Language Teaching Research Quarterly

2020, Vol. 14, 35–52

Social Class as a Predictor of Pragmatic Competence: An Investigation of L1 and L2 Politeness Strategies Use in Light of Social Class Factors

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Received *17 September 2019* ***Accepted*** *26 November 2019*

Abstract

Since Bernstein's (1958) preliminary assertions on sociology of education, many linguistic and paralinguistic features have undergone research in light of social class. The present article is aimed at finding the predictability of first language and second language politeness strategy use through social class. To this end, a group of Iranian English learners was administered a social class questionnaire measuring three social class factors along with Persian and English discourse completion tests which included 9 scenarios for the three face threatening acts. The findings showed that in both L_1 and L_2, negative and positive strategies were the most common, while off record and no face threatening act were rarely used. A total make-up of similarities was found between L_1 and L_2 in the frequency of PSs[i] on the three FTAs. It was also found that educational and behavioral social class factors were respectively high and small predictors of L_1 and L_2 politeness strategies use. The importance of considering social class in pragmatic competence is discussed.

Keywords: *Social Class, Social Class Factors, Politeness Strategies, Face Threatening Acts*

Introduction

It is generally asserted that language is connected with social class (SC) in a way that people from various SCs have different degrees of language development (Ginsberg, 2006). More clearly, SC which is demonstrated through various social class factors (SCFs) is related to or could mold various linguistic, paralinguistic, and metalinguistic features (Aliakbari, Samaie, Sayehmiri, & Qaracholloo, 2013). From the very preliminary claims on the relevance of SC and language (Bernstein, 1958) until now, a research tradition of more than half a century long has demonstrated the effect of SC on language.

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The emergence of communicative competence models of language (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980) marked a shift from the view of language and language learning as a mastery of linguistic forms to functional and social use. Since then, the ability to communicate has been considered to be a key component of language proficiency. Consequently, available linguistic resources to perform language functions (pragma linguistic elements) and contextual resources where linguistics functions are implemented (sociopragmatic elements) found their ways into pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2011).

As a component of pragmatic competence, politeness is considered to be a yardstick against which socially appropriate behaviors are analyzed. Politeness, which has been variously defined over forty years (Lakoff, 1975; Urbanová & Oakland, 2002; Yule, 1996), is actually conceptualized into a theory which has Speech Act Theory and the Grice's Cooperative Principle in its background (Watts & Mesthrie, 2003). There are some politeness markers (Holmes, 2000; Watts, 2003), and PSs (Brown & Levinson, 1987) which are linguistic realization for the demonstration of politeness in language.

Research in pragmatics has identified that learners of a language are different from the native speakers of a language (Bardovi-Harling, 2001). However, the pragmatic features of L_1 are transferable to L_2 (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 2000; Kasper, 1992), which lead to the development of a kind of interlanguage pragmatic competence (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Politeness, like implicatures, speech acts, and pragmatic routines, is a key component of pragmatic knowledge (Yamashita, 2008) which can be transferable from L_1 to L_2.

Although many linguistic, paralinguistic, and metalinguistic features have been extensively studied in light of SC, it is left untouched whether L_1 and L_2 use of politeness strategies (PSs) could be predicted by SCFs. In response to this shortcoming, the present study had a twofold purpose; to investigate what PSs Iranian learners of English language use in their L_1 and L_2, and to determine if SCFs could predict PSs use in L_1 and L_2.

Literature review

Bernstein's Theory of Sociology of Education

What we know as Bernstein's theory of sociology of education is actually the by-product of several conceptualizations through decades. The cornerstones of the theory were set by the successive presentation of 'public and formal languages (Bernstein, 1958), 'language codes theory (Bernstein, 1962a, 1962b), 'positional and person-oriented families' (1972), 'restricted and elaborated language codes' (Bernstein, 1973a), 'classification and framing' (Bernstein 1973b, 1975, 1977), 'horizontal and vertical discourses' (Bernstein, 1999), and 'pedagogic identities (Bernstein, 2000). 'Public and formal languages', 'Restricted and elaborated language codes', and 'Horizontal and vertical discourses' are three dichotomies which share more or less the same features. On one side of the three dichotomies, there are public, restricted, and horizontal languages, codes, or discourses which are syntactically poor, context-dependent, and typical of lower classes of the society. On the other side, there are formal, elaborated and vertical languages, codes, or discourses which are typical of higher classes of the society and are suitable for educational attainment.

'Positional and person-oriented families' (Bernstein, 1972), and 'classification and framing' (Bernstein, 1977) were presented to classify familial and educational systems. In positional families, children's roles are subordinate to their parents and parents control every communication. On the other hand, children have the right to dominate any communication in person-oriented families. By the same token, children who attend educational systems with strong classification and framing are subordinate to their teachers and have to follow them in any kind of educational decisions. On the contrary, weak classification and framing let students have freedom of speech and action and have

control on the educational system. Children from lower SCs and positional families usually are preys to strong classification and framing; however, those from person-oriented families and higher classes do not accept such a dominating system and seek for freer situations to have their own independence. In close association with his declarations on family and educational system types, Bernstein (2000) with the presentation of 'pedagogic identities', classified four identity types that react differently against social events.

