

A Contrastive Study of the Use of Politeness Strategies in Disagreement among Characters with Different Power Relations in English and Farsi Novels

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Abstract—In order to communicate properly in a language, it is essential to understand how the meaning, not just the physical words and grammatical rules, are conveyed in that language by learning its pragmatic rules. One way of achieving this is to study the use of speech acts in that particular language and the strategies used to keep the conversations as harmonious and conflict-avoiding as possible. The present study using a mixed-method design, tries to investigate the use of face saving strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), among the interlocutors with different power relations when using the speech act of disagreement, in English and Farsi novels. This speech act is applied differently with addressee's of different power status, being more indirect as the power status of the addressee gets higher than that of the speaker. Five English novels written by English authors were compared with five novels written by Iranian authors to detect the contexts in which the characters use the speech act of disagreement and employ politeness strategies to soften its threatening effects. To analyze different types of disagreement, the taxonomy proposed by Rees-Miller (2000) was employed. The frequency of their use by the characters and their percentages were manually calculated. The findings showed that in contrast to their different cultures, the interlocutors of the two languages performed almost equally when using this speech act and the differences were mostly in employment of politeness strategies. The results will probably lead to some understandings about pragmatic rules governing the two languages.

Index Terms—pragmatics, politeness strategies, power relation, disagreement, individualistic and collectivistic culture

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main concerns of learning a language is to learn beyond the physical forms of the words or the grammatical rules of that particular language, to learn how to interact and make your point understandable without breaking the cultural rules or appearing rude. As the world moves toward more communication and interaction and as beyond borders travels increase, mastering these pragmatic rules of the language of the country which one intends to travel to, becomes a crucial prerequisite. Native speakers of every language are familiar with the rules underlying the appropriate use of the language. All languages have some universal pragmatic rules which the learners can transfer from their second or foreign language. However, for non-native speakers trying to learn a language for communication, it is not the case that transferring each and every pragmatic rule from their mother language will help them communicate effectively in the other language. There are culture-specific pragmatic rules, which are determined and truly interpreted by the possessors of that specific language and culture. These are cross-cultural pragmatics that not being aware of them may probably lead to misinterpretation and finally communication breakdowns.

Since English is considered a foreign language in Iran, finding suitable and original English contexts and native speakers might be a serious problem for learners who want to master this language for the sake of communication. To overcome or at least partially improve this case, Iranian EFL learners are better to be exposed to the written works, here novels, of the native speakers of English. These written works might provide them partially with what cannot be provided by other things due to the lack of enough contexts. The pragmatic rules presented in them might reflect the cultures of the authors and will probably add to their pragmatic and communicative knowledge of the target language. To approach this issue, the present study, generally, attempts to investigate some fiction books written by native speakers of two languages, in terms of the characters' use of politeness strategies when interacting with other characters in the novels with different power status which lead to some variations in the choice of the type of speech acts and direct or indirect way of uttering them. It also attempts to compare the data obtained from each to detect the areas of difference.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Background

Nowadays, taking into consideration the researches, the issue of pragmatics and generally communication, have received great attention in the theories and, to some extent, practices of language teaching and learning. In recent years, the relevance of pragmatics has become increasingly clear to applied linguists (Levinson, 1983). By taking into consideration his theory of communicative competence, Hymes (1971) believes that in order to achieve communicative goals, second language learners must learn to speak not only accurately, but also appropriately. Morris (1938, p. 6) states that, "pragmatics is thought of as the relation of signs to those who interpret the signs, the users of language". However, as Mey (2006) mentions in his article:

"the user is not thought of here as an isolated individual, but as a social animal in the Aristotelian sense: a being that is dependent on the context in which she or he lives, but at the same time is able to interact with and change that context through the use of signs - read: human language and other human communicative means" (p. 786).

There are several theories existing under the umbrella of pragmatics one of which is the speech act theory which is one of the main concerns of this research. This theory which was first proposed by Austin (1962) makes the issue of pragmatics more concrete. According to this theory, there are a number of actions which we can do by the help of words. In other words, while we utter speech, we perform actions as well, such as when promising, requesting, apologizing, ordering, declaring, etc. Using some of these speech acts directly might have negative effects on the part of speaker or hearer and could make them appear rude and inconsiderate (e.g. ordering, refusing, rejecting).

Most people in order not to bother others and also with respect to others' social and power status, try to use softened versions of these threatening speech acts by uttering them indirectly. In other words, they try to be as polite as possible by saying what can be said in a direct way, indirectly. This leads to the issue of indirect speech acts which was first proposed by Searle (1976). In technical terms, direct speech acts should be accompanied by mitigating or softening devices to reduce or weaken the amount of imposition put upon the hearer's face. The word 'face' here is referred to as the public self-image of someone.

The issue of politeness is also one of the important issues within the branch of pragmatics. It is the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward another (Mills, 2003). There are several theories concerning the issue of politeness (Lakoff (1973), Fraser and Nolen (1981), Leech (1983), Arndt and Janney (1985), Brown and Levinson (1987), Ide (1989), Gu (1990), Blum-Kulka (1987, 1990, 1992), and Watts (2003)); however, Brown and Levinson's theory is more frequently and outstandingly used by the researchers conducting researches in the field, than other theories.

