Forms of Address in Iranian Students' English and Persian Electronic Requests to Faculty

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ABSTRACT

Learning how individuals open conversations or how people address one another in a certain language is an important issue in studying communication and hence establishing social relationships between individuals. The speaker and the addressee's relationship, cognitive, historical and ideological reality, determine the choice of names and other address variants. Forms of address has an interesting correlation with language and culture. It should be noted that culture is the most important factor involved in the use of address forms. The current study intended to investigate Iranian students' Persian and English electronic requests to faculty to find out if they were different intera- and inter- lingually in regard the use of forms of address. To that end, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to investigate 120 English and Persian e-mails composed by the participants to faculty members. Findings from the study have revealed a wide stylistic range in the form of address used. The results of the study also revealed that students tried to be more polite in their Persian e-mails by exaggerating in the use of the honorifics. This study proves that the application of address forms is governed by social norms and cultural rules.

Introduction

As address forms have been of great interest to sociolinguistics, in recent years much sociolinguistic work has been done on forms of address, following the principles developed by Brown & Gilman's (1960) study of the pronouns (T and V forms) of power and solidarity . Since "different languages have different linguistic resources to express what is culturally permissible and meaningful", studying address forms in different Languages is worthwhile (Afful, p. 276). Additionally, culture's address usage is particularly important due to the fact that rules governing address usage in various cultures are often extremely complicated and it is frequently difficult to work out which factors do or do not influence the choice of addresses (Coulmas, 1979).

Although the last thirty years or so have seen the evolution of a new form of research on address usage, aiming at the scientific study of address forms in a wide variety of languages and the discovery of underlying rules governing address usage (see for example, Brown and Gilman 1960; Chandrasekhar 1970; Ostor 1982; Muhlhausler and Harre 1990;, Keshavarz 2001), few studies have focused on forms of address employed in students' e-mail requests to faculty (Economidou-Kogestsidis, 2011).

As over the last 15 years, the interaction between students and their teachers at the university level has been changed from consultations through office hours or brief meetings before or after class to interaction via e-mail (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006), it would be significant to see how students apply the axes of power and solidarity, as introduced by Brown and Gilman's (1960) address theory, in their e-mails to faculty. The present study aims to investigate the forms of address employed in students' Persian and English e-mail requests to faculty to find out if they were different intera- and inter- lingually in regard

the use of forms of address. Accordingly, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1- What are the lexical expressions and linguistic forms used by Iranian students in their English and Persian e-mails to address their professors?

2. Are Iranian students' English and Persian e-mails to faculty different intra- and inter-lingually in regard to the use of forms of address?

Review of Related Literature

One of the most difficult choices that senders have to make is how to address the e-mail receiver. Utilizing a casual mode in e-mail communication without taking into account the differentiation in culture, age, and social and professional background is suggested by certain business language manuals (Crystal, 2001, p. 77). Others, such as US manuals, recommend the applying of first name only in the greeting but also advise for more formal and traditional greeting in other parts of the world such as Europe and Japan.

Some factors that business correspondence literature recommended as principles for deciding on the greetings and complementary closes such as the degree of familiarity with the receiver (Taylor, 2004; Whelan, 2000), whether the recipient would detest e-mails with a greeting and sign-off or would realize them gratuitous (Whelan, 2000), and whether the connection with the receiver was an established working relationship or not (Ashley, 2003) were summarized by Bjorge (2007).

However, these criteria propose little practical guidance to the undecided writer who might be perplexed about the receivers' favorites, likes, and dislikes and their existing relationship (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011). Bjorge (2007) mentioned that correspondents would choose the form of address and complementary close in their e-mails based on perceiving of their relationship. His utterance can also be

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relevant to student–faculty correspondence. Of course, students' perception of the relationship with the faculty might not be the same as how their professors' perception of the same relationship. This is when selecting an inappropriate form of address may cause misjudgments and infringes social suitability. This issue becomes even more complex when correspondents from different cultures are involved (Economidou-Kogestsidis, 2011).