Many issues have supported Bernstein's theory, including home environment issues such as parental attention (Tomasello & Todd, 1983), directiveness toward children (Hoff, 2003; Lawrence & Shipley, 1996), and amount of language input exposed to children (Bornstein, Haynes & Painter, 1998). Some other issues studied from a class specific perspective are syntactic complexity (Hoff-Ginsberg, 1997), vocabulary competence (Walker, Greenwood, Hart & Carta, 1994), and vocabulary creativity (Hoff-Ginsberg, 1998), phonological and morphological awareness (Shankweiler, Lundquist, Dreyer & Dickinson, 1996), literary achievement (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman & Hemphill, 1991), and language delay (Peers, Lioyd, & Foster, 2000).

Among Iranian studies of the type, the earliest one investigated T-unit length and the mean number of T-units (Allafchi, 1998), and a later one explored L_1 language proficiency, and L_1 and L_2 writings of learners in relation with SC (Hosseini, 2003). In the most recent studies, the frequency of grammatical categories in relation with SC has been under scrutiny (Aliakbari, MansouriNejad, and Qaracholloo, 2010; Aliakbari et al. (2013); Aliakbari, Qaracholloo, & MansouriNejad, 2014; Qaracholloo, 2015).

Politeness theory

As definitions for politeness, Lakoff (1975) views it as ways to reduce communicative friction (Lakoff, 1975), and Yule (1996) defines it as a fixed social behaviour within a context which includes being generous and sympathetic to others. More recently, Urbanová and Oakland (2002) described politeness as the ability to show respect, and goodwill. In contrast to previous definitions, the importance of politeness in developing successful communication is quite obvious.

Politeness is an evolutionary area of pragmatics with constant re-conceptualization of core issues and principles. There is a distinction between traditional approach represented by Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987), and a postmodern approach represented by scholars such as Mills (2011), Watts (2003), and Haugh (2005, 2007). More specifically, there are four main perspectives into politeness theory which are 1) social norms defined by lay persons' way of behavior, 2) conversational maxims consisting of Politeness Principle and Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975), 3) the concept of face or Face Management Principle (Brown and Levinson, 1987), and 4) impoliteness models addressing the problems with the concept of face (Bousfield, 2008).

In order to have successful interactions in daily or professional matters, interlocutors have to maintain each other's' face. Brown & Levinson (1987) stated that face is a universal concept that is valued in all cultures but with some variations. As asserted by Ho (1976), face is associated with social norms, social status, prestige, and authority. People in a culture or even a subculture are different in their authority, social status, and prestige; consequently, their faces could be threatened differently. Brown and Levinson (1987) believed that there are four types of threats to face, namely, 1) threats to the hearer's negative face which include face threatening acts (FTAs) such as requests, orders, suggestions, and advices, 2) threats to the hearer's positive face including criticisms, disapproval, and complaint, 3) threats to the speaker's negative face manifested in acts such as acceptance of apology and offers, and expressing thanks, and finally, 4) threats to the speaker's positive face including acts like apologies, acceptance of a compliment, and self-contradicting.

Politeness is reflected in some linguistic realizations called politeness markers and strategies. Crystal and Davy (1975), Edmondson(1977), Houseand Kasper (1981), Brownand Levinson (1987) and Holmes (2000) are among the scholars who have proposed different taxonomies for politeness markers and strategies. The most comprehensive taxonomy of which is that of House and Kasper (1981), who classify markers into 11 categories. Brown and Levinson's PSs (1987) are also widely accepted and applied in the research on politeness (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Marquez Reiter, 2000; Ogiermann, 2009a).

Politeness and FTAs

Politeness theory has FTAs as its basis. Request, complaint, and disagreement stand at the core of politeness theory because they can be really threatening to the hearer if not appropriately slackened concerning the situation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Request is generally considered a positive FTA since the speaker wants to create a close bond with the hearer; however, complaint and disagreement are known as negative FTAs which seek avoidance and separation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Request as the most common FTA in cross-cultural studies (Ogiermann**,** 2009b) can be expressed in various levels of directness (Ogiermann, 2012; Schauer, 2009). However, the indirect form of request which is furnished with politeness is preferred over the direct one in first or formal confrontations (Schauer, 2009).

Complaint is another FTA which involves censure to a hearer on an act (Trosborg, 1995). Olshtain and Wienbach (1993) stated 4 preconditions for a complaint to happen: First, some socially unacceptable act must be committed by the hearer; second, the act must be considered unfavorable by the speaker; third, the linguistic expression used by the speaker must be a censure to be relevant to that act; and finally, the speaker must have the right to ask for redress because he thinks the unacceptable act would weaken the communicative link between the interlocutors.

The other type of FTA, disagreement can reinforce the cooperative bond between the interlocutors if appropriately softened by some PSs (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Kakavá, 2002). Not only is disagreement necessary in some interactions such as problem-solving and decision-making, but it can also function as a preferred or disprefered speech act with regard to the context of situation (Angouri & Locher, 2012). Hence, disagreement can be labeled as a multifunctional act which could be used for various interactional aims.

Concurrent Study of Social Class, Politeness, and FTAs

Although it has been extensively asserted that social class plays a crucial role in language usage, and politeness having speech acts theory as its background is considered to be a main component of communicative language competence, few studies integrating social status, PSs, and FTAs have been found. Previous studies have approved that a higher social status is associated with more indirect and less confronting PSs. Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) found that speakers of lower social status used less confronting strategies than equal or higher status speakers. In a more recent study, Srinarawat (1999) found that education as a SC factor was related to indirectness as a PS. That is to say, the speakers who had a higher educational level used more indirect strategy for communication. Rees-Miller (2000) studied professors and students for their choice of PSs in disagreement and found that professors who had higher statuses used more inclusive and positive strategies than the students. Finally, Wongwarangkul (2000) found that L_1 SCFs could influence the frequency of PSs for request.

