Pragmatic Knowledge and Its Reflection in ESP Textbooks: The Case of Unauthentic Textbooks

Zohre G. Shooshtari
Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran

Anahita Bordbar
SAMA Technical and Vocational Training College, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz Branch, Ahvaz, Iran

Reza Banari
Department of TEFL, Baghmalek Branch, Islamic Azad University, Baghmalek, Iran

Abstract—**Textbooks play a crucial role in language teaching particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms since they are considered as an important and primary source of linguistic input. EFL textbooks are expected to develop EFL students' knowledge, no difference in linguistic or pragmatic competences (Gholami & Mahboobrezaei, 2011). As some scholars believed pragmatics is the fifth skill in language learning, then, it is essential to incorporate it like an integral component of EFL textbooks. However, there exists little knowledge on how well pragmatic perspectives of language are taken into consideration in expanding EFL textbooks generally and Iranian English for specific purposes (ESP) textbooks particularly. In fact, ESP textbooks are written by non-native authors and are considered as unauthentic textbooks. This study, therefore, attempted to explore pragmatic knowledge incorporation into ESP textbooks that have been published for computer engineers by SAMT publication as university textbooks. This study was also an attempt to investigate the frequency and rate of 'politeness principle' and 'irony principle' from the subcategories of inter-personal rhetoric as the umbrella term in two textbooks in the field of psychology. Book A was an authentic book written by natives for native speakers; however, book B was written by Iranians writers for Iranian university students (SAMT book). This paper then presented some results abstracted from the whole research project. EFL teachers and researchers whose professional and academic interests lie in syllabus design and ESP field may benefit from the findings of the study.**

Index Terms—**pragmatic competence, English for specific purposes, politeness principle, irony principle**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the real world, many English as a second language (ESL) instructors and/or English for specific purposes (ESP) developers are not provided with enough time to conduct needs analysis, do research on materials and develop educational materials. There are lots of texts which claim they regard the needs of ESP courses. Three features common to ESP courses have been identified by Carter (1983): a) authentic material, b) purpose-related orientation, and c) self-direction.

Also, in Dudley-Evans' (1997) viewpoint, ESP should be supplied with an intermediate or advanced level and authentic learning materials should be perfectly possible for ESP students. It is worth reminding that the utilization of authentic content materials- modified or unmodified in form- are actually a characteristic of ESP, especially in self-directed study and research tasks. The term authenticity points to the use of basic and genuine materials in the classroom. Wang and Choi (1995) describe authentic materials like follows:

… materials used in genuine communication in the actual world, and not particularly prepared for the teaching and learning of English. Instances of such materials consist of written and audio-visual materials from the media, materials used in the occupations, and even textbooks of other subject. (p. 318)

The reason behind the use of authentic materials is that through the application of natural language the acquisition of linguistic items are, in fact, enhanced. The use of naturalistic language mediates as a stimulus to further motivate the learning process. As it is axiomatic, one of the linguistic items that should be learned and instructed naturally is pragmatic acquisition within natural discourse and through authentic instruments. The discourse study is not limited to only one specific discipline; however, it is applied in a variety of disciplines including *anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics*, and *social psychology* (Demo, 2001). Therefore, discourse analysis takes multiple theoretical and analytical approaches and perspectives as its basis such as pragmatics, ethnography of communication, speech act theory, and conversation analysis, to name but a few (Schiffrin, 1994 cited from Demo, 2001). Although emphasizing different dimensions of language use, they all regard language as social interaction. For instance, politeness principle, as one of the pragmatic subcategories, should be used and implemented in textbooks and instructional means of communication.

The notion of politeness structure is one of the relevant issues in interlanguage pragmatics, especially in textbooks. The concept of politeness is a universal, social and linguistic phenomenon, and it has been the center of increasing attention and interest in the last decades. Politeness is generally considered as an integral and essential controlling mechanism in human interaction (Huang, 2007). As Longcope (1995) mentions, due to the significant role of politeness in the language we use, partners taking part in the communication consciously or subconsciously started to pay attention to certain variables which determine the form that the language will take while interacting. One of the scholars that studied these variables under the rubric of 'face' was Goffman (1955). He described 'face' like "the positive social value an individual effectively maintains for himself by the line others suppose he has taken during a special contact" (p.45).