Formentelli (2009) employed data from consultations and video-recordings in order to study how British English speakers addressed the faculty in the educational situation. The study revealed that British university students (especially younger students in their first year) utilized formal strategies as a way to express admiration and respect despite Britain's growing casualness of address in institutional encounters. His study also found that British university students prefer evasion strategies that were understood as an effort for students to discover an impartial concession between formalities (i.e., employing honorific (HON) or "title + last name" (TLN)) and casualness (i.e. first name (FN)). Students were found to favor nonreciprocal use of address forms typical of secondary schools. Importantly, most lecturers in the study felt more at ease in maintaining reciprocal informal address.

The forms of address and complementary closes of international students' e-mails in Norway sent to academic staffs were examined by Bjorge (2007). Her study revealed that e-mails written by students from a high power distance (PD) culture (Hofstede, 2001) included a more formal greeting while those from low PD cultures contained a less formal greeting. However high PD students tended to utilized formal greetings such as "Dear professors/Sir/Madam/Teacher", "Dear Professor + FN + LN" in their e-mails while students from low PD society had a tendency to employ informal greeting such as "Dear + FN", no greeting, "hi/hello + FN". The writer concluded that there was a significant discrepancy in students' e-mails in terms of form of address and complementary close.

Method

The focus of the present study was to investigate the forms of address employed in students' Persian and English e-mail requests to faculty to find out if they were different intera- and inter- lingually in regard the use of forms of address. This part gives information on the subjects from whom the data were elicited, the instruments that were used to collect the data, and, finally, the methods for data analysis.

Participants

To collect data for this study, which employed an exploratory qualitative research design, it was decided that 60 Iranian (NNS of English) postgraduate students to write two corpora of e-mail (one in Persian and the other one in English) to their professors. Therefore, the e-mail data consisted of 120 e-mails (60 in Persian and 60 in English). The students who wrote e-mails were studying English in Islamic Azad university, Najafabad Branch, Isfahan, Iran. They were enrolled in postgraduate degree and had a Persian background. All of these students knew the faculty personally, and their ages ranged from 25 to32.

The students were supposed to be advanced at the level of language proficiency because all of them had studied English for at least 4 years in BA (Bachelor of Art) before entering their MA (Master of Art) program. They had also passed a language proficiency entrance exam for being accepted as MA students. Therefore, they are considered competent enough to write an e-mail of this type without any need for further proficiency level inquiry. The professors who students addressed them were

between 35 and 60 years old, doctorate holders. Their communication style with their students could be characterized as formal (e.g., they had contact with students only during class and office hours). All of these faculty members were native speakers of Persian and had native-like proficiency in English.

Data Collection

Students were asked to address one of their professors of a course within their major and write two corpora of e-mail samples to them (one in Persian and the other one in English). A time interval between writing 2 e-mails was considered so that students couldn't translate their Persian e-mails to English. This time interval that was considered about one month gave students enough time to forget the ways of expressing their requests written by them in the first corpus of e-mail samples. It was considered the first corpus e-mail samples written by students to be in English because the probability of forgetting the English e-mails for Iranian EFL students who didn't have a native-level command of English were easier than Persian e-mails that were written in their native language.

Students were asked to write an English e-mail to their professors and request for reconsidering their grades and ask their professors to give them a chance of meeting them in their office. After about one month, they were asked to write another e-mail to their professors and repeated their request in Persian. In order to address the ethical issues in relation to such a study, students were informed that their e-mails would be kept confidential and no personal information would be revealed.

E-mail Analysis Procedures

For e-mail analysis, the form of address employed in each e-mail (both English and Persian) was elicited and analyzed. The features that were investigated were those that were examined by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) "the presence or absence of the term of deference 'dear', the inclusion of greeting in the title (e.g., Hi Dr. Kokinaki), the use of titles ('Mr.'/'Mrs'/ 'Miss'/ instead of 'Dr.'), the use of constructions such as 'title + FN' (e.g., Dr. Paul), zero forms of address (i.e., e-mails without a salutation), and formal and less formal constructions (e.g., Dear Dr. Kogetsidis vs. Dear Maria)" (p. 3199). These features were investigated as they were "marked for formality/distance or informality/solidarity, while others for their ability to cause offense (i.e., the use of incorrect title) and to increase directness and abruptness (i.e., zero forms of address, omission of 'dear')" (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3199).