Politeness is a familiar concept in every language and culture, making it a universal concept. In their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987), introduce the concept of 'face', which is one's image of self and was first proposed by Goffman (1967). They distinguish two types of face: positive face which is the need of a person to be accepted by others and negative face which is the need to be free from imposition. Any acts which damage the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other is named by Brown and Levinson (1987) as Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). The speech act of disagreement which will be investigated in this study, is also a face threatening speech act which is defined as having an opposing viewpoint in relation to the viewpoint of speaker and expressing it using the language. It is a face threatening act since a speaker is imposing his/her will on the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

According to Kasper (1997) as cited in Azarmi and Behnam (2012, p. 78), to start with the pragmatic universals, learners know that conversations follow particular organizational principles, participants have to take turns at talk, and that conversations and other speech events have specific internal structures. But the question is, are all the pragmatic rules the same in all languages and cultures? Can learners of a certain language comfortably interact with the native speakers of that language simply by relying on their grammatical knowledge of the language and pragmatic knowledge (specifically politeness rules) transferred from their mother tongue? Of course not. Different languages possess different cultures which have various characteristics that will certainly have significant effects on the use of these pragmatic rules. In other words, what is regarded as polite in one language and culture, might not be realized polite and can even be rude in other language and culture. In the present paper, the languages will be investigated in terms of possessing individualistic or collectivistic cultures, which are defined by Hofstede (1980) as two different terms that are used to decide whether a certain culture emphasizes 'self' or 'group'.

This pragmatic difference might also reflect on the writings of the speakers of these languages as well. Therefore the written documents of the native speakers of a certain language might somehow be a good alternative for people interested in studying their pragmatic rules, who don't have personal access to the native speakers. By studying and comparing the written works of the native speakers of different languages such as journalists, authors, novelists, etc., which possess different cultures, one can decide about whether these people transfer the pragmatic rules of their native language to their writings or not and also detect the parts in which the native speakers of these languages perform differently.

Limited number of studies have been conducted on the speech act of disagreement by researchers in comparison to other speech acts. These studies mostly deal with the performance of different proficiency levels (Behnam and Niroomand (2011), Norouzi (2015)), the effect of power relations on expressions of disagreements (Liu (2004),

Behnam and Niroomand (2011)), gender-based performance of disagreement (Parvaresh and Eslami Rasekh (2009), Mehregan et al. (2013), Heidari, Eslami-Rasekh and Simin (2014)), the influence of context on the use of disagreement (Rees-Miller (2000), Ghafar Samar, Abaszadeh and Pourmohammadi (2013), Norouzi (2015)), or the comparison of the users of two language in employing this speech act (Beebe and Takahashi (1989), Guodong and Jing (2005), Nguyen (2009)).

Beebe and Takahashi (1989) conducted a study on American and Japanese performance of face-threatening speech acts in English, specially the speech act of disagreement, taking into consideration the status of interlocutors. The study demonstrated that the Japanese use more explicit criticisms when disagreeing with lower-status interlocutors than the Americans. On the other hand, the Americans used more positive remarks, softening devices, and fewer explicit criticisms than the Japanese when disagreeing with higher-status interlocutors. The results demonstrated generally that, the Japanese are more direct and explicit when disagreeing than the Americans.

Doğançay-Aktuna and Kamlı (1996) investigated discourse strategies that interlocutors with different status use in expressing disagreement. They also compared and contrasted the discourse strategies which were used by native speakers of Turkish and American English in the same speech event. The results revealed that in contrast to the Turkish workplace in which status difference was not an important factor, it was very important in American workplace. Americans also were more careful than Turks in using politeness strategies and positive statements in order to mitigate the threat caused by the use of the speech act of disagreement. Generally, in their study, Doğançay-Aktuna and Kamlı showed that Americans, in this study, are more respectful for the face-wants and status of the opposite part when disagreeing with him/her than Turks.

The study by Guodong and Jing (2005) is a contrastive study on disagreement strategies for politeness between American English and Mandarin Chinese. Five scenarios for disagreement were devised for college students in USA and Chinese mainland to fill in what they would say when they disagree with the higher-status, peers and the lower-status. The findings revealed that, when disagreeing with the superior, Chinese students employ more politeness strategies and address forms than the American students do. In the case of peers, with the increase of social distance, both the American and Chinese students apply less and less politeness strategies. Positive correlation was found between the rates of disagreement and the change of the social distance for the Chinese students while negative correlation for the American students. When disagreeing with the sister, the Chinese males use the least politeness strategies in comparison to the Chinese females who use the most politeness strategies. Generally, female students use more politeness strategies than male subjects.

Chen (2006) aimed, in his article, to investigate how Chinese EFL learners perform the speech act of disagreement in English by comparing data from four groups of speakers, including 60 native speakers of Chinese, 60 native speakers of English, 30 EFL-low proficiency speakers, and 30 EFL-high proficiency speakers. The speakers' language performance in relation to several contextual factors, was examined as well. The data revealed that the Chinese speakers avoided disagreement more often while the English speakers frequently used direct disagreement using softening devices. It was also found that cultural difference in distinction between in-group and out-group signified differences in language performance when the speakers were disagreeing with the interlocutor at the longest distance.

Another study conducted by Johnson (2006), compares the use of the speech acts of agreement and disagreement by speakers from two different cultural groups: London's British West African community and its mainstream British white community. The findings demonstrate that the British West Africans mostly favor a conversational style which emphasizes 'involvement' and is consisted of turn finishing, overlapping speech and etc. during disagreement, but the conversational style of the British Whites mostly tend towards a more 'considerate' style which has no imposition on the interlocutors such as hesitancy, etc. In other words, the BWAs are more tolerant for direct and explicit disagreement than the BWs, who mostly avoid to disagree directly in order not to ruin the harmony of their relationships.

In her article "I'm Not Agree with You", Kreutel (2007) investigate ESL Learners' Expressions of Disagreement. The data were gathered from 27 ESL learners using Discourse Completion Tests, then it was compared to that of 27 native speakers of American English. The desirable and undesirable features of disagreement each containing six subcategories were selected as the framework of analysis for this study. According to the results, the non-native speakers used mitigating devices less frequently than native speakers. However, they were also resorted to undesirable features. The findings of this study demonstrated that high lexico-grammatical proficiency does not necessarily lead to high pragmatic competence.

