



On Subtitling of Ta'ārof Apologies

Mojde Yaqubi*

Young Researchers and Elite Club, Hamedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran

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Abstract

Apologies are sources of problems in the process of Persian-English subtitling as they are performed with variant forms and functions in these two languages and cultures. 'Ta'ārof apologies'-Persian apologies which are extended to show politeness-creates more serious obstacles for the subtitlers. These difficulties root in the culture-specific contexts in which they are used as well as the cultural norms underlying their practice in Persian. This study qualitatively analyses the difficulties encountered by Persian-English subtitlers of Iranian films in both understanding of ta'ārof apologies in the source text (ST) and their translation into the target text (TT). The results revealed that besides the subtitles applied for translating ta'ārof apologies, different elements help the subtitlers to transfer their meaning into English subtitles. These elements are speaker's and the hearer's utterances as well as the end act in the conversation and also the verbal and non-verbal signs in the conversation and the previous and next scenes.

Keywords: Context, Cultural norms, Iranian interpersonal relationship, Subtitling, Ta'ārof Apology

INTRODUCTION

From among the disciplines which investigates the discrepancy of 'what is said' and 'what is meant' in interpersonal relationships, pragmatics deals with the study of interpretation of meaning of utterances by accessing to different elements such as the shared knowledge between speaker (S) and hearer (H), as well as the contexts in which the utterance has been used (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1975; Cutting, 2002). Although the number of comparative and contrastive pragmatic studies between Persian and English has been drastically increased in the past few years, few studies were conducted which investigated Persian-English and English-Persian translation of

pragmatic issues. These studies mainly include works on translation of speech act (Rahimi, 2004; Zamani, 2013), face-threatening acts (Yaqubi, 2012; Yaqubi, et al., 2013; Moradi & Jabbari, 2015), conversational implicature (Hassani Laharomi, 2013) deictic expressions (Zandi & Azizinezhad, 2011) and politeness (Amany et al., 2014) in both written and oral texts.

In line with the development of pragmatics across the world, several mono-cultural, cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatic studies analyzed the production of some specific speech acts in terms of their pragmatic structures in Persian (Afghari, 2007; Allami Naeimi, 2011; Aliakbari & Changizi, 2012; Yaqubi et al., 2015; Yaqubi et al., 2016). Among the culture-specific Persian speech acts, those which are used in doing

*Corresponding Author's Email:
m.yaqubi@qodsiau.ac.ir



ta'ārof-Iranian ritual system of politeness- are reported to be sources of difficulties in intercultural communication (Taleghani-Nikazm, 1998; Koutelaki, 2002; Eslami, 2005). Mismatch of form and function of a series of speech acts such as apologies used in doing *ta'ārof* may run the risk of not being understood or misinterpreted by the translators or subtitlers and leads to mistranslation in the TT. As such, translating them is immensely involved with difficulties of their understanding and transferring the linguistic and cultural aspects. However, despite their importance, the form and the meaning of these speech acts as well as the cultural norms underlying them have been attempted in separate studies. Besides, they have been neglected in the area of translation and subtitling. This study focuses on the difficulties of Persian-English subtitling of *ta'ārof* apologies in order to fill the gaps in the area of pragmatics and translation.

Persian *Ta'ārof*

A great number of studies on the Iranian interpersonal relationship have focused on the usage of 'Persian language' as a prominent criterion to investigate the extravagant intricacies of the Iranians' communications (Beeman, 1986, 1988, 2001; Sharifian, 2007, 2011; Koutlaki, 1997; 2002, 2010). Based on these studies, a great deal of the Iranian society's style of conversations ride on their consummate verbal skills in using this language. In his book "*Language, Status and Power in Iran*", Beeman (1986) compares Iranians to magicians who are able to transform reality. Interpretation of the complex conversations between Iranians in their usual communication deals with the great discrepancy of what is being said by S and the actual meaning of what he or she has intended to deliver. Among other linguistic patterns, in Persian, this discrepancy is revealed and confirmed by its complex system of politeness namely that of *ta'ārof*. Sharifian (2011, p. 144) believes that "a person's ability to exercise and respond to *ta'ārof* appropriately has a significant bearing on their social relationships". As Izadi et al, (2012, p. P. 77) argue

"*ta'ārof* has been addressed as the backbone of Persian politeness system and seems to be dominant in a majority of interactions between Iranians in different settings".