Chi-square tests of Independence, being suitable for nominal data, were conducted to investigate whether English and Persian electronic requests, as written by Iranian EFL learners, were different inter-lingually in regard to the use of forms of address.

Findings

Forms of Address in English E-mail Requests

The quantitative analysis of forms of address in students' English e-mail requests were analyzed. Due to the great variation emerging from the data a number of findings were received in relation to the forms of address employed in students' English e-mails. Some of the constructions used were acceptable but too direct due to the omission of deference form 'dear', and a number of e-mails included no salutation whatsoever (zero form of address). The forms of address analyzed to get a clearer picture of the constructions preferred by the NNSs were as follow:

(a) 39.9% of students used 'dear' in their English e-mail requests (Table 1) (see example1).

(b) 16.6% of students employed greeting as a way to address their professors (Table1) (see example 2).

(c) 10% of the English e-mails were started without any forms of address (Table1) (see example 3).

d) Other forms of address such as "Hello my master" were included in 33.3% of the students' English e-mail requests (Table 1) (see example 4).

Regardless of the employment of 'dear' or the inclusion of a greeting, all of the forms of address employed made use of the lecturer's last name rather than first name. These results further revealed the students' overall preference for formality.

Student No. 50

Dear Professor,

It was an honor for me to have a course with you. I hope you don't mind my asking but would you please give me a chance to meet you and let me know if it is possible to change my score. Actually the average of my scores decreased dramatically because of this score.

Your faithful student,….. (student name)]

Student No. 49

[**Hello Dr. ...(professor name)**

Would it be possible if you please have a review on my exam paper and if there's no matter increase it to a better score? By the way, I will appreciate if you let me have a short visit with you!

Yours sincerely,….. (student name)]

Student No. 41

[hello, I'm …. (student name). I would appreciate if you reconsider my grade on 'Skills' course. May I visit you on Saturday at 10 a.m. in your office?

All the best,…. (student name)]

Student No. 5

[**Hello my master**

Unfortunately I messed up exam. Would you mind reviewing my paper, plus I need to meet you, because this mark is very vital for me.

Thanks in advance…… (student name)]

Table 1.*Forms of Address in Students' English E-mails*

Use of 'dear'	Dear + incorrect academic title/title + FN (Dear Ms/Dr. Angelica)	0/60 (0%)
	Dear + LN (Dear Savvidou)	0/60 (0%)
	Dear + TLN (Dear Dr. Kokinaki)	22/60 (36.6%)
	Dear + FN (Dear Paul)	0/60 (0%)
	Dear + incorrect academic title + LN (Dear Ms Kokinaki)	2/60 (3.3%)
	Dear + title + FN + LN (Dear Dr. Maria Kogetsidis)	0/60 (0%)
	Other	0/60 (0%)

Forms of Address in Persian E-mails

Nowadays the salutation 'hazrat' (to a highly respected person) and 'jenaab' (replaced by 'sarkaar', chief, in addressing women) in combination with a name or title is the most commonly used salutation in Persian. In a very polite address, words such as 'be pishhgaahe' (to the court of), 'hozure' (to the presence of), or 'khedmate' (in the service of), followed by epithets like 'mohtaram' (respected), 'mobaarak' (blessed), 'baa sa'aadat' (fortunate), 'geraami', 'arjmand', and so on follow the above mentioned designations (Rajabzadeh, 2011). If the corresponding person is a doctor or hold phD, or she is an engineer, 'Doktor' or 'Mohandes' must be added to the titles respectively.