Nguyen (2009), in her paper, "Politeness Strategies in Showing Disagreement in Group Work" compared and contrasted Vietnamese and American undergraduate students' performance. The relationship between respondents was the same because the participants in her study were all undergraduate students. According to the results, both of the two groups of respondents prefer using non-conflicting disagreement strategies than conflicting ones and they mostly express their disagreement in a non-threatening way with the assumption that if they show their disagreement aggressively, the group's relationship will be broken. The data revealed that, the male respondents of both groups tend to be more direct than the female respondents. It further revealed that the American respondents tend to be more indirect and less aggressive than the Vietnamese respondents and are more careful to save the face of their interlocutor and do their face threatening act using off-record strategy.

A study also done by Behnam and Niroomand (2011), investigates the ways power relations influence politeness strategies in disagreement. To accomplish this, a discourse completion test (DCT), which consisted of five scenarios in which the subjects were supposed to disagree with two higher statuses, two with peers, and one with a lower status, was completed by 40 Iranian EFL learners, in a university setting. The participants were placed at two different levels (intermediate and upper-intermediate) based on their score on a proficiency test. The results of the study investigated that, with increasing proficiency level, learners' use of direct, bald-on record way of disagreeing decreases and indirect, off-record way of disagreeing increases. The answers to the research questions provided that power status of people have strong effects on learners of both groups' choice of politeness strategies, the students in both groups made use of same strategies with different frequencies, and that the learners in higher level are more careful about the face wants of their interlocutors.

The study conducted by Ghafar Samar et al. (2013) investigates the expression of disagreement by Iranian advanced English learners including 26 male and female interlocutors in language institute, home environment and university setting. The results showed that the interlocutors move toward more aggravated way of disagreement as the setting changes from language institute to university setting, suggesting that the use of a certain speech act, cannot be investigated without a certain context.

Patrawut (2014) examines the use of politeness strategies by native speakers of Thai (NT) and Canadian English (NE) in disagreement among the student and lecturer in the classroom context. To collect data, the classrooms were videotaped for three hours every week for ten continuing weeks. According to the findings, the NT and the NE use different politeness strategies in different ways when expressing their disagreement to the lecturer. Having a collectivist culture, the NTs disagree with their lecturer in less quantity than the NEs with an individualist culture. The NT normally redress their politeness strategy and mostly realize the strategies verbally, but the NE usually aggravate the politeness strategy in the subsequent turns and realize their strategy non-verbally.

Norouzi (2015), in her paper, investigated the influence of politeness strategies in different disagreement situations by Iranian EFL learners of intermediate and advanced levels. The sample involved 50 Iranian students that were equally divided into intermediate and advance group. A Discourse completion Test (DCT), which consisted of five situations in which the students were supposed to express their disagreement, was applied. To analyze the utterances of disagreement, the taxonomy of Muntigl and Turnbull (1995) was employed. The results demonstrated that, intermediate and advance learners use the same type of strategies, however, they differ in the type and frequency of use of these strategies and that correct use of these strategies mostly depend on the linguistic and especially pragmatic knowledge of the learners.

Bavarsad, Eslami-Rasekh and Simin (2015), in their study, tried to investigate the ways in which Persian EFL learners and American native English speakers express disagreements with peoples of different power status. 140 participants (100 Persian EFL learners and 40 American native English speakers) were randomly selected from among undergraduate and graduate students of University of Isfahan and Islamic Azad University (Najafabad branch) majored in English and from Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Students were supposed to complete a DCT which presented nine situations in which the students had to express their disagreement with people of different power status. By employing Muntigl and Turnbull's taxonomy (1998), the results revealed that both nationalities were careful about using appropriate politeness strategies which matched the status of the interlocutors; However, Persian EFL learners were more careful and cautious than Americans in doing this.

Even though these studies have investigated the use of the speech act of disagreement by the students or learners of different languages, and in some cases have compared them with the performance of the native speakers, little or maybe no studies have been carried out which compares the written works, novels, of the speakers of two languages (here English and Farsi), in terms of the use of this speech act and employment of politeness strategies and generally investigating their pragmatic differences.

Most of the studies mentioned above, examined the use of disagreement and the politeness strategies employed to soften its threatening effect, by EFL, ESL learners or the native speakers of those languages. In some cases, they have also compared the learners' performance by that of the native speakers. The instrument mostly used by the researchers was discourse completion test (DCT) and the data gathered were mostly elicited.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the use of these two speech acts (disagreement and refusal) in the writings of the native speakers of English and Farsi. It aims to examine how the politeness strategies used by the novelists which are reflected in the conversations among the characters, are different among the characters when talking to a character of different power or social status and also how they are different among the two different languages (English and Farsi). To state it more specifically, the current research attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ1) What disagreement strategies are mostly employed in English and Farsi novels?

RQ2) What types of disagreement the characters with different power relations mostly use in English and Farsi novels?

RQ3) What politeness strategies do the characters in both languages employ in order to soften the impact of the speech act on the interlocutors' face?

RQ4) To what extend the differences in the culture of each language (in terms of being individualist or collectivist) are reflected on the employment of politeness strategies by characters in the novels?

III. METHOD

A. Design of the Study

The design of the present study is both qualitative and quantitative. This is because, the sentences in the novels were analyzed qualitatively in order to detect the places in which the speech act of disagreement was used and the politeness strategies employed, and the characters using this speech act were identified in terms of whether they had higher, lower or equal power status in relation to the addressee and the data obtained were presented quantitatively in numbers by calculating the frequency of their use and their percentages.

B. Materials

Five English and five Farsi novels with modern writing style, the authors of which were the native speakers of English and Farsi, were chosen. Since the issue of gender was not considered as a variable in this study, the novels were not chosen in a way that their authors are equal in number in terms of male and female.