Studies on *ta'ārof* have sporadically highlighted some concepts related to this notion. These concepts are explained below:

- **Adab (politeness):** As an important concept in the Islamic culture, *adab* refers to many meanings such as courtesy, morals, learning, literature, etc. (Sahragard, 2003). Sahragard (2003) believes that as a kind of social education and training, *adab* is based on *tarbiyat* or good breeding.
- **Shekasteh-nafsi:** *Shekast-e nafsi* is a compound in Persian made up of the morphemes *shekasteh* 'broken' and *nafs* 'self' (Sharifian, 2011, p. 113) which literally means 'self-breaking'. Sharifian (2005, p. 337) believes that *shekasteh-nafsi* motivates the speakers to downplay their talents, skills, achievements, etc. while praising a similar trait in their interlocutors.
- **Ehterām (respect):** The results of Sahragard's (2003) study suggest that any verbal or non-verbal act performed out of respect can be considered as *ehterām*. Izadi (2015) translates this concept as deference. He argues that *ehterām* reflects the person's showing awareness of self and other's territory of individuality, autonomy, privacy, differentiation, independence and the like (p. 83).
- **Tavāzo (humility):** The English equivalents chosen by Sahragard (2003) for this concept are humility and modesty. To show *tavāzo*, people downgrade or deny their abilities and possessions.
- **Mehmān navāzi (hospitality):** Iranians show their hospitality through performing *ta'ārof*. Sahragard ar-

gues that it may involve using flowery language, expressing strong and repetitive insistence that the guest eat something, degrading the host's belongings and capabilities, etc. (p. 417). According to Koutlaki (2010, p. 44) "*ta'ārof* is a "polite communication style that its practice stems from religious teachings of generosity and hospitality".

***Ta'ārof* from Pragmatics Point of View**

Since decades ago, *ta'ārof* has been the centre of attention of many scholars in different disciplines such as pragmatics. In most of these studies speech act has been the core subject. They presented a series of speech acts such as offer, compliment, invitation, apology, refusal of offer and invitation applied in doing *ta'ārof* (Taleghani-Nikazm, 1998; Koutlaki, 2002, 2010; Eslami, 2005; Salmani Nodoushan, 2005, 2014; Afghari & Karimnia, 2012; Saberi, 2012; Babai Shishavan & Sharifian, 2013; Babai Shishavan, 2016). In some studies (Koutlaki, 2002; Eslami, 2005) *ta'ārof* has been used as an alternative term for specific speech acts such as invitation, offer or refusal of invitation and offer in conversations. In some studies, a speech act and the term *ta'ārof* are coined such as *ta'ārof* refusal (Koutlaki, 2002) and *ta'ārof* apology (Koutlaki, 2010). Difficulties of understanding or identification of the culture-specific notion of *ta'ārof* have been the centre of attention in mono-cultural and cross-cultural pragmatic studies which mainly investigate the intricacies of interpretation of culture-specific meaning of these speech acts for non-native speakers of Persian.

One of the complex speech acts done in doing *ta'ārof* is apology. Koutlaki (2010) elaborated on culture-specific types of speech acts in Persian such as offers, refusals, compliment and apologies. She used *ta'ārof* apologies and ostensible apologies interchangeably to categorize them as deference, humility and cordiality devices in Persian. According to Koutlaki (2010) "if the English use please and thank you more than other nations, Iranians must be the uncontested

champions of the ostensible apology". She believed that in doing *ta'ārof*, people exhibited empty formality through which insincere hospitality and respect will be shown. She argues that "in the same way that the English "*thank you*" is not always an expression of thank, as in "*that'll be all for now, thank you*", Iranian apology can be anything from an expression of humility, gratitude, thanks, or indebtedness when offering a present, or even a move to a closing sequence, as in "sorry I've taken your time" (p. 47). Later Saberi (2012) categorized the situations of ostensible apologies based on Koutlaki's (2010) conceptualization of this speech act. These categorizations are as follow:

- **Apology in offering a present:** when offering a present to somebody the speaker apologizes, communicating the idea that the present is not worthy of the receiver.
- **Host's apology for bad food:** when the host/hostess, apologizes to the guests for not providing good and delicious food.
- **Apology for doing service or favour:** when expressing gratitude and indebtedness for a favour or service.
- **Host's Apology for inconveniences:** when the host/hostess may apologize to the guest for the probable inconveniences and lack of comfort.
- **Guest's Apology for trouble:** when the guest apologizes to the host/hostess for their trouble.