Brown and Levinson (1987) studied politeness making use of Goffman's (1955) sociological idea of face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), theory of politeness consisted of three fundamental notions which comprise 'face', 'face threatening acts', and 'politeness strategies'. According to Renkema (1993), "five feasible strategies for performing FTAs were summarized according to their linked level of face threat which, in exchange, may echo the level of politeness: 'Do the FTA on record without redressive actions (the least polite)'; 'Do the FTA on record with redressive actions focusing on positive face'; 'Do the FTA off record'; 'Don't perform the FTA' (the most polite strategy)" (p. 79).

It is clear that as the number of professionals in different occupations increases, the importance of having a comprehensive knowledge of English as a lingua franca increases as well. This understanding becomes outstandingly central in international contexts (Louhiala-Salmenin & Kankaanranta, 2010). As a result, following the politeness principle and using its various structures can uniquely attribute to the performance of successful co-operative social interaction and negotiation of meaning. One of the great impacts of engaging with the politeness strategies and the correct use of them can be attributed to the success of university students in communicative interactions. Also, it results in minimizing any conflict and confrontation emerged from linguistic or cultural mismatches. The reason for mentioning the university students is the nature of the current research. As it is clear, different instruments like internet, e-mails, PDFs and textbooks are used in the classrooms for university students; however, nothing can take the place of textbooks in the instructional settings and nobody can neglect their importance.

The insufficiency of research studies in assessing ESP textbooks based on politeness markers is something that cannot be neglected. No one can ignore the importance of the meaning of politeness in the realm of international communication, which empowers the need for doing research in this area. The current study sought to investigate the politeness markers in the authentic versus unauthentic ESP text books in order to find a model of these politeness markers in textbook communications.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

It is generally supposed that university students are mature and have the world knowledge to some degrees. Therefore, the use of artificial language does not make sense to teach; it is better to use authentic language. That is, the kind of materials that are used naturally among native-speakers for real-life purposes. Sometimes, it is difficult for language teachers to choose what to teach. However, it is better to choose the topics from real world events that occur every day. Wang and Choi (1995) pointed out that "... the authentic materials selected by the teacher act like a stimulus to thinking, and help to draw out issues in contemporary events for discussion"(p. 319). Clearly, in non-native countries the students are mostly unfamiliar with the correct and appropriate use of English language. Therefore, the use of authentic materials can bridge this gap and mediate as a stimulus between the classroom and outside world.

According to Widdowson (1983), appropriacy to the learner's needs and purposes for learning is the criteria for a text to be authentic. In his idea, there is a difference between genuineness and authenticity. As a matter of fact, genuineness is a feature of the text itself and a perfect quality. In comparison to genuineness, authenticity is a characteristic representing the link between the text and the reader's suitable response. In a resembling vein, other writers put forward a difference between the ideas of text authenticity and learner authenticity. The former is described according to the origin of the materials, that is, the texts were originally written for real-life communicative purposes. Consequently, such passages may often be complicated in that they are non-simplified and upgraded according to their conceptual and linguistic difficulty (as mentioned in Spector-Cohen, Kirschner, & Wexler, 2001). Learner authenticity is described according to the learner's interaction with the text. "Due to their intrinsically communicative quality, textually authentic materials tend to possess more potential for being made learner authentic than textually unauthentic materials" (Yuk-Chun Lee, 1995, p. 324).

Pragmatics in general and teaching pragmatic competence in particular have been considered like a holistic section of learning and teaching a language, and it has been thoroughly studied (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig& Griffin, 2005). Teaching pragmatic in interpersonal as well as in textual communication, according to the sociocultural rules that govern communication from different aspects like speech acts and politeness principle in a given speech community, is a valuable tool to make learners aware of what is essential within a culture and how this is communicated.

Different researchers working on the textbook evaluation like Bardovi-Harlig (1996) claimed that many textbooksvtend to providelittle opportunity for learning L2 pragmatics for university students as a result of textbooks' commercial nature. This is due to the fact that many textbooks either do not present politeness principle, or they present politeness principle without clear view and reliability.

Bouton (1996) investigated the disadvantage of the textbook he taught. The textbook rarely presented the invitations in the form they are in published native speaker's (NS)corpora. In another study, Han (1992) found that the Korean ESL learners responded to the compliments with 'thank you'. The reason was that in Korean ELT material they learned 'thank you' was the only correct way to respond to a compliment.

