	Positive direction
	Clarity

It is also interesting that, an expression of regret (*mote?asefam*) was utilized less than other strategies. Consequently, it appears that in Persian some forms such as *bebaxšid*, *?ozr/mazerat mikham*, *sharmandam*, and *mote?asefam* are used in overt expression of apology. According to Leech (1983, p.11), this is a matter of pragmalinguistics that is referred to as "the particular resources that a given language provides for conveying particular illocution", and it may be differentiated from sociopragmatics that "investigates the ways in which specific social conditions affect pragmatic performance".

As Wierzbicka (1985) argued, speaker's preferences in the use of diverse apology forms appear to stem from different cultural norms and presumptions. Thus, in a religious country like Iran as Shariati and Chamani (2010) argue, one probable explanation for choosing *bebaxšid*(forgive

me), as the most common form of apology, may be the moral principles of Islam, which lay great emphasis on valuing the rights of other people concerning their feeling, face, and possessions.

Meanwhile, in the Iranian culture, human beings are considered as different parts of the same body, and are promoted to build amiable relations with other people, and remaining aloof from others is disapproved. Hence, *bebaxšid* (forgive me) is more frequent among Iranians perhaps because it creates the least aloofness between speaker and hearer. Another probable justification is that *bebaxšid* is articulated much easier than other forms while it is comprised of more semantic elements. Iranian young children, therefore, acquire and express this form before other ones, and are accustomed to it.

5. Conclusion

The current study aimed at scrutinizing the use of three types of speech acts namely, *Thanking*, *Apologizing* and *Requesting* performed by young children speaking Persian as their native language. A qualitative approach was taken to analyze the data, though using some significant quantitative methods gave rise to the emergence of some linguistic features and strategies. Based on this study, *positive direction* strategies were adopted in the FEAs (*Thanking and Apologizing*), while *negative direction* strategies were embraced in FTAs (*Requesting*). These findings show that young children like adults follow universal rules regarding the acquisition of pragmatic features, irrespective of the cultural or environmental contexts in which they embark on pragmatic rules. However, in some instances it was shown that children do not use some sub-strategies required to successfully perform the pragmatic rules. In fact, children show their inability in some features of linguistic and pragmatic competence. This finding confirms Herschensohn and Young-Scholten (2013, p. 504) who argue that “as in all modules of the linguistic system, in pragmatics there exist universal properties as well as language-specific properties, where mismatches between L1 and L2 can occur”.

As mentioned before, the data of the current study was elicited through a discourse-completion test. It would definitely be more advantageous if the data were based upon naturally-occurring exchanges collected through written ethnographic observation and tape-recorded because in this way prosodic characteristics of speech sounds, as an important feature of these speech acts exchanges, were accessible. Moreover, the inclusion of more speech acts together with a larger subject population as well as using more data collection instruments would yield better results. Therefore, it is urgent for future researchers to include and consider these variables in their research studies.

This study explored children's use of different strategies related to *Thanking*, *Apologizing* and *Requesting* in their native language across a social context. To make more accurate judgements about the realizations of these speech acts in Persian, the findings of this study need to be corroborated by additional research. Furthermore, as Trosborg (1995) has proposed, the pragmalinguistic information offered by such investigations is limited to a descriptive level, and more researches are essential to discover valid interpretations for the behavior of Persian speakers in each of these speech acts. More research is also needed to investigate the extent to which young children are contextually sensitive and can distinguish between pragmatic competence in the private and the public contexts.

The results of the current study may be beneficial to the learners of Persian who have to know the conventional forms of *thank*, *request* and *apology* along with the contexts in which these forms may be employed for an effective and appropriate communication in Persian. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be compared and contrasted with that of analogous investigations on other languages to unravel similarities and differences in the realization of *thanking*, *requesting* and *apologizing* across languages with the aim of encouraging Persian learners to be circumspect regarding improper transmission of these norms to target language, which may result in misapprehension in cross-cultural interaction.

