A Contrastive Study of Request Speech Act in English and Persian Novels: Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach

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Abstract
The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) Approach claims that there are some universalities in all languages. Speech acts seem to be present in all languages, but considering this approach, research has not indicated whether request speech act differs from one language to another. Thus, this study intended to investigate whether request strategies are used differently in English and Persian romantic novels and whether Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach can be considered in English and Persian requests. To reach these objectives, the corpus consisting of two English and Persian romantic novels were used. It was analyzed using Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)'s classification. Results indicated that *mood derivable* was the most frequent request strategy in both novels. Moreover, a statistically significant difference was not observed between request strategies in English and Persian romantic novels and thus the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach can be considered in English and Persian requests. The conclusion drawn is that considering the applicability of this approach, both American and Iranian native speakers can presumably use imperative structures, with the politeness marker *please* or without it, as a request strategy, when the interlocutors are close friends or members of the same family.

Keywords: Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach, pragmatics, request strategies, romantic novels, speech acts

Introduction
Requests have been viewed as a face-threatening speech act (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). They have the intended meaning (i.e., illocutionary force) of affecting a hearer's behavior in such a way that they get the hearer to do something (Blum Kulka, 1991). House and Kasper (1987, p.252) define requests as directives by which "S (Speaker) wants H (Hearer) to do p (p is at a cost to H)". Since requests have the potential to be intrusive and demanding, there is a need for the requester to minimize the imposition involved in the request. This is done through the use of peripheral elements (also known as internal and external modifications) to get addressees to support their requests (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987).

Within the Cross-Cultural Speech Realization Project Act (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), requests are defined as consisting of three parts: (a) the alerter or address term, (b) the head act, and (c) the adjuncts to the head act (also known as supportive moves). The head act is the core of the speech act sequence and its only obligatory part. Within the head act, three different strategies have been observed: direct (or impositive), conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Alerters are opening elements and include items like attention getters (e.g. Pardon me…) and terms of address (e.g. Mrs. Smith), whereas supportive moves are modifications that precede or follow the head act and affect the context in which the actual act is embedded as they serve the purpose of either

mitigating or aggravating the force of the request. They classified the requests into nine categories: 1) mood derivable, 2) explicit performatives, 3) hedged performatives, 4) locution derivable, 5) scope stating, 6) language specific suggestory formula, 7) reference to preparatory conditions, 8) strong hints, and 9) mild hints.

The natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) is a minilanguage corresponding, evidence suggests, to the shared core of all languages. This minilanguage has as many versions as there are human languages. For example, there is an English NSM, a Russian NSM, and a Chinese NSM, with matching minilexicons and minigrammars. Each such minilexicon has a set of fewer than 100 words and a very simple grammar. The grammar of the English NSM does not include any of the complex, language-specific machinery of full English, with its relative clauses, gerunds, participles, and so on, but it does include for example if clauses—which, evidence suggests, can be found in all languages.

Wierzbicka and her colleagues have developed this approach for exploring the cultural underpinning of speech acts (e.g., Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2004; Wierzbicka, 1991; Wierzbicka, 2007). Within this approach, cultural values and attitudes, or what they term 'cultural scripts', which give rise to pragmatic devices, are explicated in terms of a set of fundamental meanings, termed semantic primes, which are alleged to be universal.

Wierzbicka (2006) defines cultural scripts as follows: "Cultural scripts are shared understandings (of a given community of discourse), especially evaluative and prescriptive or proscriptive ones, articulated in universal human concepts" (p. 35). The cultural scripts method has been employed in numerous studies (see in particular the work of Anna Wierzbicka, Cliff Goddard, Bert Peeters, Felix Ameka, Catherine Travis, Rie Hasada, Zhengdao Ye and Jock Wong). Cultural scripts aim at modelling insiders' perspectives, that is, accounting for *their* values and *their* attitudes, without imposing any value judgments from above or from outside. Unlike semantic explications, which model the semantic content of linguistically encoded meanings (lexical, grammatical and phraseological semantics), cultural scripts model shared cultural understandings, attitudes and values of a speech community.

