A Study into Politeness Strategies and Politeness Markers in Advertisements as Persuasive Tools

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Abstract *This study aimed to investigate the pragmatic function of politeness in a less-talked-about communicative act: advertising. Politeness theory being discussed by Leech (1983) and being analysed by the taxonomy of Brown and Levinson (1987), is known to be as one of the essential factors for a successful communication whose success is guaranteed by appropriate persuasive tools. The major focus of this study was to explore the politeness strategies adopted in English and Persian ads and finding their persuasive factors by comparing and contrasting them. To this end, a corpus of 100 Persian and English ads was collected. Their lines were first analysed to pinpoint the politeness strategy category and subcategory in both languages and then their frequencies were computed. Analysis of the results based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of politeness functions indicated that English ads made more use of Positive politeness strategies while in Persian ads indirect Off-record strategies were more favoured. Exploring the findings according to Nisbett's (2004) classification of Eastern and Western cultural system confirmed the collectivist in contrary to individualistic nature of culture in those countries respectively. Consequently, it was illustrated that the choices of psychological strategies made by advertisers to persuade customers were in line with their intended culture.*

Keywords: advertisement, Persian, English, culture, politeness strategies

1. Introduction

Advertisement is some sort of a directive speech act (Searle, 1970) and an impositive one (Leech, 1983), whose aim is to persuade and encourage people to buy products. Advertisers generally employ different language techniques to achieve this aim, one of which can be using linguistic politeness strategies. These strategies are used to foster rapport and maintain social equilibrium (Fraser & Nolen, 1981).

People who encounter polite linguistic elements which display respect or consideration for others are more willing to pay attention to that polite language. Therefore, since it is of critical importance for advertisers to attract readers` attention and to maintain social and emotional relationships with their customers, they are expected to employ politeness strategies with much care in their ads. Furthermore, based on the specific sets of politeness strategies being used in discourse, different cultures can be differentiated from one another and as Hughes (1984) pointed out one way of exploring the cultural notions is through analyzing newspapers or other media's advertisements. Since those working in advertising try to change the buying behavior of customers by persuading them to follow their leads, there is no shade of doubt that advertises in every culture and language adopt different persuasive strategies which have to be in line with social politeness strategies of that culture in order to cultivate success.

Lakoff (1975) holds the view that politeness has been developed to reduce friction in communication and Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, and Ogino (1986, p. 349) define it as "one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others` feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport". Moreover, Ide (1989, p. 225) views it as 'language usage associated with smooth communication'. All of

these definitions reveal the fact that politeness is an important factor in developing effective relationships with people, and any misuse of these strategies can hinder the effective communication, leading to individuals` dissatisfaction and indifference.

Granted the fact that different cultures utilize different linguistic strategies to be polite, it seems that delving into the nature of these differences can be of great interest and help to researchers and practitioners. Thus in this study, we aim to investigate different linguistic politeness strategies which are used in Persian and English ads to persuade people to buy different products.

2. Theoretical Background

Politeness as a linguistic phenomenon has directed the attention of researchers (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Geis, 1982; Lakoff, 1982; Scollon & Scollon, 2001) in exploring the different areas of theoretical and practical issues related to it. Having the Grice's Cooperative Principle and Speech Act Theory as its background (Watts & Mesthrie, 2003), politeness theory has turned to a cornerstone by which the socially correct and appropriate behavior can be analyzed. Due to its importance in characterizing the elements specific to polite discourse and behavior, many studies (e.g. Hardin, 2001; Matsumoto, 1989; Pishghadam, 2011; Schmidt, Shimura, Wang, & Jeong, 1995) related to politeness theory in pragmatic linguistics has opened the doors to familiarizing the audience with politeness strategies in different cultures.

In everyday interaction, a large extent of polite strategies is exchanged among people in order to maintain effective communication. As Johnstone (2008, p.145) observed, people in every culture can hire politeness markers to "use and interpret language appropriately in actual social interaction". The crucial point in every interaction then can be studied by the amount and type of politeness strategies used by speaker(s) and hearer(s) in order to construct appropriate interpersonal relationships (Woods, 2006).