The English novels are:

- "The Sound and the Fury" by William Faulkner
- "The Lovely Bones" by Alice Sebold
- "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- "The catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger
- "1984" by George Orwell

The Farsi novels also are:

- "Savushun" by Simin Daneshvar
- "Symphony of the Dead" by Abbas Maroufi
- "The Colonel" by Mahmoud Dowlatabadi
- "I Will Turn off the Lights" by Zoya Pirzad
- "Her Eyes" by Bozorg Alavi

C. Sampling

The novels were chosen concerning their date of composition. An attempt was made in order to choose novels that were written in modern styles so that the pragmatic features which were going to be investigated, do not have significant discrepancies with the features that are used by the native speakers of the two languages who use the languages in present era.

D. Procedures

First of all, the novels were read and the parts in which the characters disagreed with other characters were detected and underlined. Then all of the underlined sentences were written down on separate sheets of paper and each sentence in the novels which contained an act of disagreeing, were categorized using the taxonomy proposed by Rees-Miller (2000). In order to analyze the data, the frequency of occurrence of every type of the two speech acts under investigation was counted and transferred into percentages in order for the data to be more comprehensible. They were presented in separate tables and figures for each speech act. Next, to compare the two languages in terms of using these target features and also in order to assess their relationship, the categories were taken into consideration regarding their frequency of use and also percentages. The frequency of the use of different types of disagreement by characters as speakers, with different power relations from that of the addressee or hearer ($S > H$, $S = H$, $S < H$) were also calculated and analyzed. This was done in order to investigate whether different levels of power status will influence the choice of certain ways of expressing disagreement or not. Finally, categorized speech act types used by the characters in the novels, were also classified into Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies: 1. Bald-on record, 2. Positive politeness, 3. Negative politeness, and 4. Off-record. And the frequency of use of these politeness strategies in each novel by characters with different power relations and their percentages were also presented in separate tables and figures, and were compared.

E. Categories of Analysis

The taxonomy proposed by Rees-Miller (2000) was used as framework of analysis for categorizing and analyzing the speech act of disagreement. The taxonomy contains three macro categories which include several subcategories:

1. Softened disagreement:
 - a. Positive politeness (positive comment, humor, inclusive first person, partial agreement.)
 - b. Negative politeness (questions, I think/I don't know, down-toners (maybe, sort of), verbs of uncertainty (seems))
2. Disagreement not softened or strengthened:
 - a. Contradictory statement
 - b. Verbal shadowing
3. Aggravated disagreement:
 - a. Rhetorical questions,
 - b. Intensifiers

- c. Personal, accusatory you
- d. Judgmental vocabulary

To investigate the politeness strategies and rules employed when using the speech act of disagreement, Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies were used as framework of analysis:

1. Bald-on record strategies, which are more direct ways of expressing something.
2. Positive politeness strategies, which are used to soften the impact of the damage by the use of a face threatening speech act to the addressee's positive face by emphasizing closeness between speaker and hearer.
3. Negative politeness strategies, which are used to soften the impact of the damage by the use of a face threatening speech act to the addressee's negative face by emphasizing the hearer's freedom of action.
4. Off-record strategies, which are indirect ways of using a speech act so as to save the addressee's face.

They were also some types of use of these speech acts in which no politeness strategies were used and which were used in aggravated and risky ways. They were named as 'high risk of FTA'.

IV. RESULTS

A. Types of Disagreement Used in English and Farsi Novels

The data gathered from the five English and five Farsi novels concerning the speech act of disagreement, were classified according to the taxonomy of Rees-Miller (2000). Tables I and II present the percentages of the use of this speech act in English and Farsi novels. Fig. 1 also comparatively represents the data presented in the two tables.

In order to answer the first research question: "What disagreement strategies are mostly employed in English and Farsi novels?", we refer to table I which presents the percentages of the use of the speech act of disagreement in all five English novels and table II which provides the same information for the five Farsi novels.

TABLE I.
TYPES OF DISAGREEMENT USED IN ENGLISH NOVELS

Types of disagreement		Frequencies (Percentages)	
Softened disagreement	Positive politeness	1 (0.59%)	11 (6.58%)
	Negative politeness	10 (5.98%)	
Disagreement not softened or strengthened	Contradictory statement	134 (80.23%)	139 (83.23%)
	Verbal shadowing	5 (2.99%)	
Aggravated disagreement	Rhetorical questions	4 (2.39%)	17 (10.17%)
	Intensifiers	-	
	Personal, accusatory you,	3 (1.79%)	
	Judgmental vocabulary	10 (5.98%)	
		Total: 167 (100%)	

As indicated in the table, almost all types of disagreement are used in the whole English novels except 'intensifiers'. According to the percentages presented, 'contradictory statement' which is a subcategory of 'disagreement not softened or strengthened', has highest percentage of use (80.23%) in comparison to the rest and 'positive politeness', a subcategory of 'softened disagreement', has the lowest percentage (0.59%) and is used the least. 'Negative politeness' and 'judgmental vocabulary' have the second highest percentages; however, the value of their percentage is low (5.98%). The rest are somehow in equal and low range of percentages (2.99%, 2.39%, and 1.79%) and are used in limited numbers in the English novels. If we take into consideration the larger categories including, 'softened disagreement', 'disagreement not softened or strengthened' and 'aggravated disagreement', we will see that 'disagreement not softened or strengthened' is the most frequently used category by English characters (83.23%). Aggravated and softened disagreement stands next.