Statement of the Problem

Although many linguistic, paralinguistic, and metalinguistic features have been extensively studied in light of SC, only few studies have been devoted to a concurrent study of SCFs and PSs, and no study has been conducted in Iranian context in this regard. By the same token, although FTAs are numerously addressed in the literature on speech acts in general and politeness theory in particular, they are rarely inquired into from a SC perspective. Similarly, while request, complaint, and disagreement as three main FTAs stand at the core of politeness theory, no study has examined their reflection across SCs. More importantly, none of the available studies on politeness from a social perspective has included as many social driving forces as possible. Clearly speaking, the few studies found have taken into account only one SCF like education into consideration and have ignored the other SCFs. In response to these shortcomings, a survey analysis was conducted to investigate PSs use in light of the most common SCFs. The study aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What L_1 and L_2 PSs do Iranian English learners use in the FTAs request, complaint, and disagreement?
2. Are SCFs significant predictors of L_1 and L_2 PSs use by Iranian English learners in the FTAs request, complaint, and disagreement?

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were selected from among nearly 640 learners of English at Shokouh Language school, Bojnord, Iran. In order to select participants who were proficient enough to take politeness tests, only those learners (233) who were attending *American English File 3 and 4* were targeted to sampling. It was assumed that higher level English learners could successfully take politeness tests since they have already mastered enough linguistic elements to demonstrate their own pragmatic competence. Due to the fact that the placement of English learners is sometimes based on their age, gender or financial gains of the language institutes, and not their proficiency levels, Oxford Placement Test (Version 1.1) including three parts was administered to the subjects and 37 test takers whose scores were two or more standard deviations above the mean were selected. Since family (Bernstein, 1972) and educational system (Bernstein, 1977) are two driving motors of social class, only those learners who were living with their families and were attending local schools were considered as appropriate for the study. Four other learners who were living far from their families and were more connected with the society and college environment than their families were excluded, and finally 33 (21 females, and 12 males) whose ages ranged from 15 to 18 were selected.

Instruments

The Social Class Questionnaire

The SC questionnaire developed by Aliakbari, et al. (2013) was used to gather SC data. The questionnaire consists of 18 items designed based on the most common SCFs through factor analysis. It includes the six SCFs 1) life style, 2) travel, 3) parental education, 4) properties, 5) paternal job/income, and 6) accommodation which are synthetized into 1) economical, 2) behavioral, and 3) educational SCFs as general categories. For the sake of the present study, the general categories are used for data analysis. This questionnaire was used to gather data on SC because it is the most comprehensive one designed according to the accepted paradigms of the Iranian society which includes six main SCFs. Similarly, it has been validated through factor analysis and expert judgment which efficiently unravels the hidden factors behind SC.

Discourse Completion Test

Two DCTs were designed to measure the participants' politeness strategy preferences in English and Persian. The DCTs were modeled after Srisuruk (2011), though in some different situations. The Persian DCT was a translation of the English one, with the same scenarios and FTAs. Each DCT comprised of 9 scenarios for the three FTAs of request (3 scenarios), complaint (3 scenarios), and disagreement (3 scenarios). In writing the scenarios, the participants' positions, and daily lives, the social distance between them, and the settings were taken into consideration. The people whom the participants had to deal with within the scenarios were of lower, equal, and higher statuses. In order to make sure that there were no linguistic, semantic, and situation ambiguities, the DCTs were piloted with 10 participants of the same language proficiency and age (see Table 1).

Table 1
DCTs Information

Scenarios	Settings	Social status of the participant	People to deal with	FTAs
1	School	Lower	Teacher	Request
2	Home	Higher	Brother	Request
3	school or home	Equal status	Friend	Request
1	Restaurant	Higher	Waiter	Complaint
2	Barbershop	Higher	Hairstylist	Complaint
3	school or home	Equal status	Friend	Complaint
1	Home	Lower	Father	Disagreement
2	Neighborhood/home	Higher	Brother	Disagreement
3	School	Lower	Teacher	Disagreement

Raters

Since two DCTs (Persian and English) were used to gather data, two types of raters were recruited. As for the Persian DCT, native speakers of Persian familiar with the behavioral norms of the scenarios and politeness theory were judged to be appropriate. Two native speakers of Persian with MA degrees in the Persian language and literature were instructed on politeness theory, PSs, and FTAs in order to make them more qualified for data analysis. They were also taught Brown and Levinson's (1987) classification of PSs. They had enough English proficiency to understand Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy without any Persian translation.

As for the rating, since no native English speaker was available, two PhD students majoring in applied linguistics were asked to rate the English DCTs. They had the required theoretical and practical qualifications to rate the DCTs in a native-like manner. Firstly, they have been studying English at school, language institutes and universities for more than 15 years, and therefore, are advanced English speakers and writers. Secondly, they have had online communication with many English native speakers of lower, equal and higher statuses and have efficiently acquired the logistics of polite speech with interlocutors of different statuses. Thirdly, they have been teaching English for 8 years (on average). Finally, they have taken two discourse analysis and pragmatics courses and two testing courses as students and several writing courses as students and teachers to be qualified enough for rating purposes. Although they had passed two pragmatics courses, they received further instructions on politeness theory, PSs, and FTAs to refresh their knowledge in this regard. Just like the Persian raters, they deeply studied Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of PSs which was used as the analytical framework of the study.