On the other hand, in English, ostensible apologies are defined differently. Isaacs & Clark (1990) argues:

Suppose an army officer orders a private to apologize to her for some minor infraction. When the private says, "I apologize," they may both know he is not truly sorry for the act. The purpose of the apology is to establish the private's respect for the officer's authority. The officer must collude by acknowl-

edging the apology. And if asked, "Do you really mean it?" the private cannot truthfully say "yes" but he also can't say "no" without undercutting his intention of showing respect for the authority structure (p. 504)

Later Link & Kreuz (2005) elaborated on the concept English ostensible apology by proposing a set strategies (characteristic features) of these speech acts. These strategies are 1) the act for which the speaker is apologizing was not the addressee's best interest, 2) speaker believes that the act was not against the addressee's best interest; 3) speaker doesn't persist or insist on the Apology.

Unlike English apologies whose function or meaning rely mainly on the form or structure or the offence made by S, studies on Persian apologies such as *ta'arof* apologies indicate that, interlocutor signal the meaning of these speech acts by using them in specific contexts including in different times and places such as parties, and also among different people such as the host and the guest, as well as with different functions such as to show hospitality or humility. These apologies occur when no offence has occurred, even in most of the cases of *ta'arof* apologies, the speaker (S) does a favour to the hearer (H). Therefore, interpretation of the meanings of *ta'arof* apology is more difficult for the translators as they are highly context-dependent. Miller et al (2014, p. 3) believe that "anyone who wants a deep understanding of the Persian language will benefit from understanding that the surface content of *ta'arof* is not the most important aspect of its meaning; rather what *ta'arof* signifies is a contextual understanding of the conversation that follows and the actions that ensue from that conversation". Koutlaki (2010) and Saberi (2012) emphasize on the context of *ta'arof* apologies i.e. the place and time of the apology as well as the people involved in their identification. However, in the same situations, these apologies are not used or less frequently used in English which makes the transferring their meaning difficult.

Therefore, variations of apologies in Persian and English are expected to create difficulties of understanding in intercultural communications and translation. Despite their prevalence and importance, *ta'arof* apologies have been less discussed in the previous Persian speech act studies. More importantly, they are ignored in the area of translation and subtitling. In this study understanding these elements in Persian soundtrack of Iranian films as well as their transference through subtitling will be analyzed and discussed. In this study, the problems of understanding and transferring the meaning of *ta'arof* apologies in the process of subtitling of Iranian films into English will be investigated. The research questions of this study are as follow:

1. What types of *ta'arof* apologies are used in the corpus? What strategies, *ta'arof* features as well as cultural norms are evident in these speech acts?
2. In what ways *ta'arof* apologies create problems for the Persian-English subtitles?

METHOD

In this study 80 *ta'arof* apologies are collected from two sources as follow:

1. The soundtracks of 4 Iranian subtitled full films (*Talā-ye Sorx* (Crimson Gold) (2004), *Mārmulak* (Lizard) (2004), *Sa'adat Abād* (Land of Felicity) (2011), *Ye Habbeh Qand* (A Cube of Sugar) (2011)).
2. Soundtracks of 4 Iranian TV films (*Mā Xune nistim* (We are not at home) (2009), *Bolur-e Bārān* (The Crystals of Rain) (2010), *Dard-e Sar* (Trouble) (2010), *Kabutar bā Kabutar* (Birds of a Feature) (2011)) broadcasted from the international channels of Jam-e-Jam or IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran broadcasting) These films are also called tele-film interchangeably TV films are full-length audiovisual products which are

produced solely for the purpose of showing on TV. The rationale for choosing these films as the corpus is that no researcher has ever used Iranian TV films as the corpus for subtitling or dubbing analysis. Therefore, there is a need to investigate their subtitling in terms of transference of cultural aspects into English as they are watched by many people around the world through the International IRIB channels.