References

- Abedi, E. (2017). An investigation of apology strategies employed by Iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 6 (3), 27-37.
<https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2016.1626>
- Afghari, A. (2007). A sociopragmatic study of apology speech act realization patterns in Persian. *Speech Communication*, 49, 177-185.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.specom.2007.01.003>
- Ahar, V., & Eslami-Rasekh, A. (2011). The Effect of Social Status and Size of Imposition on the Gratitude Strategies of Persian and English Speakers. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(1), 120-128.
<https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.1.120-128>
- Aijmer, K. (1996). *Conversational routines in English: Convention and creativity*. London: Longman.
- Alemi, M., & Khanlarzadeh, N. (2016). Pragmatic assessment of request speech act of Iranian EFL learners by non-native English speaking teachers. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 4(2), 19-34.
- Austin, J. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bagherinejad, I., & Jadidoleslam, M. R. (2015). On the use of apology strategies by Iranian EFL learners: Do gender and proficiency level matter? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5 (6), 1263-1274.
<https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0506.20>
- Barron, A. (2006). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Beeman, W. O. (1988). Affectivity in Persian language use. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 12, 9-30.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00047036>
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11(2), 131-146.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(87\)90192-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(87)90192-5)
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Request and apologies*. New Jersey: Ablex.
- Blum-Kulka, S., Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: a cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, 5(3), 1096-2103.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196>
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813085>
- Byon, A. S. (2004). Sociopragmatic analysis of Korean requests: Pedagogical settings. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36, 1673-1704.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2004.05.003>
- Chamani, F., & Zareipur P. (2010). A Cross-cultural study of apologies in British English and Persian. *Concentric: Studies in Linguistics*, 36(1), 133-153.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Edmondson, W., House, J., Kasper, G., & Stemmer, B. (1984). Learning the pragmatics of discourse: a project report. *Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 113-127.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.2.113>
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. (1993). A cross-cultural comparison of requestive speech act realization patterns in Persian and American English. *Pragmatic and Language Learning*, 4, 85-103.
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. (2004). Face-keeping strategies in reaction to complaints: English and Persian. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 14, 181-197.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.14.1.11esl>
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. (2005). Raising the pragmatic awareness of language learners. *ELT Journal*, 59(2), 199-208.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cci039>
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. R., & Eslami-Rasekh, A. (2008). Enhancing the pragmatic competence of non-native English-speaking teacher candidates (NNESTCs) in an EFL context. *Investigating Pragmatics in Foreign Language*

- Learning, Teaching and Testing*, 30(2), 178-197.
<https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847690869-011>
- Farashiyani, A., & Amirkhiz, S. (2011). A Descriptive-Comparative Analysis of Apology Strategies: The case of Iranian EFL and Malaysian ESL University Students. *English Language Teaching*, 4(1), 224-230.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n1p224>
- Farashiyani, A., & Hua, T. (2012). On the relationship between pragmatic knowledge and language proficiency among Iranian male and female undergraduate EFL learners. *The southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 18 (1), 33-46.
- Ghanbaran, S., Rahimi, M., & Eslami-Rasekh, A. (2014). Intensifiers in Persian Discourse: Apology and Compliment Speech Acts in Focus. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 542-551.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.450>
- Ghobadi, A., & Fahim, M. (2009). The effect of explicit teaching of English 'thanking formulas' on Iranian EFL intermediate level students at English language institutes. *System*, 37, 526-537.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.02.010>
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Golato, A. (2003). Studying complement responses: A comparison of DCTs and recordings of naturally occurring talk. *Applied Linguistics*, 24(1), 90-121.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/24.1.90>
- Haji Maibodi, A. (2016). Investigating the effects of individual differences in the speech act of apology in institutional discourse. *English Language Teaching*, 3 (2), 65-88.
- Harooni, M., & Pourdana, N. Politeness and Indirect Request Speech Acts: Gender- Oriented Listening Comprehension in Asian EFL Context. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 6 (2), 214-220.
- Hashemian, M. (2014). A Pragmatic Study of Requestive Speech Act by Iranian EFL Learners and Canadian Native Speakers in Hotels. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 6 (2), 55-80.
- Hassall, T. (2006). Learning to take leave in social conversations: a diary study. In M. DuFon and E. Churchill (eds.), *Language learners in study abroad contexts* (pp.31–58). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
<https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598531-006>
- Herschensohn, J., & Young-Scholten, M. (2013). *The Cambridge handbook of second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139051729>
- Holmes, J. (1995). *Women, men and politeness*. London: Longman.
- Jalilifar, A. (2009). Request strategies: Cross-sectional study of Iranian EFL learners and Australian native speakers. *English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 46-61.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n1p46>
- Jalilifar, A., Hashemian, M., & Tabatabaee, M. (2011). A cross-sectional study of Iranian EFL learners' request strategies. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(4), 790-803.
<https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.4.790-803>
- Jautz, S. (2008). Gratitude in British and New Zealand radio programmes. Nothing but gushing? In K. P. Schneider & A. Barron (Eds.), *Variational pragmatics. A focus on regional varieties in pluricentric languages* (pp. 141-178). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.178.07jau>
- Jautz, S. (2013). *Thanking formulae in English: Explorations across varieties and genres*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.230>
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. New York: Longman.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Márquez Reiter, R. & Placencia, M.E. (2005). *Spanish pragmatics*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230505018>
- Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