Vinagre (2006), conducting research in an e-communication setting, discovered that the way of "using politeness strategies by collaborative email partners could aid them conquer the existing threat to each other's negative face" (p. 1030). The participants of the study were eleven ESL students and their partners. Their introductory email exchanges were analyzed in terms of the politeness strategies. The author expected that the participants made use of negative politeness strategies; rather, they utilized a noticeable amount of positive strategies, particularly those linking to 'claiming common ground', 'assuming or asserting reciprocity' and 'conveying cooperation'. Vinagre concluded that through the use of these strategies the interlocutors seek solidarity, convergence and cohesion.

In another study in an e-communication setting, Nall (2004) researched a total of 12 emails sent by Chinese vendors to a U.S company. The investigator used Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness framework to scrutinize the FTA strategies utilized by these Chinese vendors. The outcomes illustrated that the Chinese vendors showed a diverse opinion toward FTA, an opinion which was not in line with Brown and Levinson's (1978) pattern. The study suggested that using reliable and authentic writings corresponded with business writing standards and simplifying differences in textual criteria are the essential components of any EFL/ESL teaching business corresponding.

Although almost all of the studies in textbook evaluation have been conducted in ESL contexts, some of them have taken place in EFL settings like in Iran. For example, Tavakoli (1995) studied the language functions in the dialogues utilized in the English textbooks of Iranian senior high schools. The findings revealed that out of five different kinds of language functions, only three of them were used in the texts, namely representative, directive, and expressive. Commissive and declaration were, however, the least frequent ones.

Very lately, Soozandehfar and Sahragard (2011) analyzed the conversation parts of Top Notch Fundamental textbooks from the pragmatic outlook of language functions and speech acts. The findings showed that the conversations in these newly-published textbooks were not pragmatically reliable. 'Interchange Books'(2005), as broadly utilized in Iranian foreign language teaching Institutes, were studied by Koosha and Dastjerdi (2012).The outcomes of the study showed that "the series failed to comprise materials which are required for conceptual and face saving communication when resort to different types of requests was needed" (p.58).

Considering inadequacy of research studies in evaluating ESP textbooks based on politeness markers, the present study sought to investigate the politeness markers in the authentic versus unauthentic ESP text booksin order to find a pattern of these politeness markers in textbook communications. To do so, the study aimed at answering the following question:

1) What is the range of politeness principles and how are they distributed in the textbooks in question?

III. METHOD

A. Context

The present study was conducted in an Iranian EFL setting where English language instruction constitutes a total of two to three hours per week in secondary and high schools as well as in pre-college courses. In addition to Persian, as standard language, and Arabic, as religious language, Iranian Ministry of General Education identifies English as an essential course due to the reality that its present status like an international language of communication, a critical device of instruction, and language of science is of high value. Also, English is known in the 7th year of public school system and is taught throughout the remaining years in universities during BA, MA, and PhD courses (Taghizade Mahani, 2012). Furthermore, there is a powerful emphasis on English in the Iranian higher education schedules by all private and state universities (Shoarinejad, 2008; Shokouhi, 1989). English is the device of instruction at English departments proposing English language teaching, English language and literature, and English translation programs; however, other departments suggest courses of Basic English, General English, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). As cited before, English is particularly common in universities as English for academic purposes (EAP) and ESP courses.

B. Materials

For the aim of this study, two of three New Interchange books (II and III) written by Jack C. Richards (2005) were chosen. They are one of the most popular books and are utilized in many countries for teaching English as a second/foreign language (EFL/ESL), and also they are used as EAP courses in the universities. 'New Interchange I' was removed from the study since the researchers tried to create equity and balance in the number of textbooks. The aim of choosing these textbooks was that these kinds of textbooks which have been written by native authors in native context are considered as authentic textbooks. Also, two unauthentic textbooks were chosen. They were 'Reading through reading: General English for university students' by MinooVarzgar, Hossein Farhadi and Parviz Mafton, and 'Reading for General English' by Farideh Pourgive. They are called unauthentic since they are written by non-native authors based on their own context and cultural norms. These textbooks are published by SAMT Publications which is a trusted and highly valuable publication center in Iran. Each New Interchange book consists of 16 units. General English

textbooks, i.e. unauthentic textbooks, consist of ten and eight units, respectively. The politeness principle in all of these four books was analyzed.

C. Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

Then ature of this study was mainly qualitative in that no special statistical analyses were needed. Therefore, the entire analysis of the present study was done by calculating frequencies and percentages of the politeness principle included in Interchange books (II and III) as authentic textbooks and general English textbooks as unauthentic textbooks. The analysis process was based on the taxonomy of politeness structure proposed by House and Kasper (1981) which includes 11 categories as follows (Alemi & Razzaghi, 2013, pp. 112-113):

1) *Politeness markers*, by which they imply expressions added to the utterance to 'show deference to the addressee and to bid for cooperative behavior'. The most clear instance of a politeness marker in English is please, but there exist others, e.g., if you wouldn't/don't appreciate, tag questions with the modal verb will/would following an imperative function (Close the window, will you/would you?), and so on.

2) *Play-downs*, by which they understand syntactic tools which 'tone down the perlocutionary effect an utterance is likely to possess on the addressee'. These are then subcategorized into five subdivisions which in reality boil down to the following four: use of the past tense (I wondered if …, I thought you might …), progressive dimension together with past tense (I was wondering whether …, I was thinking you might …), an interrogative including a modal verb (would it be a good idea …, could we …), a negative interrogative including a modal verb (wouldn't it be a good idea if …, couldn't you …).

3) *Consultative devices,* by which they understand structures which look for containing the addressee and bid for her/his cooperation, e.g., Would you mind …, Could you …

4) *Hedges*, by which they understand the avoidance of giving an exact propositional content and leaving a choice open to the addressee to dictate her/his own intent, e.g., sort of, kind of, somehow, more or less, rather, and what you have.

5) *Understaters*, which is a means of expressing the propositional content of the utterance by a phrase functioning like an adverbial modifier or also by an adverb itself, e.g., a bit, a little bit, a second, a moment, briefly.

6) *Downtoners,* which 'adjust the effect' of the speaker's utterance, e.g., just, simply, possibly, perhaps, really.

7) *Committers*, which decrease the degree to which the speaker confines her/himself to the propositional content of the utterance, e.g., I think, I believe, I guess, in my idea.

8) *Forewarning*, which is a strategy that could be recognized by a developed range of diverse structures in which the speaker makes some sort of metacomment on an FTA (e.g., pays a compliment) or applies a commonly accepted principle which s/he is about to defy, etc. (e.g., far be it from me to criticize, but …, you may find this a bit boring, but …, you're perfect at solving computer problems).

9) *Hesitators*, which are pauses replete with non-lexical phonetic material, e.g., er, uhh, ah, or are examples of stuttering.

10) *Scope-staters*, which define a subjective outlook about the state of subjects referred to in the proposition, e.g., I'm afraid you're in my seat, I'm disappointed that you couldn't …, it was a shame you didn't …

11) *Agent avoiders*, which point to propositional utterances in which the agent is quelled or impersonalized, thereby deviating the criticism from the addressee to some generalized agent, e.g., passive structures or utterances like people don't do X.

This 11-category taxonomy was utilized as a framework of the analysis. Any of the four textbooks, varying from authentic to unauthentic, was analyzed on the basis of these categories. In order to facilitate understanding, each politeness structure was given a code similar to Alemi and Razzaghi's study (2013). Politeness markers (PM), play-downs (PD), consultative devices (CD), hedges (H), understaters (UN), downtoners (D), committers (C), forewarnings (F), hesitators (HS), scope-staters (S) and agent avoiders (A). The data was collected from the above-mentioned textbooks and the frequency analysis was utilized to research the number and the kind of any politeness structure. The aim was to express a model of politeness markers in these textbooks utilized in ESP.