Table 1 (Continued). *Forms of Address in Students' English E-mails*

Omission of 'dear'	Incorrect academic title + FN (Miss Maria)	0/60 (0%)
	TLN (Dr. Kogetsidis)	0/60 (0%)
	Incorrect academic title + LN (Ms Kogetsidis)	0/60 (0%)
	Title + FN (Dr. Paul)	0/60 (0%)
Use of 'greeting' (e.g. hi, hello')	Hi/Hello+ incorrect academic title+ FN (Hi Mr. Paul)	0/60 (0%)
	Hi + FN (Hi Paul)	0/60 (0%)
	Hi/Hello incorrect title + LN (Hello, Ms Kogetsidis)	1/60((1.6%)
	Hi/Hello + TLN (Hi Dr. Kokinaki)	9/60(15%)
	Hi/Hello + title + FN (Hi Dr. Rosie)	0/60 (0%)
Zero forms of address		6/60(10%)
Others		20/60(33.3%)

Due to the great variation emerging from the data a number of findings were received in relation to the forms of address employed in students' Persian e-mails. Some of the constructions used were acceptable but too direct due to the omission of deference form 'Jenaab' or 'sarkaar' and a number of e-mails included no salutation whatsoever (zero form of address). Some of the students started their Persian e-mails with greeting such as 'Salaam Alaykom' (hello to you), 'Baa salaam va ehtaramm' (with my greeting and regards), and 'Baa dorud va salaam' (with [my] greetings and regards) when they didn't employed salutation. Some Persian e-mails were started with greeting followed by the title terms such as 'ostaad' (master) or 'doktor' (Dr.).

Other forms of address such as 'Ostaade geraami' (dear master), 'Doktore mohtaram'(dear Dr.), and ' Ostaade arjmand' (dear Dr.) were found too. Some students exaggerated in using honorific terms in order to make their Persian e-mails more polite. They used some address forms such as 'Ostaade arjmand jenaabe aaqaaye doctor'.

The current study used the same criteria to analyze English and Persian data in terms of the form of address used towards the faculty member. The features that were examined were the presence or absence of the term of deference 'dear' ('Jenaab' or sarkaar' in Persian), the inclusion of a greeting in the title (e.g., Hi Dr. Kokinaki), the use of incorrect titles ('Mr.'/'Mrs.'/'Miss' instead of 'Dr.'), the use of unacceptable constructions such as 'title + FN' (e.g., Dr. Paul), zero forms of address (i.e., e-mails without a salutation), and formal and less formal constructions (e.g., Dear Dr. Kogetsidis vs. Dear Maria) (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3199). The forms of address that were used in Persian e-mails were as follow:

(a) 40% of students used 'dear' in their Persian e-mail requests (Table 2) (see example 5).

(b) 6.7% of students employed greeting as a way to address their professors (Table 2) (see example 6).

(c) 33% of the e-mails were started without any forms of address (Table 2) (see example 7).

d) Other forms of address such as "Hello my master" were included in 20% of the students' Persian e-mail requests (Table 2) (see example 8).

Regardless of the employment of 'dear' or the inclusion of a greeting, all of the forms of address employed made use of the lecturer's last name rather than first name. These results further revealed the students' overall preference for formality.

Student No. 38

[Dear Dr. … (professor name)
Hello
This is … (student name), a freshman student of teaching. I request to meet you in person to talk about revising my grade in 'Advanced writing' course. Please revise my score.
Thanks]

جناب آقای دکتر....با سلام
با احترام به استحضار می‌رساند اینجانب
.....(نام دانشجو) دانشجوی سال اول رشته
آموزش جهت بررسی و تغییر نمره دستور پیشرفته
درخواست ملاقات حضوری با جنابعالی را دارد.از
جنابعالی خواهشمندم نمره اینجانب را مورد
بازبینی مجدد قرار دهید. با تشکر

Student No. 14
[Hello Dr. … (professor name)
This is … (student name). I have an objection to my exam score. If it is possible give me an appointment to meet you in person and also if it is possible check my answer sheet once more.
Thanks… (student name)]

جناب آقای دکتر.....
با سلام خدمت آقای دکتر ... (نام استاد)
اینجانب...(نام دانشجو) نسبت به نمره امتحان
خود اعتراض دارم. در صورت امکان فرصتی را
مشخص کنید تا حضور شما رسیده و همچنین اگر
امکان دارد برگه امتحانی من را دوباره تصحیح
کنید.
با تشکر(نام دانشجو) .....