Procedure

The three instruments were administered in two sessions. In the first session (November 22, 2017), the SC questionnaire and the English DCT were administered to the participants. The participants were assured that the data would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purposes. They were not asked for their personal information, except age and gender, to make them answer the questionnaire and the DCT without any bias. There was no time limit for answering the questionnaire and the DCT. However, they were asked to answer the DCTs using natural language befitting the situations. They were also asked to write their answers as clear and concise as possible; this would make the analysis of the DCTs very easy and valid.

The Persian DCT was administered to the participants with a time interval of 10 days to make sure that the answers to the second DCT would not be directly influenced by the first administration. Since the second DCT included exactly the same scenarios, their simultaneous administration could result in similar reactions to the scenarios. Another reason for the delayed administration of the English DCT was that a simultaneous administration of the three instruments could be very time-consuming and exhausting.

Analytical framework

Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of PSs was used to analyze the data. Their taxonomy is made up of five categories of strategies including 'bald on record' (BR), 'positive politeness' (PP), 'negative politeness' (NP), 'off-record' (OR), and 'no FTA' (NFTA) strategies. BR as the clearest way of speaking is used when the speaker ignores the interlocutor's face and says what he wants. PP is used to get close to the hearer and to increase intimacy in communication. On the contrary, NP is an avoidance strategy used for formality and self-effacement. OR strategy is used to be indirect, vague, and general. Finally, NFTA is used when the speaker says nothing to offend the hearer. PP, NP, and OR strategies are demonstrated in some linguistic realizations. Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy was used as the analytical framework because social distance and status which are focused on in this study are also reflected in their taxonomy. Additionally, it is based on speech act theory and FTA which are also the focus of the present study.

Data Analysis

As common in all studies of the type, some of the questionnaires and DCTs were not appropriately and completely answered which were excluded from the study. The data collected from 29 participants were considered valid to be analyzed. The questionnaires were analyzed based on Aliakbari, et al. (2013) instructions. As for the DCTs, first, the scenarios were analyzed for the five types of PSs and their linguistic realizations. In order to answer the first research question, the number of PSs and their linguistic realization were computed for each FTA and the total FTAs. A series of regression analyses were run to see if SCFs were significant predictors of L1 and L2 PSs use.

Results

Social Class Results

Table 2 shows the descriptive data for the general SCFs of the SC questionnaire. The range of scores and SDs show that the participants were quite different in each SCF. These differences indicate that people of different SCs had participated in the study.

Table 2
The Results of SC Questionnaire

General categories	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Sum	Mean	SD
Behavioral	9	27	18	589	20.31	6.35
Educational	2	14	12	256	8.82	3.87
Economical	7	22	25	483	16.65	4.93

Descriptive Results of Politeness Strategies

There were a total of 522 responses (261 for each language) to the nine scenarios. A total of 311 Politeness Strategies were used by the participants in L_1. The participants used 50 cases of double strategies for answering the scenarios in L_1. The total number of L_2 PSs equaled 290 which were lower than that of L_1. In both L_1 and L_2, NP ($L_1 = 188$, $L_2 = 176$) and NFTA ($L_1 = 6$, $L_2 = 4$) had the highest and the lowest frequencies respectively. The number of PP ($L_1 = 57$, $L_2 = 52$) and OR (51 for both L_1 and L_2) were close to each other. Nine responses in L_1 and 7 responses in L_2 included no FTA. It was found that the highest numbers of PP, NP, OR, BR, and NFTA strategies were respectively for complaint, request, disagreement, complaint, and complaint (see Table 3).

Table 3
PSs and linguistic realizations

		Total		Request		Complaint		Disagreement	
Strategies	**Linguistic realizations**	**L_1**	**L_2**	**L_1**	**L_2**	**L_1**	**L_2**	**L_1**	L_2
PP		57	52	7	5	17	26	33	21
	Give/ask for reasons	10	11	0	0	4	7	6	4
	Include speaker and hearer in the activity	7	6	0	0	3	4	4	2
	Be optimistic	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	0
	Offer and promise	4	3	1	2	0	0	3	1
	Assert knowledge of hearer's wants	3	2	1	1	0	0	2	1
	Joke	2	3	1	0	1	3	0	0
	Assert common ground	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
	Avoid disagreement	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	2
	Seek agreement	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
	Use in-group identity markers	3	4	0	0	0	0	3	4
	Intensify interest	9	8	1	0	4	5	4	3
	Exaggerate approval	4	4	0	0	3	4	1	0
	Notice hearer's wants	7	3	3	2	0	0	4	1
NP		188	176	112	108	61	55	15	13
	State the imposition as a general role	14	8	12	6	0	0	2	2
	Impersonalize	12	7	9	7	0	0	3	0
	Minimize imposition	11	8	0	0	11	8	0	0
	Apologize	16	19	8	12	6	7	2	0
	Please command	42	38	25	21	13	11	4	5
	Question	16	13	11	7	4	7	1	2
	Hedge	20	13	13	7	7	5	0	1
	Be conventionally indirect	57	58	34	38	20	17	3	3
OR		9	7	5	3	1	2	3	2
	Overgeneralize	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
	Be vague	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Be ironic	2	3	1	1	0	1	1	1
	Give hints	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
BR		51	51	19	19	3	4	29	28
NFTA		6	4	0	0	4	2	2	2
Total		311	290	143	135	86	89	82	66

It was found that the participants had used 13 linguistic realizations of PP; 8 linguistic realizations of NP and 4 linguistic realizations of OR strategies. As for the linguistic realizations, 'give/ask for reasons' and 'intensify interest' were the most common for PP. 'Be conventionally indirect' and 'please command' were the most common NP linguistic realizations. Finally, the most common realization for OR was by 'give hints' (see Table 3).