IV. RESULTS

In order to answer the research question of the study, data were analyzed by comparing the politeness markers in the two groups of books in questions. As can be seen in Table 1, the number of politeness principle used in New Interchange series is more than that of general English textbooks; that is, the total number of politeness principle in the two New Interchange series is 299, while this number is 103 in unauthentic textbooks, which is about three times less than the number of politeness in New Interchange series.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY OF POLITENESS PRINCIPLES IN TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks	frequency	Total
New Interchange II	110	299
New Interchange III	189	
Reading through reading	68	103
Reading for General English	35	

As it is obvious, one can claim that the general English textbooks are not communicatively-adapted and, consequently, they are not conversation-based. The politeness principles analyzed in this investigation are the ones utilized in conversations and reading sections which are included in each unit. For example, in New Interchange II and III, the number of politeness is 110 and 189, respectively; however, this number in 'General English for university students' is 68 and in 'Reading for General English' is 35.This indicates that the New Interchange series are more suitable for teaching pragmatics and communicative functions of English. Figure 1 clarifies the results.
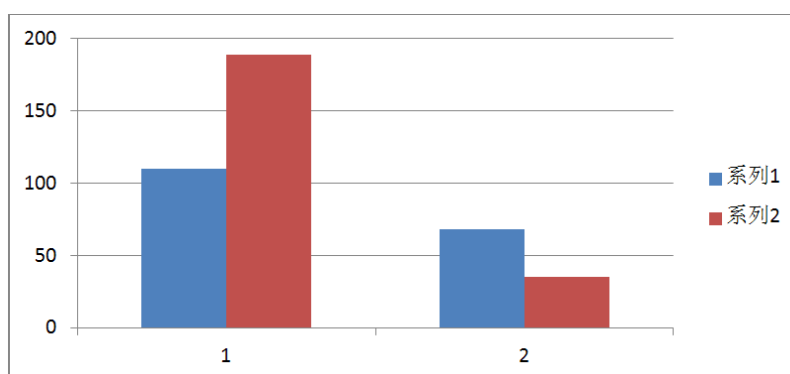

Figure 1.Frequencies of politeness principles in authentic and unauthentic textbooks.
1: authentic textbooks
2: unauthentic textbooks

As mentioned before, the aim of this study was to investigate the frequencies of politeness structure based on House and Kasper s' subcategory (1981). Table 2 shows the analysis of the frequencies of the politeness structures, any politeness structure as coded previously is shown in the row and the left column of the table expresses the name of authentic and in-authentic textbooks.

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF POLITENESS MARKERS

	PM	PD	CD	H	U	D	C	F	HS	S	A	Total
New Interchange II	3	2	6	3	8	11	9	23	41	2	2	**110**
	3%	2%	5%	3%	7%	9%	8%	20%	37%	2%	2%	
New Interchange III	5	4	4	3	4	8	10	39	84	9	12	**189**
	3%	2%	2%	1.5%	2%	4%	5%	19.5%	50%	5%	6%	
Reading through reading	2	7	24	1	1	3	1	7	14	3	5	**68**
	3%	10%	40%	1.5%	1.5%	5%	1.5%	10%	21%	5%	8%	
Reading for General English	2	3	11	1	1	3	1	3	5	2	3	**35**
	6%	8%	33%	3%	3%	8%	3%	8%	14%	6%	8%	

As can be viewed in the Table above, there exists a considerable difference according to the differences and frequencies of the politeness structures in the conversations. A sum of 299 politeness structures were utilized in authentic textbooks particularly in the conversation and reading items. Out of these, F and HS were the most frequent ones in authentic textbooks. From total of 103 politeness structures took place in unauthentic textbooks, CD and HS were the most repetitive ones.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study tried to highlight the inclusion of politeness structures in the ESP text books ranging from authentic to unauthentic. In this study, House and Kasper's (1981) politeness structure taxonomy was utilized as a pattern for analyzing the number and kinds of politeness structures in the above-mentioned textbooks. After finding and analyzing reading and conversations sections of textbooks, the total of 299politeness structures in authentic textbooks and 103 structures were found in unauthentic textbooks. Although all eleven politeness structures stated in House andKasper's (1981) taxonomy were found in the textbooks, they had different rates and frequencies. For example, S, U and D were the lowest in frequencies in unauthentic textbooks. But S and A were the lowest in frequency in New Interchange textbooks. The least frequent politeness strategy found to be hesitators. In fact, in each textbook it took place just 3 or 1 time/s in total. It was represented in the textbooks in the form of 'um and ….'

The present study is to some extent in harmony with Alemi and Razzaghi's (2013) study. However, the frequency of different subcategories of politeness structure is different. As mentioned before, in Alemi and Razzaghi's study, the least frequent structure was hesitation because in reading and conversations, that are in the form of text, this structure cannot be represented well; however, in listening part and in conversations the structure can be represented clearly."This strategy which is a very important strategy in conversations expresses the uncertainty andhesitation of a speaker in what to say next or how to express his/her utterance" (Alemi & Razzaghi, 2013, p.115).