Student No. 33
[Hello
Dear master please if it is possible check my answer sheet to see if it is possible to change my score and also let me to meet you to talk about the final exam.
Regards,
…. (student name)]

سلام
استاد عزیزخواهش می کنم در صورت امکان برگه
من را بررسی کنید تا ببینید که آیا امکان
تغییر نمره من وجود دارد وهمچنین اجازه دهید
شما را ملاقات کنم تا پیرامون نمره آزمون اخیر
با حضرتعالی صحبت کنم.
با سپاس
....(نام دانشجو)

Student No. 5
Hello dear doctor
Unfortunately I have done very badly in my exam. I request you to check my answer sheet once more, also I need to meet you.
My exam score is very important for me.
Thanks
… (student name)]

جناب دکتر سلام متاسفانه امتحانم خیلی بد شد. از
شما درخواست دارم دوباره برگه ام را بررسی
نمایید. همچنین نیاز است شما را ملاقات کنم.
نمره این امتحان خیلی برایم مهم می باشد.
ممنونم
..... (نام دانشجو)

Forms of Address in English and Persian Request

In order to find out whether English and Persian e-mail requests written by Iranian(NNS of English) post graduate university students to their professors were different inter-lingually in regard to the use of forms of address, English and Persian e-mail requests compared based on the presence or absence of the term of deference 'dear' ('Jenaab' or 'sarkaar' in Persian), the inclusion of a greeting in the title (e.g., Hi Dr.

Kokinaki), the use of incorrect titles ('Mr.'/'Mrs.'/'Miss' instead of 'Dr.'), the use of unacceptable constructions such as 'title + FN' (e.g., Dr. Paul), zero forms of address (i.e., e-mails without a salutation), and formal and less formal constructions (e.g., Dear Dr. Kogetsidis vs. Dear Maria) (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3199).

Table 2. *Forms of Address in Students'Persian E-mails*

Use of 'dear'	Dear + incorrect academic title/title + FN (Dear Ms/Dr. Angelica)	0/60 (0%)
	Dear + LN (Dear Savvidou)	3/60(5%)
	Dear + TLN (Dear Dr. Kokinaki)	6/60(10%)
	Dear + FN (Dear Paul)	0/60 (0%)
	Dear + incorrect academic title + LN (Dear Ms Kokinaki)	0/60 (0%)
	Dear + title + FN + LN (Dear Dr. Maria Kogetsidis)	0/60 (0%)
	Other	15/60(25%)
Omission of 'dear'	Incorrect academic title + FN (Miss Maria)	0/60 (0%)
	TLN (Dr. Kogetsidis)	0/60 (0%)
	Incorrect academic title + LN (Ms Kogetsidis)	0/60 (0%)
	Title + FN (Dr. Paul)	0/60 (0%)
Use of 'greeting' (e.g. hi, hello')	Hi/Hello+ incorrect academic title+ FN (Hi Mr. Paul)	0/60 (0%)
	Hi + FN (Hi Paul)	0/60 (0%)
	Hi/Hello incorrect title + LN (Hello, Ms Kogetsidis)	1/60(1.7%)
	Hi/Hello + TLN (Hi Dr. Kokinaki)	3/60(5%)
	Hi/Hello + title + FN (Hi Dr. Rosie)	0/60 (0%)
Zero forms of address		20/60(33%)
Others		12/60(20%)

Table 3 summarizes the quantitative analysis of forms of address in students' English and Persian e-mail requests. Due to the great variation emerging from the data a number of findings were received in relation to the forms of address employed in students' English and Persian e-mails. The forms of address analyzed to get a clearer picture of the constructions preferred by the NNSs in their Persian and English e-mails requests were as follow:

(a) About 40% of students used 'dear' in their English and Persian e-mail requests (Table 3).

(b) Students used greeting as a way to address their professors more in their English requests (16.6%) than their Persian requests (6.7%) (Table 3).

(c) While 33.3% of the Persian e-mails were started without any forms of address, only 10% of English requests were started without any forms of address (Table 3).

d) Other forms of address such as "Hello my master" were found more in English e-mail requests (33.3%) than Persian e-mail requests (20%) (Table 3).