- Olshtain, E. (1989). Apologies across cultures. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper, (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp.155-173). New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. (1983). Apology: A speech act set. In N. Wolfson, E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 18-36). Rowly, MA: Newbury House.
- PejmanFard. M. (2004). *Politeness principles: Requests and apologies in spoken Persian*. Unpublished MA thesis. Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran.
- Pishghadam, R., & Zarei, S. (2011). Expressions of gratitude: A case of EFL learners. *Review of European Studies*, 3(2), 140-149
<https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v3n2p140>
- Pishghadam, R., & Zarei, S. (2012). Cross-cultural comparison of gratitude expressions in Persian, Chinese and American English. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (1), 117-126.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n1p117>
- Roever, C. (2011). Testing of second language pragmatics: Past and future. *Language Testing*, 28(4), 463-481.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532210394633>
- Saadatmandi , M., Modarres Khiabani , S., & Pourdana, N. (2018). Teaching English pragmatic features in EFL context: A focus on request speech acts. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(7), 829-835.
<https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0807.14>
- Salmani-Nodoushan, M. A. (2008). Persian requests: Redress of face through indirectness. *Iranian Journal of Languages Studies*, 2(3), 257-280.
- Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173438>
- Searle, J. R. (1975). Indirect speech acts. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds), *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 3 (pp. 59-82). New York: Academic Press.
- Shahrokhi, M. (2012). Perception of dominance, distance and imposition in Persian males' request speech ACT strategies. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 678 – 685.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.181>
- Shariati, M., & Chamani, F. (2010). Apology strategies in Persian. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 1688-1699.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2009.10.007>
- Suszczynska, M. (1999). Apologizing in English, Polish and Hungarian. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 1053–1065.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(99\)00047-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00047-8)
- Suzuki, T. (2010). Children's pragmatic competence: A case study of English speech acts performed by American children. *Proceedings of JACET Summer Seminar*, 161-179.
- Tabatabaee, A. (2008). *The cross-sectional study of Iranian EFL learners' request strategies*. Unpublished master's thesis, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz Branch, Iran.
- Tajvidi, G. R. (2000). *Speech acts in second language learning process of Persian speakers: Communicative and pragmatic competence in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran.
- Trosborg, A. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints and apologies*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110885286>
- Wierzbicka, A. (1985). Different cultures, different languages, different speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9, 145–178.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(85\)90023-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(85)90023-2)
- Yoosefvand, A., & EslamiRasekh, A. (2014). A comparative study of gratitude speech act between Persian and English Speakers. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 1 (2), 44-61.
- Yusefi, K., Gowhary, H., Azizifar, A., & Esmaeili, Z. (2015). A pragmatic analysis of thanking strategies among Kurdish speakers of Ilam based on gender and age. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 211 – 217.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.507>
- Zarepour, F. (2016). An analysis of Iranian EFL learners' English written requestive E-mails. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 7(3), 579-585.
<https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0703.20>