In the field of pragmatic linguistics, proponents like Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983) attempted to provide definitions of politeness theory along with their specific rules. Leech's ideas, for instance, focused on the "goal-oriented speech situation in which *speaker* uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of *hearer*" (p.15). Criticizing Leech's (1983) politeness model as too abstract and theoretical and not a production model (cited in Watts & Mesthrie, 2003), Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed a politeness model which was built on social interaction and viewed the strategical choices of people in interactions to mirror the cross-cultural variability presenting in communication. In their theory which is widely known as the most comprehensive and influential model in pragmatic politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) believed to base their notion of 'face' on that of Goffman (1955). For them, the two types of desires which are attributed by one interactant to the other, that is, "the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face) and the desire to be approved of (positive face)" are the components which mainly compose the notion of face (cited in Johnstone, 2008, p.146).

In compliance with the idea that everyone tries to keep his face in the duration of social interaction as much as possible, it can be expected that all those involved in interactions try to reduce face-threatening acts (FTAs). Nevertheless, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model presupposed that whenever a person is forced to perform a FTA as an action which poses a threat to the addressee's positive or negative face, he would resort to some strategies that reduce or "redress" the coming threat. Woods (2006) reports a set of five "super-strategies" proposed by Brown and Levinson's (1987) model from which the speakers use to minimize the FTAs. These super-strategies range from the one which increases the risk of losing face (Bald on-record strategy) bringing about FTA without any redressive action to the one which decreases the risk factor (Avoidance strategy).

One crucial factor that makes Brown and Levinson's (1987) model as a reliable source for analyzing politeness strategies may be considered as its universality and the fact that almost all of our daily interactions are under their impact. Another significant point of this model is its emphasis on recognizing

the target cultures based on the three social variables that provoke FTAs in any interaction: the social distance between participants, their relative power, and the ranking of imposition in any specific culture. Analyzing culture in this model is facilitated by focusing on the amount of positive and negative strategies and weighing them against one another in each culture to find out in which one solidarity or imposition rule more. By a similar token, Scollon and Scollon (1981) pointed out that while in different cultures negative politeness determines the seriousness of the imposition, the positive one emphasizes the general nature of relationships among interactants.

Among different areas of research which have been conducted on politeness strategies, there exist many that focus on advertising on cross-cultural scales. Advertisement as one of the most accessible sources of written persuasive discourse has *'persuaded'* many researchers (e.g. Geis, 1982; Hardin, 2001; Lakoff, 1982; Lin, 2005; Schmidt, et al. 1995) to carry out studies with respect to the special culture and society of use. Print advertisements or commercials as verbal interactions are categorized as persuasive discourse. Lakoff (1982) as a pioneer in the field of pragmatic study of persuasive discourse (cited in Lin, 2005, p.77) defines persuasive discourse as "the non-reciprocal attempt or intention of one party to change the behavior, feelings, intentions, or viewpoint of another by communicative mans".

Persuasive discourse according to Reardon (1991) can be divided into three types, ranging namely interpersonal persuasion, organization persuasion, and most commonly-used one, mass media persuasion such as advertisement. In 1982 Lakoff explored the elements of persuasive discourse and pointed out that some successful examples of advertising contained violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle and Maxim of Manner.

Furthermore, Geis (1982) made a more comprehensive study on TV ads and concluded that apart from a set of special linguistic techniques, advertisers favor the indirect ways of claim-making for their products. Also, Pearson (1988) conducted a study to find out how speakers in church business meetings negotiate support for their opinions by making use of politeness strategies. He discovered that in such meetings ministers, who hold the first role, make more use of positive and negative politeness strategies in comparison to others resulting in their being more skilled, powerful and persuasive. Matsumoto (1989) attempted to emphasize the importance of Japanese culture in interpretation of politeness phenomenon, holding that the significance of social context should be highlighted in the politeness theories of non-western languages.

TV commercials also have been investigated by Schmidt et al. (1995) who had the aim of differentiating the realization of speech acts among cultures. In their study, they compared the commercials from the United States, Japan, the China, and South Korea and reported that consumer product ads in U.S. are more persuasive than the similar ones in the Asian countries in terms of frequency of suggestions to buy and the level of the related imperatives being used in them. In another study, Obeng (1997) studied politeness strategies utilized by some legal professionals in Akan and reported that these professionals hired some sort of politeness strategies like deferential modes of address and reference along with hedges and compliments with the aim of softening the "locution of up-coming face threatening acts and thereby render them polite and persuasive" (p.50).