Regardless of the employment of 'dear' or the inclusion of a greeting, all of the forms of address employed made use of the lecturer's last name rather than first name. These results further revealed the students' overall preference for formality in their both English and Persian e-mails.

Table 3. *Forms of Address in Students' Persian and English E-mails*

English E-mail Requests		Persian E-mail Requests	
Use of 'dear'	39.9%	Use of 'dear'	40%
Use of 'greeting' (e.g. hi, hello')	16.6%	Use of 'greeting' (e.g. hi, hello')	6.7%
Zero forms of address	10%	Zero forms of address	33.3%

Others	33.3%	Others	20%

In order to find out whether English and Persian e-mail requests written by Iranian (NNS of English) post graduate university students to their professors were different inter-lingually in regard to the use of forms of address, chi-square tests of Independence were conducted. The statistical results indicated that students employed a significantly higher number of forms of address in their English e-mail requests, x^2 (1, n = 120) =9.37, p = .002. These differences were significant at a $p <$ .05 level (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Chi-Squre Test Results for English and Persian E-mails*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.753	1	.001
Continuity Correction	9.367	1	.002

In order to find out whether English and Persian e-mail requests written by Iranian (NNS of English) post graduate university students to their professors were different intra - lingually in regard to the use of forms of address, English and Persian e-mail requests compared. A number of findings were received in relation to the forms of address employed in students' Persian and English e-mails. The term of deference 'dear' + title + last name in salutation was used by students in their English e-mail requests to make them to be more polite. Students employed 'jenaab' (replaced by 'sarkaar', chief, in addressing women) in combination with 'aaqaaye' ('khaanom' in addressing women) and a title + last name in their Persian e-mails to make them to be more polite. They also used words such as 'hozure' (to the presence of), or 'khedmate' (in the service of) in combination with 'ostaad' (professor), followed by epithets like 'mohtaram' (respected), 'geraami', 'arjmand', 'bozorgvaar'; and also followed by 'jenaab' (replaced by 'sarkaar', chief, in addressing women) and 'aaqaaye' (khaanom in addressing women) + title + last name in their Persian e-mails such as 'khedmate ostaade mohtaram va bozorgvaar jenaabe aaqaaye doktor Zaarei',which is used in a very polite address in Persian, to make their e-mails more polite.

Some students used greeting such as ' hi/hello + title + last name' or ' hi/hello + last name' as a form of address in their English e-mail requests. Some Persian e-mail requests also began with greeting such as 'salaam (hi/hello) + aaqaaye ('khanom' in addressing women) +last name' or ' salaam + aaqaaye ('khanom' in addressing women) + title + last name'. A closer examination of the structure of the forms of address in students' Persian e-mails that employed greetings in their salutation, it revealed that the diversity of the forms of address used by students in their Persian e-mails were more than their English e-mails. Some students used forms of address such as ' zemne salaam va khaste nabaashid' (an expression to show respect) in combination with 'hozure' , 'mahzare' (to the presence of), or 'khedmate' (in the service of), followed by 'jenaabe' ('sarkaar'in addressing women),'aaqaaye' ('khaanom' in addressing women), and the title and recipient's given name in their e-mails as a form of address to make their Persian e-mails to be more polite.

Some students didn't begin their English and Persian e-mails with salutations. They just started their e-mails with 'hi/hello'. A closer examination of these kinds of e-mails revealed that students tried to make their Persian e-mails to be more polite by adding the phrase ' baa ehtaraam' (with respect) to their greeting whenever they omitted the salutation, while they just used 'hello/hi' in their English e-mails.

Other forms of address such as 'Hello my master' were used by students in their both English and Persian e-mail requests. Some students tried to make their Persian e-mails more polite by

adding epithets like 'mohtaram' (respected), 'geraami', 'arjmand', 'bozorgvaar'. A closer examination of the structure of forms of address in students' Persian and English e-mails revealed that the students' overall preference for formality in their Persian e-mails by exaggerating in using honorific terms to make their Persian e-mails be more polite were more than in their English e-mails.