Literature Review

Wierzbicka (1985) conducted a study on request strategies used by British and Polish native speakers. She found out that the main difference in the use of request strategies between British and Polish speakers is in the use of interrogatives as a result of cultural differences between these two groups. While interrogatives are frequently used by British speakers because they are considered polite ways of requesting, Polish speakers view them as formal and overpolite and indicate uncertainty on the part of the speaker as to the willingness of the hearer to fulfill the request.

In a study, Wei (2012) explored request strategies used by native speakers of Chinese and English. An oral discourse completion task (ODCT) was used to collect data and the chi-square analysis method was applied to examine the data. The results of the comparisons of request strategies and internal modifications between Chinese and English native speakers showed no significant differences.

Considering requests in the EFL context, Rezvani, Eslami-Rasekh, and Vahid Dastjerdi (2014) investigated the impact of explicit and implicit teaching on the acquisition of the speech acts of requests and suggestions by Iranian EFL learners. They found that both explicit and implicit teaching exerted a significant effect on the learners' production of requests and suggestions in English. It was also found that there was no statistically significant difference between the aforementioned methods of instruction with regard to their effects on learners'

pragmatic development. Koosha and Vahid Dastjerdi (2012) too made an attempt to explore the use of request forms presented in Richard's *Interchange Series, Books I, II, and III*, widely used in Iranian foreign language teaching context. The obtained results showed that a large number of peripheral modification devices are not presented in the texts studied and those which have received some attention are different in terms of frequency of exposure. Also, no balance was found between the presentation of internal and external modifications in the books under study. The findings of this study, they claimed, had implications for textbook writers, materials developers, language teachers and learners.

Maher (2002) examined some Italian speech act verbs, looking at how we can best express their meanings in an accurate way intelligible to people unfamiliar with Italian, but without falling into the trap of ethnocentrism. The framework to be used in this paper is the Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory (or NSM), which has been built up by Anna Wierzbicka and her colleagues. The result indicated that even two quite closely related languages, such as English and Italian, differ considerably in the kinds of speech acts they require. Thus, it is concluded that as there were differences in these two languages, NSM approach is not applicable in these two languages.

Kim (2008) did the semantic and pragmatic analysis of South Korean apologetic speech acts, in particular with respect to how South Korean apologetic speech act expressions differ conceptually from Australian English expressions of apology. She used the natural semantic metalanguage proposed by Wierzbicka (1985) to find out how the main South Korean apologetic speech act expression *mianhada* differs conceptually from Australian English *sorry*. The findings of her study are that the attitudinal meanings of *mianhada* and *sorry*, as well as the range of illocutionary acts associated with the two expressions are different. Her study further suggests that conceptualizing speech act expressions, using semantically simple words, may help second language learners acquire the proper ways of carrying out speech acts (including non-verbal expressions) in the target language and culture.

In his study, Karimnia (2010) used Natural Semantic Metalanguage (henceforth NSM) to carry out a comparative analysis. The compliment response behavior of native Persian speakers was compared with that of Native American English speakers to see if it can provide evidence for applicability of NSM model which is claimed to be universal. The descriptive technique was the cultural scripts approach, using conceptual primes proposed in the NSM theory. The cultural scripts were presented in both English and Persian Metalanguages. The data were taken from a corpus of 50 hours of recording the live interviews from the Persian and English TV channels. The results showed the applicability of NSM model for cross-cultural comparisons. Then, the paper concludes with the pedagogical implications of the development of the theory of cultural scripts for teaching L2 socio- pragmatics in general and compliments in particular.

Can's (2011) study aimed to find out the culturally different conceptualizations of congratulation in British culture and *tebrik* and *kutlama* in Turkish culture using a corpus approach and to formulate cultural scripts for these three performative verbs using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach. To be able to collect the targeted data, the study begins with the monolingual and bilingual dictionary definitions of the performative verbs (i.e., congratulate, tebrik etmek and kutlamak) and then follows a corpus approach whereby the performative verbs and their various lexical forms are searched for in various corpora (i.e., BYU-BNC, MTC, Google). The results of the study show that there are some cultural differences as well as similarities in the conceptualization of the speech act of congratulation in terms of its contexts of use and strategies. Although there were differences, Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach was verified in this study.