Majority of the answers to the scenarios were short and included only one PS; however, some of the answers included double PSs. The following are some examples of L_1 and L_2 answers to the 9 scenarios along with the PSs and linguistic realizations. The L_1 answers have been translated into English.

Request scenarios:

A:

1) Sorry, do you have enough time to help me in my lessons (L_1, NP, apologize).
2) Would you please help me with some difficulties I have in my lessons (L_2, NP, be conventionally indirect).

B:

1) I am studying now. If possible call later to talk (L_1, PP, give reasons).
2) Dear Hamid, we can talk later, I will call you as soon as I finish my study (L_2, double PP strategies, include speaker and hearer in the speech, offer and promise).

C:

1) Please turn it off, I can't sleep (L_1, NP, please command).
2) I want to sleep, please turn down or use your headphone (L_2, NP, please command).

Complaint scenarios:

A:

1) So sorry, this food is really salty. Please tell the cook to use less salt (L_1, NP, apologize, please command).
2) It would be really tasty if it were less salty (L_2, NP, minimize imposition).

B:

1) I don't like this style, no problem, it happens (L_1, NP, minimize imposition).
2) This hairstyle is really nice, but I can't go out with it (L_2, PP, intensify interest).

C:

1) I really like that book, please look for it or buy another one (L_1, NP, please command).
2) We must look after what we borrow from others, otherwise, they will not lend us again (L_2, double PSs, PP, include speaker and hearer in the speech; NP, state the imposition as a general rule).

Disagreement scenarios:

A:

1) If I study what you prefer, I will lose my interest in it and maybe will leave college (L_1, PP, give reasons)
2) I know that you wish success with my education, but the key to success is interest (L_2, NP, state the imposition as a general rule).

B:

1) Why do you behave like this in the neighborhood? It is quite abnormal (L_1, NP, question).
2) For living in a neighborhood, some rules must be followed and we are not an exception (L_2, NP, state the imposition as a general rule).

C:

1) Dear teacher, I was really active in class and outside, I hope you add to my score for this (L_1, PP, be optimistic).
2) I think this score is lower than what I expected because I was really hard-working. Please give me a higher score (L_2, PP, give reasons).

4.3. Social Class Factors as Predictors of Politeness Strategies

In L_2 PSs, the five regressions models showed significant findings for all the PSs regardless of the kind of FTA, namely, PP ($F = 13.9$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), NP ($F = 62.06$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), OR ($F = 5.23$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), BR ($F = 12.19$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), and NFTA ($F = 5.91$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$). Similarly, the regression models of PP for complaint ($F = 8.02$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), PP for disagreement ($F = 4.92$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), NP for request ($F = 45.49$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), NP for complaint ($F = 16.74$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), OR for request ($F = 3.09$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$), OR for complaint ($F = 7.50$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), BR for request ($F = 7.14$, $df = 3$. $P < .01$) and BR for disagreement ($F = 4.18$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$) indicated significant findings (see Table 4).

It was found that economical SCF were significant predictors of no PSs. Behavioral SCFs significantly predicted OR ($T = 3.06$, $p < .01$), and OR for complaint ($T = 4.44$, $p < .01$). Finally, educational SCFs were significant predictors of 7 groups of PSs; PP ($T = 3.09$, $p < .01$), NP ($T = 5.32$, $p < .01$), NP for request ($T = 5.10$, $p < .01$), OR ($T = 2.69$, $p < .05$). OR for request ($T = 2.16$, $p < .05$), BR ($T = 2.84$, $p < .01$), and BR for request ($T = 2.70$, $p < .05$) (see Table 4).

As for the L_1 PSs_1, four out of the five regressions models showed significant findings regardless of the kind of FTA, namely, PP ($F = 10.4$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), NP ($F = 40.28$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), OR ($F = 3.85$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$), and BR ($F = 12.37$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$). In the same manner, the regression models of PP for complaint ($F = 5.20$, $df = 3$, $P < .01$), PP for disagreement ($F = 8.18$, $df = 3$, $p < = .01$), NP for request ($F = 23.94$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), NP for complaint ($F = 13.62$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), OR for complaint ($F = 5.17$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$), BR for request ($F = 4.23$, $df = 3$. $P < .05$) and BR for disagreement ($F = 6.06$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$) indicated significant findings.

The comparison of regression models in L_1 and L_2 showed that except for OR for request and NFTA models which indicated significant findings for L_2 PSs, similar results were found for all other regression models. Another similar finding was that just like that of L_2 PSs, economical SCFs were significant predictors of no PSs. Similarly, behavioral SCFs were only significant predictors of two PSs which were PP for disagreement ($T = 2.20$, $p < .05$), and OR for complaint ($T = 3.70$, $p < .01$). However, behavioral SCFs were significant predictors of OR and OR for complaint in L_1, but PP for disagreement and OR for complaint in L_2.