Discussion

The results revealed that the students' e-mails indicated a wide stylistic range in the form of address used. The forms of address ranged from no salutation (zero form of address), to the more formal 'Dear + title + LN'. Being used a great variation of address forms in students e-mails seems to propose that "both native and non-native students in general might be equally unsure about what is appropriate and preferred when it comes to e-mail communication with faculty" (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, p. 3209).

The majority of students addressed their professors with the term of deference 'dear' in their both English and Persian requests. A closer examination of the forms of address in students' English and Persian e-mails revealed that the majority of students preferred to start their e-mails with salutation. While the high preference for salutation on the part of the students of the present study confirms Brown and Gilman's (1960) the power-and-solidarity model that the choice of address forms is regulated by the two complementary dimensions (or semantics) of power and solidarity, it isn't in line with Formentelli's (2009) results whose findings revealed that native students chose avoidance strategies (zero form of address) in their communications with their lecturers.

Importantly, these results indicated that the avoidance strategy (zero form of address) was more in students' Persian e-mails than English e-mails. A closer examination of the structures of Persian e-mails that included no salutation revealed that some students started their Persian e-mails with a formal greeting such as ' zemne salaam va khaste nabaashide mahzare ostaade bozogvar', while those English e-mails including no salutation students started their e-mails just with 'hello'.

The structure of 'title + FN', a grammatically unacceptable construction in English and Persian, was not seen in Persian and English e-mails composed by students. One explanation of not being used this structure by students in their Persian e-mails might be that the use of title with a first name isn't a common construction in everyday Persian interactions. Importantly, it seems that the EFL students of the present study, as a result of studying English at university, were aware of the ungrammaticality of this construction in English, therefore, they avoided using this ungrammatical structure in their English e-mails as a kind of salutation.

A number of Persian and English e-mails also involved the use of forms of address such as "Hello my master". Students preferred to employed these forms of address in their English e-mails more than in their Persian e-mails. In general it can be concluded that students' English and Persian e-mails were different inter-lingually. Although the majority of students preferred to use deference term 'dear' in their salutation, there were a great variation of forms of address in students' English and Persian e-mails requests. Moreover, the finding of the study revealed the students' overall preference for formality. The trend of formality seems to be confirmed by the use of the professor's last name rather than first name in students' English and Persian e-mails.

This current study also attempted to investigate the forms of address employed in students' Persian and English e-mails to

faculty to find out if they were different intra- lingually in regard to the use of forms of address. The findings revealed that there was a great variation in the type of forms of address used in students' English and Persian e-mails. Students indicated a great variation in their Persian e-mails in which they employed deference term 'dear' such as ' jenaabe' (replaced by 'sarkaar' in addressing women) + 'aaqaaye' (replaced by 'khaanom' in addressing women) + last name or ' jenaabe' (replaced by 'sarkaare' in addressing women) + 'aaqaaye' (replaced by 'khaanom' in   addressing women) + title + last name. Some students tried to made their Persian e-mails more polite by adding words such as 'hozure' (to the presence of), or 'khedmate' (in the service of) in combination with 'ostaad' (professor), followed by epithets like 'mohtaram' (respected), 'geraami', 'arjmand', 'bozorgvaar', and also followed by 'jenaab' (replaced by 'sarkaar', chief, in addressing women) and 'aaqaaye' ('khaanom' in addressing women) + title + last name in salutation such as 'khedmate ostaade mohtaram va bozorgvaar jenaabe aaqaaye doktor …(professor name)'.

Students also indicated a great variation in forms of address in their Persian e-mails in which they employed greeting as forms of address compared with their English e-mails. Some students used 'hello' + title + LN, some used 'hello' + LN, and some added other words such as 'arjmand' + 'bozorgvaar', 'geraami' (words that are used in very polite address) to make their e-mails more polite. Other forms of address such as 'Hello my master' were used by students in their both English and Persian e-mail requests. Some students tried to make their Persian e-mails more polite by adding epithets such as 'mohtaram' (respected), 'geraami', 'arjmand', and 'bozorgvaar'.