Karimnia (2012) conducted a study to run a comparative analysis using Natural Semantic Metalanguage. The offering routine patterns of native Persian speakers was compared with that of Native American English speakers to see if it can provide evidence for applicability of NSM model which is claimed to be universal. The descriptive technique was the cultural scripts approach, using conceptual primes proposed in the NSM theory. The cultural scripts were presented in both English and Persian Metalanguages. The data were taken from a corpus of 20 hours of recording the live interviews from the Persian and English TV channels. The results showed the applicability of NSM model for cross-cultural comparisons.

Jafari and Biria (2015) investigated a comparative analysis using Natural Semantic Metalanguage. The refusal patterns of speech acts was contrasted in English and Persian fairy tales to see if it could provide evidence of applicable efficacy of NSM model which is claimed to be universal. The descriptive technique was the cultural scripts approach, using semantic primes proposed in the NSM theory. The cultural scripts were presented in both English and Persian Metalanguages. The data were collected from some English and Persian fairy tales. The results showed the applicability of NSM model for cross-cultural comparisons.

Several scholars have dealt with the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach cross-culturally concerning different speech acts (Can, 2011; Jafari & Biria, 2015; Karimnia, 2010, 2012; Kim, 2008; Maher, 2002). However, reviewing the literature and to the best knowledge of the researchers, no study has investigated English and Persian in terms of request speech act to see whether or not Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) can be considered in these two languages in terms of the speech act of request. Moreover, many researchers (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Eslami-Rasekh, 1993; Hassall, 2003; House & Kasper, 1981; Jalilifar, 2009; Koosha & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2012; Rezvani et al., 2014, to name a few) have studied request strategies used by non-native speakers of English in an ESL/EFL context; however, no research has been conducted to explore this speech act used by native speakers of English and Persian in natural language used in social interactions. Thus, to fill this gap, this study was an attempt to compare the request strategies used by English and Persian native speakers in romantic novels which can be considered as a source of naturally occurring data to see if NSM is applicable to the speech act of request in English and Persian.

In fact, NSM can used to fruitfully analyze a number of related and unrelated languages and cultures (Goddard 2011; Wierzbicka, 2001, 2013). There is thus ample evidence to suggest that NSM is a useful analytic tool for understanding language and culture since semantic primes and certain combinations of them are universal in that they may be rendered in any language (sometimes using language-specific grammar) to yield the same meaning (Wong, 2016). Hence, similarities in the English and Persian request strategies used by English and Persian native speakers can imply that the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach is applicable in English and Persian request speech act and thus the relevant semantic primes may be exploited in teaching English speech acts to Iranian EFL learners and vice-versa. Indeed, as these primes are supposed to be universal, the English teachers can use specific sematic primes to make the meaning inherent in requests clear to EFL learners. Moreover, as the illocutionary force inherent in each speech act can be transferred via semantic primes, translation from one language to another would be a much easier task.

Considering the problem stated above, the following research questions were raised:

Q1. Are request strategies used differently in English and Persian romantic novels?

Q2. Can Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach be considered in English and Persian speech act of request?

Method

Corpus

The corpus of this study was comprised of two romantic novels: one in English and the other one in Persian. The English novel was entitled *Born in Fire* which was written in 1994 by Nora Roberts who is an American contemporary romantic novelist and her books are among the best-sellers in the United States. The Persian novel was *Dalan-e Behesht* (The Corridor of Paradise) which was written in 1999 by Nazi Safavi who is an Iranian contemporary romantic novelist and this very novel of hers is a best-seller in Iran. The novels were analogous in terms of length: both were about 300 pages, included around 110,000 words each, and among the best-sellers. The genre that both novels followed was romantic.