TABLE II.
TYPES OF DISAGREEMENT USED IN FARSI NOVELS

Types of disagreement		Frequencies (Percentages)	
Softened disagreement	Positive politeness	8 (6.83%)	15 (12.82%)
	Negative politeness	7 (5.98%)	
Disagreement not softened or strengthened	Contradictory statement	86 (73.5%)	86 (73.5%)
	Verbal shadowing	-	
Aggravated disagreement	Rhetorical questions	12 (10.25%)	16 (13.67%)
	Intensifiers	-	
	Personal, accusatory you,	3 (2.56%)	
	Judgmental vocabulary	1 (0.85%)	
		Total: 117 (100%)	

According to the table, 'verbal shadowing' and 'intensifiers' are two types not used in the Farsi novels. Like in English novels, 'contradictory statement' has the highest frequency of use (73.5%) in Farsi novels as well. 'Judgmental vocabulary' has the lowest percentage (0.85%) in comparison to the rest, which is used only one time. 'Rhetorical questions' has the second highest percentage (10.25%). Generally, as shown in the last column of the table, similar to

English novels, disagreements that are not softened or strengthened have the most frequency of use in Farsi novels as well (73.5%).

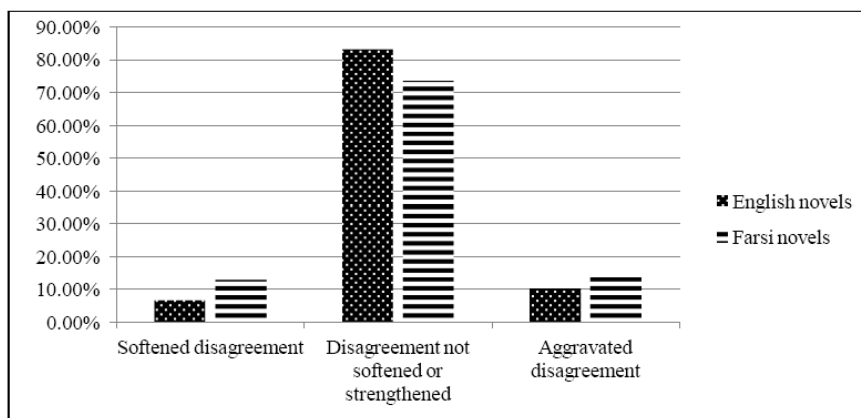


Figure 1. Types of disagreement used in English and Farsi novels.

Fig. 1 gives a general and comparative view of the use of the disagreement types in both English and Farsi novels. As it is obviously illustrated in the figure, 'disagreement not softened or strengthened' is the most frequently used type by the novels of both languages. As shown in the figure, this type is used by characters in English novels more than characters in Farsi novels.

B. Types of Disagreement Used by Characters with Different Power Relations in English and Farsi Novels

As was mentioned before, disagreement is a speech act in which, one proposes an opposing view point from that of the speaker. Since by disagreeing, one imposes his view point on the other, it is a face threatening speech act which mostly threatens the speaker's positive face by overlooking his views and desires. The power status of the interlocutors when using such a face-threatening speech act, plays an important role and decides for the level of threat put upon the requester's face.

In this section, we try to answer the second research question which asks: "What types of disagreement the characters with different power relations mostly use in English and Farsi novels?" The power status of the characters were identified in relation to other characters in each novel. It is important to mention that the context in which the actions occurred in the novels and the style of sentences the characters used, also decided for the choice of the power status of each. Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, show the use of disagreement types by characters in English and Farsi novels who disagreed with characters with higher-level ($S > H$), equal-level ($S = H$), and lower-level ($S < H$) of power status. Tables III and IV represent the exact frequencies and percentages obtained. It is also worthy to note here that the capital letter 'S' used in tables III and IV, and Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, indicates the speaker which refers to characters who perform the act of disagreeing, and the capital letter 'H' indicates the hearer with whose viewpoint the speaker disagrees.

TABLE III.
TYPES OF DISAGREEMENT USED BY CHARACTERS WITH DIFFERENT POWER RELATIONS IN THE ENGLISH NOVELS

Types of Power relations \ Types of disagreement	Softened disagreement		Disagreement not softened or strengthened		Aggravated disagreement			
	Positive politeness	Negative politeness	Contradictory statement	Verbal shadowing	Rhetorical questions	Intensifiers	Personal, accusatory you	Judgmental vocabulary
* $S > H$	-	3(1.79%)	57(34.13%)	5(2.99%)	2(1.19%)	-	1(0.59%)	6(3.59%)
	3 (1.79%)		62 (37.12%)		9 (5.38%)			
$S = H$	-	2(1.19%)	19(11.37%)	-	2(1.19%)	-	-	-
	2 (1.19%)		19 (11.37%)		2 (1.19%)			
$S < H$	1(0.59%)	5(2.99%)	58(34.73%)	-	-	-	2(1.19%)	4(2.39%)
	6 (3.59%)		58 (34.73%)		6 (3.59%)			

* S: Speaker (the one who disagrees), H: Hearer (the one who is disagreed with).

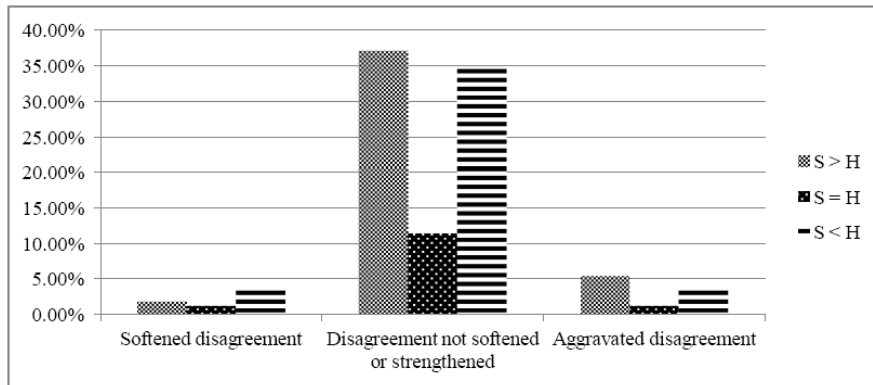


Figure 2. Types of disagreement used by characters with different power relations in the English novels

According to the table III, the most frequently used type by the speakers in higher, equal and lower position from the hearer in English novels, is 'contradictory statement' which is a subcategory of 'disagreement not softened or strengthened'. Characters of higher and lower power status, have somehow used this type equally (34.13% ~ 34.73%). This speech act type, as was mention in previous section, was the most frequently used type of disagreement in Farsi novels as well. In other words, disagreement types which were not softened or strengthened, where mostly used by three levels of power relations. 'Aggravated disagreement' were mostly employed by characters with higher level of power status.