This collection is done in two stages as follow:

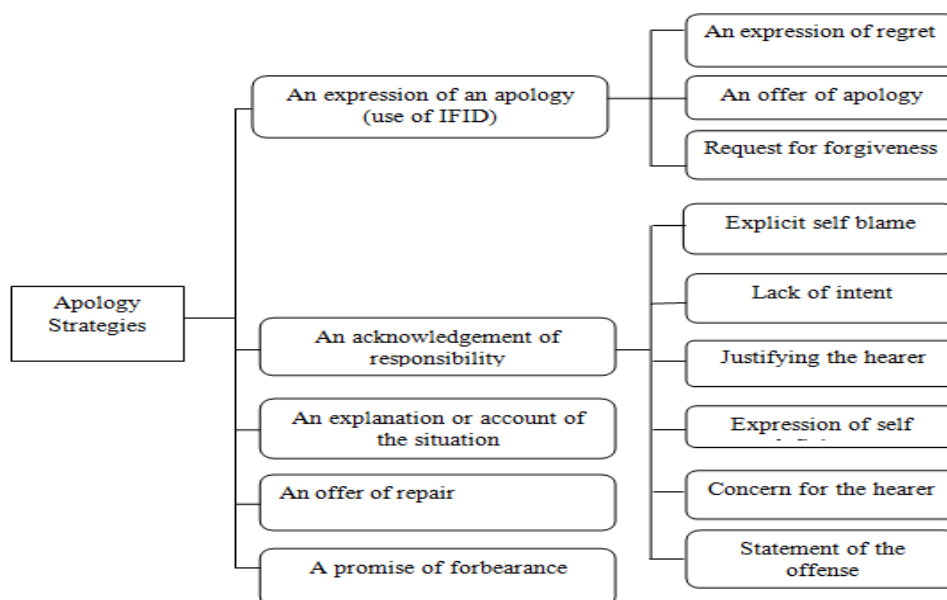


Figure 1: Apology Strategies in Persian

- **Distinguishing *Ta'ārof* features:** A set of contexts and functions of Persian ostensible apology or *ta'ārof* apologies was proposed by Koutlaki (2010). In this study her adoption of these apologies will be minimally modified to distinguish *ta'ārof* apologies from the other Persian apologies.
- **Investigation of cultural concepts:** A set of cultural concepts relevant to the notion of *ta'ārof* and apology will be investigated in identification of *ta'ārof* apologies.
- **Analysis of the subtitles:** After the collection of *ta'ārof* apologies, they are compared with their English subtitles. To this aim, a qualitative approach to analyze the transference of the meaning into TT will be taken.

RESULTS

Results of these study show that *ta'ārof* apologies occurred in three situations or contexts. Examples of these situations and their subtitle are given below:

Host's apology for bad food: following extract taken from the movie *Lizard* (2004) shows combined *ta'ārof* apologies by host for bad food. The Persian soundtrack (source text (ST)), gloss

translation (GT) and the subtitle (target text (TT) have been given.

1. Context: The conversation occurs when Yasi, the female host (in her 30s) has prepared a lot of food. She has been busy with cooking in the previous episodes. She welcomes the guests to help themselves.

Guest: [ST]: *Yāsi che kard-i*

[GT]: [Yasi][what][you did]

[TT]: Yasi, it's wonderful

Host [ST]: *Nushe jān*

[GT]: [bon appetite]

[TT]: Enjoy it.

Guest:[ST]: *Bebaxsh-id*

[GT]: [forgive]

[TT]: Sorry

Host:

[ST]: *Ajale-i shod*

[GT]: [in hurry][it became]

[TT]: If it's late

Guest: [ST]: *chi kār mixast-i bokon-i dige?*

[GT]:[What][job][you wanted][you do]

[any more]

[TT]: What else you could do?

In this conversation, upon the guest's compliment, the host states "*bebaxshid*" (forgive me) and "*ajalei shod*" (the quality of the food is not good as it is prepared in hurry) as she knows that it is customary to downgrade her talent of cooking in order to show herself as *motevāze* or humble. The guest understand the intended meaning of these apologies i.e. 'she is doing *ta'arof*', or 'she is being polite' based on the mutual cultural values i.e. knowledge of *tavāzo*, *shekaste nafsi*, or *mehmān navāzi*. Therefore, inferring the intended meaning of the apologies, the host rejects the apologies by stating "*chi kār mixāsti bokoni dige?*" (What else you wanted to do?).