VI. CONCLUSION

Along with the widespread nature of the globalization, the appeal of cross-cultural communicating is increasing. It demands that important strategies and structures for inter-personal and inter-textual communication be taught and pointed out in classroom. One of such structures is 'politeness principle'. Textbooks as critical and important tools of communication should consider this important point and should not ignore it as well. As it is clear interaction takes place between native-native and non-native-native. However, as Louhiala-Salminen (2002) and Taillefer (2007) stated, nearly 70% of communication occurs with non-native partners. This outcome reveals the value of knowing the cultural setting and strength of any partner so as to succeed in communication. The capabilities of the EFL learners as well as ESP university students to decipher the cross-cultural diversities and making a stability between themselves and foreign cultures are the components that can guide them to a highly successful communication. Politeness, like one of the most crucial elements of social interaction, is capable of playing the role of a mediator which can minimize interpersonal frictions and establish empathy and rapport. Mishandling communications, either by neglecting the nuance of social norms and rules in the other persons or employing inappropriate amount of politeness, can result in interpersonal disturbance and lead to failure in communication. It follows that a high standard textbook in terms of culturally profound and comprehensive is able to provide a good cultural outlook for the learners of that particular language.

As the concentration of this study was on the analysis of the ESP textbooks, varying from authentic to unauthentic ones, it investigated to shed light on the value of one of the main dimensions of successful communication, known as *politeness strategies*, which should be highly regarded as a necessary point in every communication, particularly in ESP courses. Denying politeness strategies may result in misconception, communication breakdown, and severe failures in communication. Then, assessing ESP textbooks is an crucial concept and it is useful for teachers because textbooks are one of the basic tools for teaching and learning and can be influenced by many criteria such as teachers' approaches, instructional positions, students' preferences and other environmental criteria.

The current study carries two basic practical inferences. The first inference is for the ESP textbook designers who are responsible for writing and developing textbooks' materials which are able to profit their readers and can be regarded as a basic informational resource for them. It is axiomatic that culture and language are so interrelated that understanding what people define needs a perfect knowledge of the cultural contexts and cultural norms working within those contexts. Culture is mixed with personality models of persons and it can frame the communicative styles of its members (Isik, 2003). Having a proper interpretation of target language's culture is vital for the learners. Thus, what material and textbook developers require is inclusion of a sufficient amount of the knowledge of the target language's culture in their materials and textbooks. This point would be more necessary for ESP textbooks and material designers because the ESP students require to expand a communicative competence in cross-cultural contexts, and if they could not achieve this capability, they would face with a lot of communicational deficiencies and challenges. Consequently, the task of textbook designers is very breath taking and demanding since they should write textbooks and materials which are highly rich according to both language and cultural dimensions, and can explicitly focus on the needs of its learners. The outcomes of this research can aid them expand materials that can portray the complicated nature of cross-cultural communication.

ESP has also inferences for teachers who use ESP textbooks and resources such as the major source of their instruction (Alemi and Razzaghi, 2013). They believe that the cultural and pragmatic perspectives of the target language should be closely considered by ELT teachers. Incorporation of cultural and pragmatic issues into classroom context and activities to raise learners' awareness of such outstanding issues needs teachers to use a range of instructional techniques and methods. In this way, instruction of cultural points, either explicit or/and implicit, is highly suggested in a way that a value of the cultural varieties and similarities between the target language and the learners' native language is broadened by the learners. Among a range of cultural points, politeness strategies like one of the basic characteristics of intercultural communication and interactional negotiation should enjoy a high rank in EFL teachers' instructional agenda. Also, the teachers require to teach howness, whenness, and whyness of the application of these politeness strategies to EFL learners (Alemi and Razzaghi, 2013).

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Zohre G. Shooshtari received her BA in TEFL at Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz and her MA at Shiraz University and she also received her PhD at Isfahan University. Her main research interests focus on applied linguistics and testing.

Anahita Bordbar received her BA in English literature and MA in TEFL at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. She is currently a PhD student at Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz. Her main research interests focus on psycholinguistics, testing, discourse analysis.

Reza Banari received her BA and MA in TEFL. He is currently a PhD student at Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz. His main research interests focus on testing and discourse analysis.