Moreover, exploring the pragmatic devices that are often used in TV commercials, Hardin (2001) analyzed a corpus of 214 ads taken from three countries: Chile, Spain, and United States. Politeness strategies among the other pragmatic devices in her study were compared and contrasted in three countries based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model and the results depict interesting differences in the use of positive and negative politeness in those cultures.

Benkendorf, Prince, Rose, De Fina, and Hamilton (2001) conducted a study in terms of politeness strategies over some indirect speech of medical consultants. In their study they found out that in transferring their ideas to the patients, counselors try to soften the direct imposition of their views "by choosing more impersonal and indirect language" (p.205). Yet in another study, Daly, Holmes, Newton, and Stubbe (2003) paid attention to the ways in which one form of 'Expletive' was used in two face-

threatening acts of 'direct complaints' and 'refusals' by the workers in a factory team work. By analyzing the workers use of a certain form of expletive according to politeness theory, they observed that making use of specific expletive expresses the socio-pragmatic function of that word and shows belonging to a given community of practice.

In another study, Lin (2005) examined the realization of politeness strategies in Chinese sale talks by introducing a new data collection method called: Natural Data Elicitation Technique. As a result of this study, Lin (2005) concluded that salespersons make different use of politeness strategies and on top of them positive strategies which emphasizes the collectivist-oriented nature of Chinese culture. By analyzing the effects of *impoliteness* as an entertaining factor in a TV quiz show, Culpeper (2005) illustrated how impoliteness can increase the possibility of face-damage. In this study he argued how creative the nature of discourse is and how by analyzing prosody, valuable information about impoliteness can be gathered. Another study in the context of medicine was undertaken by Brown and Crawford (2009) in which they explained the importance of appropriate politeness markers in telephone conversations between health advisors and callers in need for medical advice. They reported that the medical advisors tried to minimize the imposition and increase rapport through using appropriate politeness markers.

Analyzing the impact of impoliteness on American TV news hosts' identity formation (Blitvich, 2009); discussing the effects of uncertainty reduction theory and politeness theory on creating face threat (Knobloch, Satterlee, & DiDomenico, 2010); comparison of the realization of politeness strategies in Iranian and English official letters (Pishghadam, 2011) are some of the recent studies in the field of politeness theory.

3. Purpose of the Study

Since there is no study done which has examined politeness strategies by Iranian advertisers, and one way to recognize the politeness strategies used in one culture is by contrasting them with those of another culture, the present study aims at comparing and contrasting the linguistic politeness strategies which are employed by Iranian and English advertisers in their print ads.

Therefore, this study is seeking to answer the following questions:

a. Are there any significant differences between the uses of politeness strategies in the Persian ads?
b. Are there any significant differences between the uses of politeness strategies in the English ads?
c. Are there any significant differences between the uses of politeness strategies in Persian and English ads?

4. Methodology

4.1. Corpus

The corpus of this study is a collection of 150 written English and Persian advertisements from which a sample of 100 was selected. Advertisements were collected from some of the most-read and popular magazines in each language on particular topics of lifestyle, consumer, fashion, or home.

The adverts were mostly full-page ones featuring consumer products, food, fitness and beauty services and also database contained some ads from the classified advertisement sections of the above mentioned magazines. The reason behind selecting these types of ads was connected with their being published repeatedly due to their high attraction and application which is a sign of their persuasive tool. The samples in both languages did not vary in length and were mostly consisted of 2 to 3 lines and had an average of 32 words.

Furthermore, the sample ads were intended to be highly representative of the types of advertising which are considered to be more persuasive and successful in each language. The rest of the corpus was thus

discarded. The English ads consisted of 50 written ones and the same number applied for the Persian database. We stopped adding more ads at time we got they are yielding similar information.

4.2. Procedure

The first step in analyzing the data in this study was to find out the politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). According to their model of politeness, five super-strategies exist that individuals may choose when attempting to conduct a FTA.

These strategies which reduce or increase the level of face-threatening acts include: 1) bald-on-record: FTA performed bald-on-record, in a direct and concise way without redressive action. e.g. imperative form without any redress: *'Wash your hands'*; 2) positive politeness: FTA performed with redressive action. Positive strategies are oriented towards positive face of the hearer. e.g. strategies seeking common ground or co-operation, such as in jokes or offers: *'Wash your hands, honey.* 3) negative politeness: FTA performed with redressive action that is strategies oriented towards negative face of the hearer. e.g. indirect formulation: *'Would you mind washing your hands?'* ; 4) off-record: FTA performed off-record, strategies that might allow the act to have more than one interpretation. They may consist of all types of hints, metaphors, tautologies, etc. `Gardening makes your hands dirty`; and 5) Avoidance: don't do the FTA.