Similar to the guest, ST audiences can infer the meaning of apologies through context and shared knowledge of Iranian culture i.e. hosts are expected to apologize for bad food before and after serving the food. They also can understand

the meaning of these apologies through retrospective reference to the previous episodes of the movie, in which the host is preparing the food stage by stage. Furthermore, they can infer the meanings of the apologies through the visual signs e.g. big quantity and good appearance of the food as well as the happy and surprised faces of the guests. Finally, final utterance by the guest which implies no harm or offence has occurred; help them to decipher the meanings of the apologies. However, although in the English subtitles, the forms of apologies are recreated in the TT through the subtitle 'sorry if it is late', transference of their meanings i.e. 'the host is apologizing out of politeness' cannot be guaranteed. This is due to the cultural variations of intended meanings of apologies in Persian and English cultures. In other words, apologies where no insult or offence occurs, are less frequently done in English and the subtitling of these apologies may signal genuine meaning in English. Furthermore, TT audience is presumed to not understand the meaning of the apologies as the second apology has been wrongly translated. While in ST, the host apologized for her fast preparation of the food which leads to its bad quality, in the TT, the offence implied is that the food has been prepared very late. In response, the guest implies that the food looks great and it is of high quality. If the offence had been properly translated in TT, the guest response as well as the visual signs i.e. the appearance of the food could help to provide a clearer meaning in TT. Besides, visual signs in the previous scenes which show that the host has prepared the food in several stages help them to infer the meaning. This may risk the transference of the meaning of apologies into TT.

- **Host's apology for inconveniences:** *ta'arof* apologies in the corpus were used by the hosts to the guests for inconveniences such as bad accommodation, late preparation of the tea, privacy issues, messiness of the house, and forgetting to offer food. However, in the previous and current scenes in which these apologies

occurs, these offences did not occur and the hosts only used them to show their *tavāzo* or modesty and *mehmān navāzi* or hospitality. The following conversation contain *ta'ārof* apologies and their English subtitles taken from the movie *Crimson Gold*:

2. The host is a rich man in his 30s who has invited a pizza deliverer person to his house as he was alone. He was abroad for several years and he has just come back to Iran. The pizza deliverer person is a poor man in his 40s who is surprised by the host's invitation.

Host: [ST]: *Rasti bebaxsh-id*
 [GT]: [oh] [forgive]
 [TT]: -
 [ST]: *man ta'ārof na-kard-am*
 [GT]: [I] [ta'ārof] [I did not]
 [TT]: I forgot to offer you
 [ST]: *Tu yakhchāl har no drink-i bexā-in hast*
 [GT]: [in] [fridge] [any] [type] [drink] [you want] [there is]
 [TT]: There lots in the fridge. All kinds of drinks
 [ST]: *Manzur-am nushidani-e*
 [GT]: [my intention] [drink is]
 [TT]: -

In this conversation, the context i.e. the roles of the characters which are host and guest imply that the meaning of the apologies, i.e. 'the host wants to show himself as *mehmān navāz* (hospitable)'. Although the host has been abroad for several years, he remembers that the hosts are expected to show their *mehmān navāzi* through offering foods, drinks and also apologize for bad hospitality in Iran. Both ST and TT audiences access to the previous episodes which implies the guest's poverty (he has to deliver pizza to meet the ends of his family) and unexpected hospitality of the host as well as the visual signs such as guest's surprised look at the luxurious house imply that he has not been to such a place before. Although TT audience may presume that the act for which the speaker is apologizing was not the addressee's best interest (Link & Kreuz, 2005),

however, ST and TT audiences do not share the same background knowledge of *ta'ārof*. Therefore, apology structures in the subtitle do not guarantee the transference of their meaning in the TT.

○ **Guest's apology for the inconveniences:** some of the apologies in the corpus were done by guest to the host. Here is an example of this type of apology from the movie *we are not at Home* (2009):

3. Context: This conversation is between a host and a guest. The host is a man in his 50s while the guest is his friend who is a male director in his 40s. The director and his group have been in the host's house for some days.

Guest:
 [ST]: *Bebaxshid ejāze mid-id?*
 [GT]: [forgive me] [allowance] [you give?]
 [TT]: Can I come in?