To repeat what was said, Fig. 2 also clearly and concretely illustrates that disagreements that are not softened or strengthened, are used much more than other categories by the characters in all three power relation groups in English novels, especially characters in higher and lower position.

TABLE IV.
TYPES OF DISAGREEMENT USED BY CHARACTERS WITH DIFFERENT POWER RELATIONS IN THE FARSI NOVELS

Types of disagreement Power relations	Softened disagreement		Disagreement not softened or strengthened		Aggravated disagreement			
	Positive politeness	Negative politeness	Contradictory statement	Verbal shadowing	Rhetorical questions	Intensifiers	Personal, accusatory you	Judgmental vocabulary
S > H	3(2.56%)	3(2.56%)	29(24.78%)	-	7(5.98%)	-	2(1.7%)	1(0.85%)
S = H	-	-	5(4.27%)	-	-	-	-	-
S < H	5(4.27%)	4(3.41%)	52(44.44%)	-	5(4.27%)	-	1(0.85%)	-
	6 (5.12%)		29 (24.78%)		10 (8.54%)			
	-		5 (4.27%)		-			
	9 (7.69%)		52 (44.44%)		6 (5.12%)			

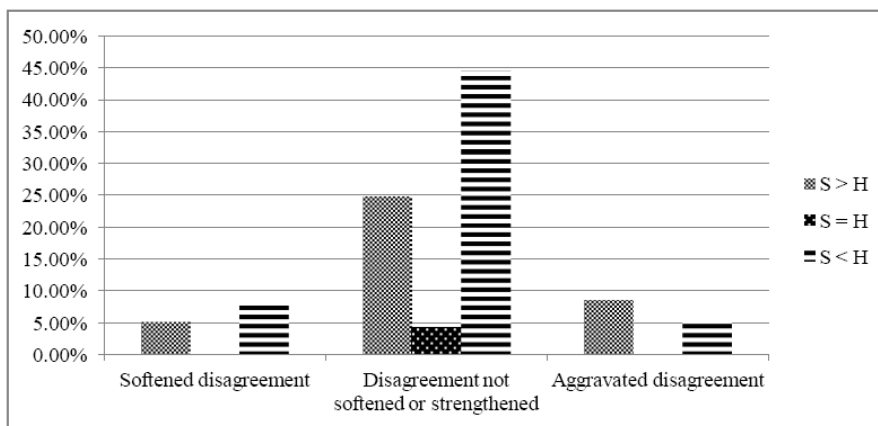


Figure 3. Types of disagreement used by characters with different power relations in the Farsi novels.

Similar to the English novels, 'contradictory statement' also was frequently used by the characters of different power status from the requesters (<, =, >) in English novels (table IV). However, it might not be suitable to say this about the characters with equal power status because, 'contradictory statement' was the only type they had used. Characters with lower power status of their interlocutors, have used this category more frequently than other characters (44.44%). As table indicates, characters in both higher and lower position or power, employed 'Disagreement not softened or strengthened' most frequently than other types.

As with Fig. 2, which illustrated the case for the English novels, Fig. 3 also demonstrates that like English novels, in Farsi novels 'disagreements not softened or strengthened' were mostly preferred by the characters, however, as can be

understood by paying attention to the two figures, in contrast to English novels, in Farsi novels this type was mostly used by characters with lower power status.

C. Politeness Strategies Used by Characters with Different Power Relations in Disagreement

Since there existed power or position inconsistency among the characters in the novels, and the speech act of disagreement used was face threatening acts (FTAs), there were evidence in the novels, of the attempt made by characters who used this speech act, to mitigate or soften its threatening effect.

This section is also an answer to the third research question: "What politeness strategies do the characters in both languages employ in order to soften the impact of the speech act on the interlocutors' face?" Disagreement mostly threatens the addressee's positive face and attempts should be made by the speaker in order to soften its threatening effects.

Even though Rees-Miller (2000) believes that speech act of disagreement can threaten both positive and negative face of the addressee depending on the context and the attitudes of the interlocutors, due to the fact that the context has not been totally considered as a variable in this study, when analyzing politeness strategies we mostly adhere to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies: 1. Bald-on record, 2. Positive politeness, 3. Negative politeness, and 4. Off-record, will be briefly discussed by considering the tables V and VI and Fig. 4 and Fig. 5. As was mentioned above, these tables and figures also present the power relations of characters. The interlocutors' power relation is an important and decisive factor when talking about the politeness strategies employed.