To analyze the advertisement lines, every strategy was explored based on its categories. At first, five strategies were labeled as groups 1-5. The categories of each group represented the different kinds that the politeness strategies are recognized with. After that the lines of the ads were read and analyzed by both of the researchers to improve the reliability of the data and to ensure their persuasiveness as the aim of this study. The second step included analyzing every line to find out its group of strategies and subcategories. Every ad was carefully scrutinized and the highlighted subcategories were codified. The subcategories of the politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model along with one example from database are sorted as follows:

Category 1: Bald on record

A1: disagreement (criticism); "No one makes your hair stronger" (EA#35)
A2: suggestion/advice; e.g. "Dress like a goddess and gods will flock to you!" (EA#2)
A3: request
A4: warning; threatening; e.g. "Don't hide your body smell!" (PA#7)
A5: imperative form; e.g. "Go hi-polish! Get magnified shine!!" (EA#29)

Category 2: Positive Politeness

B1: show concern, interest, be optimistic; e.g. "Be a shade braver!" (EA#14)
B2: promise, guarantee, offer, give reasons; "We've got something for everyone!" (EA#31)
B3: solidarity/in-group talk
B4: compliment; e.g. "Have the hair that feels stronger...Because you're worth it!" (EA#8)
B5: joke, humor; e.g. "Do you know that there's a thin person inside any fat one?" (PA#23)
B6: exaggerate sympathy, approval; E.G "We want to protect your family and whole world from smoking" (PA#46)

Category 3: Negative Politeness

C1: question, hedges (lexical, syntactic, particles, prosody); e.g. "Tired of wispy, thin hair that never looks healthy?" (EA#40)

C2: show deference; e.g. "Everyone has a diamond these days, darling!" (EA#41)
C3: indirect strategies; E.G. "Nobody here is a stranger" (PA#9)
C4: apologize
C5: impersonalize the speaker and hearer. Avoid the pronouns *I* and *YOU*
C6: stating FTA as an instance of a general rule

Category 4: Off-record strategies→ indirect speech acts

D1: give hints→ give association clues, presuppose; e.g. "To be fit has been man's wish in all ages" (PA#8)
D2: contradictions, be ironic, metaphor, rhetorical questions; e.g. "When you march on like wind, you leave no room for chance" (PA#20)
D3: understate, overstate, use tautologies; e.g. "For the first time in the world, experience the good food without oil" (PA#27)
D4: be ambiguous, be vague, over generalize, be incomplete, use ellipsis; e.g. "Let the funky jewelry do the talking…" (EA#44)

Category 5: avoidance strategies

Note: PA (Persian ad), EA (English ad)

After coding the ads, the frequency of each politeness subcategory was displayed in tables and the total frequency for each group of strategies was calculated. Afterwards, the frequency of the politeness strategies used by English and Persian advertisements was compared. Next, in order to check the significance of frequencies in both sets of advertisements, the results of the tables were analyzed using a Chi Square test. And finally, the results were compared and contrasted with each other in order to explore the cultural differences for persuasion between the two cultures.

5. Results

As the results of Table 1 exhibit, almost the same number of strategies have been employed in both Persian and English ads (N=266, N=268), and Avoidance strategies were not employed by either groups. Moreover, the table shows that among Persian ads Off-record strategies (N=111) are the most frequently used ones while Positive politeness strategies (N=126) are employed more frequently by English ads.

Table 1. Frequency of Strategies Used in Persian and English Advertisements

Ads	Bald on	Positive	Negative	Off-record	Avoidance	Total
Persian	43	104	8	111	0	266
English	58	126	15	69	0	268

As it is illustrated in Table 2, there was a significant difference between the advertisement strategies used by Persian speakers (x^2= 110.692, p<.05). The table shows that both Off-record (N=111) and Positive politeness (N=104) strategies were utilized more often than expected (N=66.5). The results also revealed that Bold-on record (N=43) and Negative politeness (N=8) strategies were less than expected (N=66.5).