Table 4: Regression results for L_2 PSs

	Model						Constant			Economical			Behavioral			Educational		
	R	R^2	AR^2	Df	F	Sig,	B	T	Sig.	B	Beta	T	Sig.	B	Beta	T	Sig.	B	Beta	T	Sig.
PP	.79	.62	.58	3	13.9	.000**	-.04	-.05	.95	-.01	-.05	-.17	.86	-.09	-.36	-1.80	.08	.45	1.09	3.09	.005**
PPR	.43	.19	.09	3	1.95	.14	.06	.20	.84	-.04	-.59	-1.28	.21	.01	.16	.55	.58	.07	.77	1.49	.14
PPC	.70	.49	.43	3	8.02	.001**	-.13	-.22	.82	.03	.18	.50	.61	-.05	-.03	-.41	.09	.18	.80	1.94	.06
PPD	.60	.37	.29	3	4.92	.008**	.02	.03	.96	-.00	-.03	-.07	.94	-.04	-.32	-1.23	.23	.18	.85	1.86	.07
NP	.93	.88	.86	3	62.06	.000**	-.01	-.01	.99	.00	.01	.08	.93	-.09	-.17	-1.57	.12	.87	1,06	5.32	.000**
NPR	.92	.84	.82	3	45.49	.000**	.51	.72	.47	-.04	-.10	-.52	.60	-.05	-.18	-1.44	.16	056	1.15	5.10	.000**
NPC	.81	.66	.62	3	16.74	.000**	-.78	-1.14	.26	.05	.19	.65	.51	.00	.01	.07	.94	.20	.62	1.85	.07
NPD	.46	.21	.12	3	2.27	.10	.26	.54	.58	.00	.00	.00	.99	-.03	-.40	-1.40	.17	.10	.71	1.38	.17
OR	.62	.38	.31	3	5.23	.008**	.50	1.33	.19	-.02	-.23	-.57	.57	-.06	-,78	-3.06	.005**	.16	1.22	2.69	.013*
ORR	.52	.27	.18	3	3.09	.04*	.15	.60	.54	-.01	-.28	-.64	.52	-.02	-.50	-1.82	.08	.08	1.06	2.16	.04*
ORC	.68	.47	.41	3	7.50	.001**	.23	1.33	.19	.03	.62	1.66	.10	-.04	-1.05	-4.44	.000**	.01	.27	.65	.52
ORD	.39	.15	.05	3	1.53	.23	.12	.53	.59	-.03	-.74	-1.55	.13	.00	.01	.36	.72	.05	.86	1.61	.11
BR	.77	.59	.54	3	12.19	.000**	-.13	-.13	.89	-.02	-.07	-.22	.82	-.07	-.29	-1.41	.17	.42	.1.05	2.84	.009**
BRR	.67	.46	.39	3	7.14	.001**	-.01	-.02	.97	-.09	-.52	-1.37	.18	-.00	-.02	-.08	.93	.25	1.14	2.70	.012*
BRC	.48	.23	.14	3	2.57	.07	-.29	-.81	.42	.07	.86	1.91	.06	-.03	-.45	-1.57	.12	-.02	-.21	-.43	.67
BRD	.57	.33	.25	3	4.18	.016*	.18	.25	.80	-.01	-.05	-.12	.90	-.03	-.26	-.98	.33	.19	.81	1.72	.09
NFTA	.64	.41	.34	3	5.91	.003**	.66	2.63	.014*	-.01	-.15	-.37	.70	.00	.10	.40	.69	-.05	.58	-1.31	.20
NFTR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NFTC	.44	.19	.10	3	2.07	.12	.15	.71	.48	.01	.25	.55	.58	.00	.20	.69	.49	-.05	-.81	-1.57	.12
NFTD	.48	.23	.14	3	2.60	.07	.51	2.41	.02*	-.02	-.46	-1.02	.31	-.00	-.06	-.24	.81	.00	.02	.05	.95

Notes: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$

PPR = positive politeness for request; PPC = positive politeness for complaint; PPD = positive politeness for disagreement; NPR = negative politeness for request; NPC = negative politeness for complaint; NPD = negative politeness for disagreement; ORR = off record for request ORC = off record for complaint; ORD = off record for disagreement; BRR = bald on record for request; BRC = bald on record for complaint; BRD = bald on record for disagreement; NFTR = no FTA for request; NFTC = no FTA for complaint; NFTD = no FTA for disagreement

5.