Host:
 [ST]: *Xāhesh mikon-am,*
 [GT]: [request] [I do]
 [TT]: Sure
 [ST]: *Befarmā-id*
 [GT]: [you command]
 [TT]: Come in

Guest:
 [ST]: *Bebaxsh-id āqāye Kāshi,*
 [GT]: [forgive me] [Mr.] [Kashi]
 [TT]: I'm sorry Mr. Kashi,
 [ST]: *In sar-o sedāye mā bāese āzāro azyate shomā ham shod*
 [GT]: [this] [sounds] [we] [cause] [annoy] [you] [also] [became]
 [TT]: We were shouting all over the place

Host:
 [ST]: *Extiār dār-in*
 [GT]: [authority] [you have]
 [TT]: No problem
 [ST]: *In-am yek tajrob-as*
 [GT]: [this-also] [one] [experience is]
 [TT]: It's just an experience

In this conversation, the context in which the

apology is used i.e. the conversation happens between host and guest indicates that the apology “*bebaxshid āqāye Kāshi, in saro sedāye mā bāese āzāro azyate shomā ham shod*” (excuse me Mr. Kashi, these sounds disturbed you) is done to fulfil the requirement of *ta'arof* i.e. to show *ehterām* (respect). The host and ST audiences know that the guests are expected to apologize for the inconvenience frequently. The host's response “*extiār dārin, inam ye tajrobas*” (you have authority, this is an experience) indicates that no offence has occurred and he is enjoying hosting the guest. However, this may create ambiguity for TT audiences as they may think that ‘if the host is enjoying hosting the guest and the guest know about it why the guest is apologizing?’ If these apologies occur in a written text, the translator could explain their meanings via explicitation, footnote and other translation strategies. But in the case of subtitling, time and space restrictions make it impossible for the subtitlers to elaborate on these meanings in this constrained mode of translation.

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

Analysis of the Persian apologies revealed that the categorization of explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) included the most frequent strategies in the Persian and English corpus. This strategy included apologies with request for forgiveness (RF) and ‘expression of regret (ER) which totally includes 50% of the data in Persian and 60% of the English data which confirmed a number of previous studies on apology in Persian and English (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Afghari, 2007; Shahrokhi & Jan, 2012; Sadeghi, 2013).

High frequency of the utterance *bebaxshid* in the Persian corpus confirmed the result of studies on Persian apologies (Afghari, 2007; Shariati and Chamani, 2010). About the high frequency of *bebaxshid* Shariati & Chamani (2010) argue that:

“Iranian culture considers human beings as different parts of the same body, and encourages establishing friendly relationships among people, while it dis-

approves keeping distance from others. Therefore, *bebaxshid* (forgive me) is more common among Iranians probably because it builds the least distance between S and H. Another possible explanation is that *bebaxshid* is pronounced much easier than other forms while it consists of more semantic components” (p. 1694).

On the other hand, in English subtitles, the high frequency of the apology form of ‘be sorry’ confirm the results of previous studies (Olshtain and Cohen, 1984) which argue that this form is the most frequent form of apology in English.

Besides *bebaxshid*, the word *zahmat* (bother) and *mozāhem* (intruder) were used frequently in the corpus. Koutlaki (1997, p. 82) maintains that “very often the guest will reply to the host's apology with (*bebaxshid*) *zahmat daādīm* (i.e. ‘you-PL forgive, trouble we-gave’), or she may offer this phrase on the way out in order to express thanks”.

Analysis of the structures of apologies in the corpus revealed that, strategies of IFID namely ‘expression of regret’ and ‘request for forgiveness’ were not used in single forms. If they were used in a single form, the addressee as well as the original audience will not understand the reason of the apology. Therefore they were combined with apologies with other strategies such as ‘statement of offence’ in order to implicate the reason for the apology. The analysis revealed that the only strategy which was used in single form was ‘statement of offence’. These offences were ‘taking the time of the addressee’, ‘bad food’, ‘lack of convenience’, ‘messiness of the room’, etc. However, these apologies were between host and the guest which as Koutlaki (2010) and Sabeti (2012) believe are manifestation of *ta'arof* rather than real apologies for a real offence. In a similar way, ST audience will understand the ostensible meaning as no offence has been committed by S and also they can recourse to their knowledge of *ta'arof*. About *ta'arof* apologies, Koutlaki (1997, p. 82) argues that the speaker is

ostensibly apologizing for bad food, lack of comfort, waste of the visitors' time: in short, she presents her hospitality as being worse than what the visitors deserve. The results of this study confirmed this claim.