Off-record>Positive>Bold-on>Negative

Table 2. Results of the Chi Square Test for the Advertisement Strategies Used by Iranian Community

	Strategies	Observed N	Expected N	df	X²	Sig.
Persian	Bold on	43	66.5	3	110.692	.000
	Positive	104	66.5	3		
	Negative	8	66.5	3		
	Off record	111	66.5	3		

The results of the Chi Square test presented in Table 3 revealed a significant difference between the strategies used by the English community (x^2= 93.582, p<.05). Here, again both Off-record (N=69) and Positive politeness (N=126) strategies were utilized more often than expected (N=67), and Bold-on record (N=58) and Negative politeness (N=15) strategies were less than expected (N=66.5). In fact, the results show that unlike the Persian ads in which Off-record strategies were used more, in the English ads Positive politeness strategies were given more priority.

Positive>Off-record >Bold-on>Negative

Table 3. Results of the Chi Square Test for the Advertisement Strategies Used by English Community

	Strategies	Observed N	Expected N	df	X²	Sig.
English	Bold on	58	67	3	93.582	.000
	Positive	126	67	3		
	Negative	15	67	3		
	Off record	69	67	3		

According to Table 4, there is a significant difference between Persian and English ads with respect to Off-record strategies (x^2 =9.8, p<.05). The table shows Off-record strategies have been employed more often than expected (N=90) by Persian speakers (N=111). It implies that Iranians opt for these strategies more than the English in their ads. Moreover, considering Bold-on (x^2 =2.22, p>.05), Positive politeness (x^2 =2.1, p>.05), and Negative strategies (x^2 =2.13, p>.05) strategies, no significant differences were found between Iranian and English ads.

Table 4. Results of the Chi Square Test for All Strategies between Persian and English

	Strategies	Observed N	Expected N	df	X²	Sig.
Bold on	Persian	43	50.5	1	2.228	.136
	English	58	50.5	1		
Positive	Persian	126	115	1	2.104	.147
	English	104	115	1		
Negative	Persian	8	11.5	1	2.130	.144
	English	15	11.5	1		
Off re	Persian	111	90	1	9.800	.002
	English	69	90	1		

6. Discussion

This study aimed at first investigating the types of politesses strategies used in the Persian ads, second examining the types of politesse strategies employed in the English ads, and finally comparing and contrasting the linguistic politeness markers in Persian and English ads.

Regarding the first aim of the study, the results revealed that Iranian advertisers used Off-record and Positive politeness strategies more than Bold-on record and Negative strategies. Off-record strategies are indirect strategies, which mostly consist of giving hints, contradictions, overstating, understating, and being vague. Actually, while Off-record strategies invite the performance of FTA, they leave the actual interpretation of the act to the addressee. In other words, if a speaker employs an FTA but prefers to escape the responsibility of doing it, he can opt for an Off-record strategy and thereby makes the addressee responsible for interpreting it as a threat to face or not (Lin, 2005). The superior use of this type of strategy more than others by Persian advertises thus may refer to their unwillingness to impose their will on the addressees by leaving it up to them to interpret it.

Furthermore, as Brown and Levinson (1987) believe, Off-record strategies enjoy the most polite way of performing an FTA by communicating *indirectly* to the audience. Indirect FTAs such as Off-record are classified as imposing the least threat in politeness theory, and as a result are ranked as the most polite verbal acts. Considering that the advertisements serve the two-fold function of communicating with their customers and at the same time persuading them to buy the product, use of indirect strategies and on top of which Off-record ones, provides more credibility for ads. Face saving theory is mostly relevant to indirect advertising language and the most effective persuasion in advertising design and promotion according to Gass and Seiter (1999) happens through the use of least redressive features available in indirect strategies.

A closer look at these indirect strategies suggests the existence of what Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to as 'relational harmony' which emphasizes a collectivist nature of eastern culture (Nisbett, 2004) in which a person prefers to be identified in harmony with a group in his community rather than gaining absolute identification as an individual. Actually, as Mao (1994, p.460) holds about the Chinese culture,

Persian interpretation of the notion of *face* comparing with that of the English may also be more of a relative one not just emphasizing the "accommodation of individual needs or desires, but more of the harmony of one's conduct with the views or judgment of the community".