Table 5: Regression results for L1 PSs

	Model						Constant			Economical			Behavioral			Educational			
	R	R^2	A R^2	Df	F	Sig,	B	T	Sig.	B	Beta	T	Sig.	B	Beta	T	Sig.	B	Beta	T	Sig.
PP	.74	.55	.50	3	10.46	.000**	.89	.92	.36	-.03	-.12	-.35	.72	-.12	-.50	-2.30	.03	.47	1.18	3.08	.005**
PPR	.10	.01	-.10	3	.09	.96	.16	.34	.73	-.01	-.11	-.21	.82	.01	.14	.45	.65	.00	.02	.04	.96
PPC	.62	.38	.31	3	5.20	.008**	.42	.92	.36	-.03	-.26	-.66	.51	-.04	-.46	-1.799	.08	.18	1.15	2.54	.018*
PPD	.70	.49	.43	3	8.18	.001**	.30	.41	.68	.00	.03	.08	.93	-.08	-.51	-2.20	.03*	.28	1	2.44	.02*
NP	.91	.82	.80	3	40.28	.000**	1.17	.88	.38	-.18	-.27	-1.28	.21	-.05	-.09	-.70	.49	1.07	1.23	5.13	.000**
NPR	.86	.74	.71	3	23.94	.000**	.74	.76	.44	-.09	-.22	-.86	.39	-.02	-.09	-.54	.59	.59	1.13	3.86	.001**
NPC	.78	.62	.57	3	13.62	.000**	-.42	-.50	.62	.01	.03	.10	.91	-.01	-.06	-.32	.74	.30	.80	2.26	.03*
NPD	.35	.12	.02	3	1.22	.32	.84	1.30	.20	-.10	-.70	-1.45	.15	-.00	-.05	-.18	.85	.17	.92	1.70	.10
OR	.56	.31	.23	3	3.85	.02*	.19	.41	.68	-.04	-.33	-.76	.44	-.03	-.37	-1.38	.17	.17	1.09	2.29	.03*
ORR	.50	.25	.16	3	2.80	.06	-.00	-.02	.97	-.00	-.05	-.11	.90	-.02	-.35	-1.25	.22	.07	.78	1.55	.13
ORC	.61	.38	.30	3	5.17	.006**	.16	1.19	.24	.00	.12	.29	.76	-.02	-.95	-3.70	.001**	.04	.84	1.86	.07
ORD	.41	.17	.07	3	1.73	.18	.04	.15	.88	-.04	-.65	-1.38	.18	.01	.27	.93	.35	.05	.66	1.25	.22
BR	.77	.59	.54	3	12.37	.000**	.11	.11	.90	-.10	-.31	-.96	.34	-.06	-.23	-1.13	.26	.53	1.23	3.34	.003**
BRR	.58	.33	.25	3	4.23	.015*	-.37	-.53	.59	-.02	-.13	-.32	.74	.00	.00	.00	.99	.16	.70	1.49	.14
BRC	.49	.24	.15	3	2.67	.06	.07	.30	.76	.00	.08	.18	.85	-.02	-.57	-2.02	.053	.05	.72	1.43	.16
BRD	.64	.42	.36	3	6.06	.003**	.41	.55	.58	-.08	-.42	-1.07	.29	-.03	-.21	-.85	.40	.31	1.17	2.66	.013*
NFTA	.20	.04	-.07	3	.35	.78	.57	1.50	.14	-.02	-.26	-.52	.60	-.01	-.24	-.75	.45	.03	.35	.62	.54
NFTR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NFTC	.22	.05	-.06	3	.44	.72	.35	2.09	.38	.00	.02	.03	.97	-.02	-.35	-1.10	.27	.01	.20	.36	.71
NFTD	.19	.03	-.07	3	.31	.81	.21	.91	.36	-.02	-.44	-.87	.38	.00	.09	.28	.78	.01	.28	.49	.62

Notes: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$

PPR = positive politeness for request; PPC = positive politeness for complaint; PPD = positive politeness for disagreement; NPR = negative politeness for request; NPC = negative politeness for complaint; NPD = negative politeness for disagreement; ORR = off record for request ORC = off record for complaint; ORD = off record for disagreement; BRR = bald on record for request; BRC = bald on record for complaint; BRD = bald on record for disagreement; NFTR = no FTA for request; NFTC = no FTA for complaint; NFTD = no FTA for disagreement

Educational SCFs predicted two more L_1 PSs in contrast to L_2. The 9 groups of PSs predicted by educational SCFs were PP ($T = 3.08$, $p < .01$), PP for complaint ($T = 2.54$, $p < .05$), PP for disagreement ($T = 2.44$, $p < .05$), NP ($T = 5.13$, $p < .01$), NP for request ($T = 3.86$, $p < .01$), NP for complaint (2.26, $p < .05$), OR ($T = 2.29$, $p < .05$), BR ($T = 3.34$, $p < .01$), and BR for disagreement ($T = 2.66$, $p < .05$) (see Table 5). The PSs which were predicted by educational factors in L_1 and L_2 were PP, NP, NP for request, OR and BR.

Discussion

L_1 and L_2 PSs

The analysis of SC questionnaires showed that the range of scores was high for the three SCFs. This variety in SCFs among English learners who attend the same language institute in a small city is quite astonishing. This not only indicates that the concepts of SC clash and SCFs are disputable issues in Iranian context, but also language institutes are kept busy by people from various SC backgrounds. More obviously, learning English has turned into a primary educational aim among Iranian families regardless of their SC status.

It was found that the participants used 311 PSs in L_1 which was higher than the number of PSs in L_2 (290), but it was not a big gap between L_1 and L_2. This can be attributed to the participants' L_1 superiority over their L_2. More clearly, although the participants were selected from among the English learners with the highest level of English proficiency, their L_1 was more protruding to let them use more double PSs in a single scenario. This small difference could be regarded as natural because the most advanced level of L_2 is still lagging behind L_1.

As for the number of PSs on each FTA, in both L_1 and L_2, the number of PSs used for request and disagreement was the highest and the lowest respectively. Although the number of PSs on complaint was a little higher than those for disagreement, the number of PSs on request was nearly twice that of disagreement. This finding supports Ogiermann's (2009b) assertion that request is the most common FTA in cross-cultural studies. A comparison of L_1 and L_2 shows that the PSs on request and disagreement were a little higher for L_1, but L_2 had more PSs on complaint. This could be attributed to the cultural norms of Iranian society and Persian which prefer a more direct way of disagreeing without softening the FTA with linguistic realizations. Regardless of request as the most common FTA in politeness theory, the number of PSs on complaint was much higher than those on disagreement. It could be claimed that it is the acceptable norm of Persian to soften the threatening effect of complaint more than that of disagreement. This could also be due to the social distance of the interlocutors in the scenarios for complaint and disagreement. The interlocutors of the complaint scenarios were close friend, hairstylist, and waiter, and the interlocutors for disagreement were favorite teacher, younger brother, and father. Maybe, the informality and intimacy of the speech in disagreement scenario is the reason for using fewer PSs. On the contrary, there was no big difference between L_2 PSs on complaint and request, though, the interlocutors were different. It could be stated that L_2 complaint and disagreement are equally softened for their threatening effect regardless of the status of the interlocutors.