Through the analysis of *ta'ārof* apologies, the researcher noticed the important role of some cultural norms related to *ta'ārof* in practicing Persian apologies. These notions were *adab* (politeness), *ehterām* (respect), *mehmān navāzi* (hospitality), *tavāzo* (modesty) and *shekaste nafsi* (self-breaking).

Among these notion, *adab* has been reported to be a very important notion related to *ta'ārof* (Sahragard, 2003; Salmani Nodoushan, 2005). The primary English equivalent of this notion is 'politeness,' 'courtesy' and 'respect' (Sahragard, 2003). The main components related to *adab*, is *ehterām* (respect) (Koutlaki, 2002; Sharifian, 2007). Similar to *adab*, *ehterām* is also connected closely to *ta'ārof* apologies. Result showed that in all examples in the corpus, the characters extend apologies to show *adab* and *ehterām*.

As cited in Behnam & Amizadeh (2012, p. 66) "*ta'ārof* has deep roots in the Iranian tradition of treating your guests better than your own family and being great hosts" (Rezaei, 2007). This concept is also related to the concept of *ta'ārof* and more specifically *mehmān navāzi* (hospitality) and Persian apologies. Analysis of the data showed that the host's apologies for bad food and other offences are seen as a sign of consideration for their guests and of concern for the guests' needs and more generally as sign of *mehmān navāzi* or hospitality.

Another cultural concept related to *ta'ārof* are *shekaste-nafsi* and *tavāzo* which mean humility or modesty. This concept was very evident in the Persian ostensible apologies in the corpus. In such cases, the host downgrades the food or the convenience the host has prepared for the guest. *Shekaste nafsi* is done by the host to show *tavāzo* or modesty which is one of the components of *ta'ārof*. Koutlaki (1997, p. 78) argues that:

Under the maxim of Humility, a host/ess will offer fruit or sweets to a guest saying *qābele ta'ārofī nist* ('it's not worth to be offered', i.e. it's not good enough for the guests) thus presenting her hospitality as inferior. It may be that the speaker does not believe this to be the case at all, but the operation of the humility maxim is so strong that she must present it as such.

The most important limitation of this study is the scarcity of research on similarities and differences of Persian and English apologies as well as the lack of comparative research for translation of *ta'ārof* apologies. As a fundamental aspect of Iranian conversations, *ta'ārof* in general and Persian OSAs in particular are ubiquitous elements in Iranian films. However, due to the purposes of the study, the research had to limit the study to the subtitled Iranian films which make the data collection difficult.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the data revealed that subtitling of *ta'ārof* apologies creates difficulties for the subtitlers due to cultural differences which can occur in two stages: identification and transferring the meaning. However, based on the qualitative analysis, besides the subtitle used for subtitling of *ta'ārof* apologies, the different clues help the subtitler in subtitling them and help the audience to decipher ostensible meaning of the apologies. These clues are 1) S's utterance (the offence articulated e.g. 'it's a mess'), 2) H's utterance which implicate the non-occurrence of offence (e.g. 'forget it, "I wanna talk to you' as a reply to the apology 'it's mess'), 3) the end act (e.g. silence of S), 4) polysemiotic signs (e.g. host's apologies for bad food to a guest who is licking his fingers), and 5) getting information from the verbal and non-verbal elements in previous/ next (e.g. several stages of preparing the food).

Based on the analysis of the subtitles, it can be concluded that the subtitlers should transfer the reason of the apology in order to signal the mean-

ing in TT i.e. no offence has taken place and make the audience think that the apologies are done out of politeness. Visual elements i.e. the role of the characters can be good clues for TT audience to understand the meaning of apologies. However, subtitler needs to take this issue into account and use the subtitle as an additive factor for transferring the meaning of ta'arof apologies.

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haee University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

Dr Mojde Yaqubi holds a PhD in Translation studies. She is currently teaching translation courses in undergraduate and graduate levels at the Islamic Azad Universities and supervising some master's degree theses in the field of English translation. She is interested in interface between pragmatics and subtitling as well as reception studies in translation studies.

Email: m.yaqubi@qodsiau.ac.ir