TABLE V.
EMPLOYMENT OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES BY CHARACTERS WITH DIFFERENT POWER RELATIONS IN DISAGREEMENT IN ENGLISH NOVELS

Power relations \ Politeness strategies	Off-record strategies	Positive politeness strategies	Negative politeness strategies	Bald-on record strategies	Highest risk of FTA
S > H	-	-	3 (1.79%)	62 (37.12%)	9 (5.38%)
S = H	-	-	2 (1.19%)	19 (11.37%)	2 (1.19%)
S < H	-	1 (0.59%)	5 (2.99%)	58 (34.73%)	6 (3.59%)

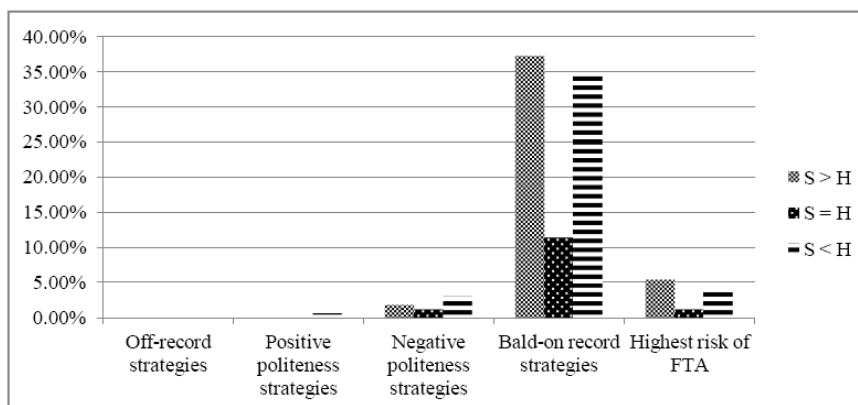


Figure 4. Employment of politeness strategies by characters with different power relations in disagreement in English novels

The data presented in the table above, which indicate the percentage of the use of the politeness strategies by characters when expressing their disagreement in English novels, are obtained by taking into consideration the disagreement types used by each character (table III). According to the table, no off-record or indirect strategies were used by characters in English novels when disagreeing. There was just one employment of positive politeness strategies which was employed by a character in lower position. The employment of negative politeness, although not high, was more frequent with characters in lower position (2.99%). Direct or bald-on record strategies which were the most dominantly employed strategy, was mostly used by characters with high level of power status than others (37.12%). And finally, characters with higher power status used more rude and threatening ways of this speech act without employing any politeness strategy (5.38%). Generally saying and as it is illustrated in Fig. 4 as well, bald-on record strategies were most frequently employed strategies when disagreeing, in English novels.

TABLE VI.
EMPLOYMENT OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES BY CHARACTERS WITH DIFFERENT POWER RELATIONS IN DISAGREEMENT IN FARSI NOVELS

Power relations \ Politeness strategies	Off-record strategies	Positive politeness strategies	Negative politeness strategies	Bald-on record strategies	Highest risk of FTA
S > H	-	3 (2.56%)	3 (2.56%)	29 (24.78%)	10 (8.54%)
S = H	-	-	-	5 (4.27%)	-
S < H	-	5 (4.27%)	4 (3.41%)	52 (44.44%)	6 (5.12%)

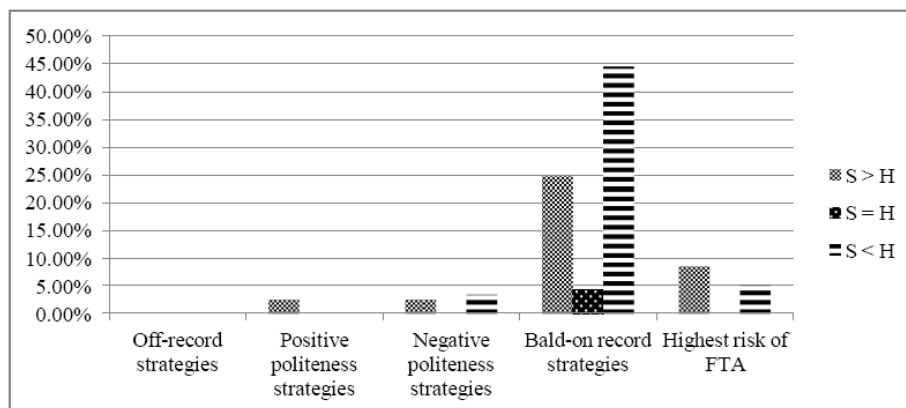


Figure 5. Employment of politeness strategies by characters with different power relations in disagreement in Farsi novels

As table VI indicates, no off-record strategy was employed in Farsi novels. Positive and negative politeness strategies, as in English novels, were also most frequently employed by characters who were in lower position. Like in English novels, in Farsi novels bald-on record strategies were the most frequently used strategies. However, in the case of Farsi novels, bald-on record or direct politeness strategies were mostly used by characters with low power status in comparison to that of characters in higher position (44.44% > 24.78%). Moreover, the threatening or strengthened ways of disagreement were most frequently chosen by characters in higher level of power status (8.54%). By comparing Fig. 5 with Fig. 4, it can be said that like in English novels, bald-on record strategies were most frequently employed when disagreeing in Farsi novels as well but the frequency of their use by the characters were different.

V. DISCUSSION

The results for research question 1 indicate that both English and Farsi novels employ disagreement types that are not softened or strengthened, more frequently than other types. The use of aggravated disagreement is more than softened disagreement in both novel sets but the frequencies of use of the subcategories are different. For example in English novels when characters employed softened disagreement, they mostly used negative politeness types but in Farsi novels both positive and negative politeness types were somehow used equally with slight differences in numbers. English characters preferred to use judgmental vocabulary more frequently while Farsi characters employed rhetorical questions more than other types when using aggravated versions of disagreement. Generally saying, in the written works of both languages, the use of disagreement is mostly inclined toward directly contradicting, using words such as 'no' or sentences which are the opposite of what was said by the addressee, rather than conveying the message softly or indirectly or with more aggression.