Regarding the second aim of the study, the findings illustrated a major tendency of English advertisements towards Positive politeness strategies which include: show concern, interest, be optimistic, promise, guarantee, offer, give reasons, compliment, joke, humor, exaggerate sympathy. As the main purpose of positive politeness strategies, Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to shortening the social distance that is to make the advertiser and addressee closer to each other and thus build up an individualistic connection. Having positive feeling about oneself along with praising personal success in western culture is considered at the opposite of group-driven success in eastern culture (Nisbett, 2004) which is gained in most of English ads through the use of Positive politeness strategies. Moreover, in accord with Lin's (2005) findings, positive strategies by minimizing the face threatening force of an act, try to save a person's positive face and provide him with more feeling of personal success which can lead to stressing the more individualistic and self-motivated nature of western communities.

The findings related to the third aim of the study revealed that employing mostly Off-record politeness strategies by Persian advertisers as a sign of successful persuasive tool in comparison with using Positive politeness strategies at most by English advertisers offered some differences between these two cultures. To start, the notion of face and face-saving acts as proposed by Goffman (1967), as well as the notion of 'self' may not be as individualistically perceived in eastern cultures like in Persian ads as they are perceived in western ones. Following the classification of culture into individualistic and collectivist as a highly mentioned-topic of cross-cultural research, Ting-Toomey and Cocroft (1994) reported that in eastern communities the realization of 'self' is mainly gained through "personal achievements and self-actualization processes", whereas in western communities the realization of 'self' happens by more "role relationships, family reputation, workgroup reputation" (p. 514).

Moreover, according to Allami and Naeimi (2010) in a high- context culture such as Iran, people tend to use indirect, symbolic, vague, and implicit style of communication whereas low-context culture is generally represented by direct and explicit communication approach. As a result of the above mentioned classifications of culture in eastern and western communities, more use of indirect and Off-record politeness strategies which are supposed to be one of the least FTAs, creates an atmosphere in which the addressee feels in- group membership and can enjoy the feeling of group-driven success. Our findings can also be consistent with those of Pishghadam (2011) who stated on the basis of Scollon and Scollon`s (2001) categorization, Iranian culture is a hierarchal one in which social hierarchy is assumed as a natural structure, whereas American culture works on the basis of a deference politeness system in which the interlocutors share the equal social level and rights. Undoubtedly, indirect way of talking is more prevalent in hierarchical cultures whole cultures based on deference favor for more direct way of dealing with issues.

Furthermore, that Persian advertises' endeavor to build a relationship with customers via indirect strategies is probably in line with Nisbett's (2004) classification of Asian and western cultures. To put it another way, in Asian countries people are more favored to construct relationships in the community by any possible way. Moreover, as Miracle (1987) claims, unlike western advertisers who use *learn-do-feel* strategies, advertisers in Asian countries generally use *feel-do-learn* strategies to entertain and establish feelings. Even if the Persian advertisement lines lack the essential factors to offer adequate reasons for their claims (like the repeated use of overstate strategy: *the best*, *the first*, *the only…*), yet; their close-circle connection making with the customers is one remarkable success they have proved to gain as an effective persuasive tool. Thus, Persian advertisers should constantly keep in mind that however appealing their ads may seem, they must never ignore the fundamental notions underlying the collectivist concept which comes with indirectness in their polite realizations of ads.

To wrap up, one should not ignore the role of *culture* in analyzing the words stated by speakers of a given language. Culture and cultural norms, among other things, can create major impact on the language through

which people communicate. Therefore, it is believed that the findings of this study can ensure compliance with the findings of Nilsen and Nilsen (1978); and Brown (1980), that the influence of language on thought and behavior can probably best be depicted in the world of advertising. Considering the "reciprocal influence of culture and thought on advertising" (Valdes, 1986, p.3), the differences in politeness strategies adopted by advertisers in Persian and English contexts seem adequately representative of the cultural norms existing in them.

Finally, considering the limited number of studies on Persian advertisement as a type of speech act especially at cross-cultural level, it is thereby recommended that further studies explore other forms of advertisements such as commercials. Moreover, highlighting the types of politeness strategies applied in the ads of one culture can facilitate the grasp of norms of that culture. At the end, it is believed that comparing the politeness strategies available in Persian ads with those other Asian countries can yield more opportunities of finding similarities and differences at a closer cultural background.

Acknowledgement

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