In both L_1 and L_2, the hierarchy of PSs was NP, PP, BR, OR, and NFTA with NP strategies as the most frequent PSs. The hierarchy of L_1 PSs on complaint was exactly the same as this. As for request, with the single displacement of PP with BR, the same hierarchy was yielded. These results are generally similar to Srisuruk's (2011) findings. It is conceivable to propose this hierarchy of PSs for their frequency as an acceptable universal norm with some trivial deviations. The main deviation of this hierarchy is in the frequency of PSs for disagreement where NP strategies are less frequent than PP and BR strategies, with OR and NFTA as the least frequent ones. It can be proclaimed that although each FTA calls for particular PSs to be less threatening, there is a general trend in the adoption of PSs which lead to some common all-inclusive classifications.

The three FTAs request, complaint, and disagreement were expressed through various distributions of each PS. It was found that the number of NP, OR strategies for request was the highest, while PP, and BR strategies were the most common for disagreement. Additionally, NFTA strategy had been mostly used for complaint. These findings support FTA and politeness theory that consider request as an approach FTA with the aim of creating a close bond between the interlocutors, and complaint and disagreement as avoidance FTAs with the purpose of creating a distance between the interlocutors (Olshtain & Weinbach (1987). One the one hand, the participants used more NP, and OR strategies on request which by nature seeks closeness and association to reduce its threatening effect. On the other hands, more PP and BR strategies were used on disagreement to reduce the social distance between the interlocutors. By the same token, majority of NFTAs strategies had been used on complaint which is also an avoidance FTA. It could be concluded that the distribution of PSs across FTAs is according to politeness theory.

The participants had used 13 PP, 8 NP, and 4 OR linguistic realizations; this range of realizations shows that they were highly familiar with the linguistic expressions suitable for the given pragmatic functions. The most common L_1 and L_2 PP linguistic realizations were 'give/ask for reasons'. 'intensify interest', and 'include speaker and hearer in the activity'. Similar to Srisuruk's (2011) findings, 'be conventionally indirect', and 'please command' were the most common NP linguistic realizations. Although the participants had applied various linguistic realizations, in both L_1 and L_2, their focus was on few realizations.

Social Class Factors as Predictors of L_1 and L_2 Politeness Strategies

Out of a total of 20 regression models for each language, 11 models in L_1 and 12 models in L_2 showed significant findings. This finding is in tune with the findings by Aliakbari, et al. (2013), Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), and Wongwarangkul (2000) who found that SC is generally correlated with language pattern and politeness. It could be asserted that SC has a great role in the formation of politeness competence in both L_1 and L_2 and people from higher SCs are more probable to use more PSs in their communication. Along with many other linguistic and metalinguistic features which are related to SC, pragmatic competence is also molded by social status.

Although it was found that SC is generally a significant predictor of PSs use, economical SCF had no role in this regard. Though income and occupation are among the most important SCFs, they have no contribution to the formation of pragmatic competence. Similar to this finding, Aliakbari, et al. (2013) had also found that economical SCF has nothing to do with language pattern. More

clearly, it could be proclaimed that every element which is categorized as SCF does not necessarily lead to language competence in general and pragmatic competence in particular.

Although economical SCF predicted no PS, behavioral SCF predicted L_1 use of PP for disagreement and OR for complaint, and L_2 use of OR and OR for complaint. A more revealing prediction by behavioral or life style SCF was expected because it is directly associated with the daily life of the participants. This small association between behavioral SCF and PSs can be attributed to those behavioral aspects which are reflected in the SC questionnaire. More clearly, the behavioral SCFs included in the questionnaire were health care, sanitary tools, and travel which are not directly connected with way of communication. More communicative behavioral aspects such as home environment discussions could be more revealing predictors of PSs use.

Finally, educational SCF predicted 9 L_1 PSs, and 7 L_2 PSs which reflects the highest contribution of SC to the prediction PSs. This finding is in accordance with Aliakbari, et al. (2013), Hoff (2003), Rees-Miller (2000), and Srinarawat's (1999) findings. The role of parents in the formation of pragmatic competence is more crucial than any other SCF because they inevitably provide their children with enough language input enriched with linguistic and pragmatic elements.

Conclusion

From the inquiry into Persian and English PSs, it was found that there were similarities between the two languages in the frequency of PSs on different FTAs. It was also concluded that although each FTA calls for particular PSs, there are general universal norms with the tendency toward NP and PP strategies more than other PSs. From the investigation of Persian and English PSs in light of SCFs, it could be concluded that SC can generally predict PSs use in the two languages and people from higher SCs tend to use more PSs. However, SCFs had various degrees of contribution to the variance of PSs use in the both languages. It was found that economical SCF was no predictor of PSs, behavioral SCF predicted a small variance of PSs use, and the highest degree of prediction was found to be due to educational SCF. The findings of the study were generally in tune with the studies found in the literature and Bernstein's theory of sociology of education was supported in this regard.

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[i] Abbreviations: SC = social class; SCF = social class factor; PS = politeness strategy; FTA = face threatening act; DCT = discourse completion test; PP = positive politeness; NP = negative politeness; OR = off record; BR = bald on record; NFTA = no face threatening act.