The findings about the research question two also suggest that in English novels, not softened or strengthened versions of disagreements (most significantly contradictory statements) are most dominant type used by majority of characters in all three power relation groups, more than any other types. Characters with higher and lower power status somehow used this type equally. Aggravated disagreements are mostly employed by characters in higher positions and characters with lower power have used softened disagreements more than other characters. Similar to English novels, in Farsi novels the most dominant type used by majority of the characters both in higher and lower power status, is disagreements not softened or strengthened, as well. Contradictory statement is the only subcategory of this type which is used in Farsi novels. We cannot say this about the characters in equal positions with the addressee's since the only types they had used were contradictory statements. In contrast to English novels, in Farsi novels the interlocutors in lower power status used contradictory statements (disagreements not softened or strengthened) more than other characters. Characters possessing higher power, used aggravated disagreements more and characters with lower power employed softened disagreement more than others. The reason of it is very obvious because their power relations with other characters with whom they are interacting, allows for this choice.

According to the findings regarding the third research question, there is high preference among characters in higher, lower and equal position comparing to the addressee, in both English and Farsi novels, for choosing types of disagreement that are neither softened nor strengthened, over other types. In other words, the majority of the characters used direct and bald-on strategies when disagreeing with other characters. This case was mostly true with the characters with higher power status in English novels, and characters with lower power status in Farsi novels. Although bald-on record strategies are not as threatening as aggravated ways of using speech acts, the use of these strategies by characters in lower positions from the addressee (the case with the Farsi novels) may in some ways account for the fact that factors other than the power status of the interlocutors will decide for the choice of politeness strategies. Factors such as context or situation which according to the study carried out by Ghafar Samar et al. (2013), and another study by Mehregan et al. (2013) decides for the choice of politeness strategies among interlocutors. In both novel sets, characters in higher position from the addressee used strengthened versions of disagreement (high risk of FTA) more than others. Their high level of power status allows them to choose strengthened and threatening ways of disagreement more than

other characters. The characters in lower positions also used softening disagreement and as a result, positive and negative politeness strategies more than others. Therefore, it can be inferred that, as the power status of the speaker becomes higher than the addressee, there is the possibility of the use of threatening speech acts without employing strategies of politeness and mitigating devices and in more face-threatening ways. On the contrary as the characters power status becomes low, the characters mostly prefer to use softening strategies in order to look more polite and reduce the pressure of the disagreement on the addressee's face.

To answer the fourth research question which investigates the impact of the cultures of two languages (in terms of being individualistic or collectivistic) on the employment of politeness strategies by the characters, it should be said that the results obtained in some ways ran counter to what was expected from the written works, here novels, of English and Persian native speakers with two different cultures. The types and strategies used by the characters cannot completely be explained by the characteristics of the two cultures. Therefore it can be interfered that factors other than power status of the characters (e.g. context, situations) also influenced the choice of certain types or politeness strategies over the others.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The main concern of the present paper was to investigate the use of politeness strategies among the characters with different power relations in both English and Farsi novels. The speech act of disagreement was chosen to be investigated. The taxonomy of Rees-Miller (2000) was used for categorizing the disagreement types. The frequency and percentage of the use of these types in the novels and Brown and Levinsons' (1987) politeness strategies employed in each novel sets by characters with different power relations, were calculated and reported. According to the results, the similarities among the English and Farsi novels regarding the use of disagreement were more than the differences; however, the employment of direct and face-threatening strategies, were more different than similar among the two novel sets.

The results of this study will probably have important pedagogical implications, the most important and general of which are, not to rely merely on the grammatical rules of the language to master it. Particularly, the findings of this study will give specific insights into the use of the speech act of disagreement and the ways of using them when communicating with the native speakers of English and Farsi by paying close attention to their social status. Even though the present study investigated the written and not spoken language, another main pedagogical implication of it will probably be the fact that no pragmatic or communicational rule in a language can be used without the presence of the context and other outside factors.

By raising the awareness of the learners, the learners themselves can obtain information about the rules beyond the structural rules which govern their native and foreign/second language. They will get to know which features are the same so that they can transfer those features from their native language, and the features that are different so that they can learn them. Language pedagogy can also emphasize those features that are different in both languages and make sure that the learners get a good understanding of them and by using them they will make their points more understandable in conversations and interactions. By mastering these rules, the learners will communicate successfully and know how to act in order not to destroy others' face wants which probably will lead to communication breakdowns.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

No research works are perfect and none is conducted without any limitation or even drawbacks. The present study is also not an exception. The main limitation of the study is that, it does not completely account for the contextual and external factors other than the power relations of the characters which probably influence the actions and expressions of the interlocutors. This does not mean that these external factors were completely ignored. As was previously mentioned, the power status of the characters were mostly decided based on the context they were embedded in, however, it is not only the power or social status of the interlocutors which can be decided by the help of context. Another limitation of the study which might hinder the generalizability of the results and which relates to the first limitation as well is the fact that the choice of the novels in a way that all have somehow similar settings, was very difficult and even impossible. Therefore certain performances and choices which are made due to the influence of the setting or context, might not be generalizable to other contexts or situations.

There are several issues which the researchers who are interested in this research area, can consider in order to carry out future researches. First of all, since the limited numbers of novels (five English and five Farsi) were used in the present study, it might be a good idea for those who are interested, to choose more materials and even in different genres than that of this study in order to investigate whether the same results will be obtain or not. Languages other than English or Persian might be chosen to be compared as well. Furthermore, as gender of the authors or even the interlocutors, was not considered as a variable in this study, it is also recommended that other researchers take this into consideration. It is also seriously recommended to the researchers that they closely consider the contextual or any external factors other than power relations of the interlocutors, when investigating pragmatic rules of the languages. The reason is that in order for the researchers to obtain authentic or more valid results, they must pay attention to natural

factors influencing the variables, as they influence them in real world. By paying close attention to contextual factors, the results obtained will be more valid, reliable and generalizable.

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