Some students didn't begin their English and Persian e-mails with salutations. They just started their e-mails with 'hi/hello'. A closer examination of these kinds of e-mails revealed that students tried to make their Persian e-mails more polite by adding the phrase ' baa ehtaraam' (with respect) to their greeting whenever they omitted the salutation , while they just used 'hello or hi' in their English e-mails.

Importantly, these results seem to indicate that students exaggerated in using honorifics in their Persian e-mails. One explanation for this might be that the diversity of words used in more polite address in Persian is more than English. While the most common form of salutation in an English letter or e-mail is 'dear' followed by the recipient's given name or title, a great variation of formal phrases   are used as salutation in Persian formal letters or e-mails.

 To sum up, the findings about the address strategies employed in students' Persian and English e-mails revealed that students were more keen in their Persian   e-mails on maintaining the asymmetrical distribution of forms of address. They tried to be more polite in their Persian e-mails by exaggerating in the use of the honorifics. This finding is in line with Brown and Gilman's (1960) claim that the difference of power regulates the choice and distribution of address terms, and also formal strategies are employed in addressing the more powerful party. Importantly, these results seem to indicate that the choice of non formal address forms can easily become a source of pragmatic failure.

In general, comparing the distribution of address forms emerging in Persian and English e-mails it can be argued that culture is the most important factor involved in the use of address forms because members of a speech community utilize various address terms according to their socio-cultural relationship. More specifically, there are large lexical gaps in translating Persian address forms and honorifics into English.

According to Methven's (2006) claim, the best way for translating address forms and honorifics between languages is through the pragmatic translation of address terms into its simple deictic equivalent.

Xiao Ying (2007) claimed that address terms should be translated from the cultural and cognitive perspectives. Ngo (2006) mentioned that the linguistic and cultural elements of the source text should be paid more attention in the translating terms of address for a better understanding of the original text and providing the target reader with enhanced knowledge of the customs and culture of another nation.

According to the aforementioned remarks, it cannot be said that students' Persian e-mails were more polite than English e-mails in terms of the use of forms of address because each language has its own system of address forms, and the use of more honorific terms in salutation is not common in English. In sum, the most problematic area in translation of address terms is that most of the address terms are culture specific and cannot be translated literally. Therefore, the cultures of the target language and the contextual situation are the most influential factors in selection and translation of address terms.

Conclusion

Address forms are important linguistic mechanisms in that they reflect the speaker's attitude toward the addressee and the addressee's interpretation of his or her relationship with the speaker. Therefore, inappropriate choice of address forms hinders effective communication between the speaker and the addressee. The present study aimed to investigate English and Persian e-mail requests written by Iranian (NNS of English) post graduate university students to their professors to find out were different intra- and inter-lingually in regard to the use of forms of address. The results of the study indicated that the NNS students' Persian and English e-mails were typically characterized by a considerable variation in the forms of address employed. The findings about the address strategies employed in students' Persian and English e-mails revealed that students were more keen in their Persian e-mails on maintaining the asymmetrical distribution of forms of address. They tried to be more polite in their Persian e-mails by exaggerating in the use of the honorifics.

Implication, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

Since there are as yet no established conventions for linguistic behavior in e-mail communication (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006), it is difficult for foreign language learners to choose the appropriate form of address   in their e-mails to faculty. Therefore, the results of this study can be used for teaching in the areas of syllabus design, material development, and classroom activities to make students aware of the appropriate forms of address in e-mail writing in the academic context.

The limitations of this study revolve primarily around the way of the data collection process. The data didn't comprise naturalistic due to ethical reasons. This may have some effects on the way participants requests via e-mail. Because of this limitation participants may not make genuine effort to make requests in the way they would normally do in an actual e-mail exchange. This limitation have some effects on participants' actions and behaviors and therefore distorts research results. Moreover, limited by the sample size and data-collection, readers should be cautious to generalize the findings of this study to Iranian communities at large. At best, the results of this study would target only typical college or university communities. For future research, it is recommended to Analyze e-mails sent by students from other fields of study and at

different universities in Iran as well as undergraduate students whose computer experience most likely began at a much earlier age than that of post graduate students would.

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