Concerning the genre of these novels, the researcher considered two criteria: 1) the genre exists in both languages and its novels share most commonalities, and 2) the novels of that genre include dialogues between the characters who are some common people and their lives are usual lives. Some of the genres that are available in both languages are realism, surrealism, romanticism, etc. Considering these two criteria, the romance genre seemed to be the best possible one which met the two above-mentioned criteria.

Having access to the requests made in natural face-to-face conversations done by native speakers of English was infeasible for the researchers; hence, novels and films could be used as the sources which were nearly close to naturally occurring conversations. Due to this limitation, the researchers decided to choose novels as the source in which natural conversations could be found and requests made in conversations could be accessible.

Analysis Framework

The instrument which was exploited in the present study to analyze the speech act of request in English and Persian romantic novels was the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). Following Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), nine request strategies are proposed: 1) mood derivable, 2) explicit performatives, 3) hedged performatives, 4) locution derivable, 5) scope stating, 6) language specific suggestory formula, 7) reference to preparatory conditions, 8) strong hints, and 9) mild hints.

Procedure

The paper copy of the Persian novel *Dalan-e Behesht* (The Corridor of Paradise) was available in the book market; however, the paper copy of English novel *Born in Fire* was not available in the book market in Iran. The researcher could find the free e-book of *Born in Fire* on the Internet and download it from Library Genesis (http://gen.lib.rus.ec). The two romantic novels were read by the researcher and all the sentences were analyzed and the sentences which included the speech act of request were singled out. Then, the request strategies of those sentences were determined based on the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). Indeed, the request strategies were determined, coded based on this scheme, and finally counted. The frequency of each strategy was specified and the data were statistically analyzed.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, which were two English and Persian corpora, the frequency of all request strategies used in the English and Persian romantic novels, were determined. The two corpora were of different sizes; thus, the data were normalized in terms of 10,000 words. Before the data were subjected to statistical analyses, normality of the data was tested in order for the researcher to be able to use parametric/non-parametric tests. To answer the first research

question, as the data were not normal, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to explore whether or not there was a difference between frequencies of the request strategies in the two English and Persian romantic novels. The answer to the second research question was dependent upon the answer to the first research question.

Results

Concerning the first research question, the frequency and percentage of all request strategies in English and Persian romantic novels were determined and represented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Frequency and Percentage of Request Strategies in English and Persian Romantic Novels*

Request strategy	English novel Born in Fire N* (%)	Persian novel The Corridor of Paradise N* (%)
Mood derivable	16 (76.19%)	27 (77.14%)
Explicit performatives	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Hedged performatives	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.86%)
Locution derivable	2 (9.52%)	0 (0.00%)
Scope stating	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.86%)
Language specific suggestory formula	0 (0.00%)	3 (8.57%)
Reference to preparatory conditions	2 (9.52%)	2 (5.71%)
Strong hints	1 (4.77%)	1 (2.86%)
Mild hints	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Total	21 (100.00)	35 (100.00)

* The frequencies were normalized in 10,000 words.

It was indicated in Table 1 that the frequency and percentage of the request strategies in these two novels were different. *Mood derivable* was shown to be the most frequent request strategy in both *Born in Fire* (76.19%) and *The Corridor of Paradise* (77.14%). The percentages that this strategy allocated to itself was almost the same in both novels. The two request strategies which were present in both *Born in Fire* and *The Corridor of Paradise* were *reference to preparatory conditions* (9.52% and 5.71%) and *strong hints* (4.77% and 2.86%). These two request strategies were twice used in the English novel than the Persian novel. Moreover, the two request strategies which were not observed in these two novels were *explicit performatives* (0.00% and 0.00%) as well as *mild hints* (0.00% and 0.00%). The rest of the request strategies including *hedged performatives* (0.00% and 2.86%), *locution derivable* (9.52% and 0.00%), *scope stating* (0.00% and 2.86%), and *language specific suggestory formula* (0.00% and 8.57%) were observed either in the English novel or in the Persian novel.

The difference between request strategies used in the English and Persian romantic novels was to be explored in the first research question. To answer this question, first the normality of the data related to the request strategies in English and Persian novels was verified; then the descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney U test—as the data were not normally distributed—were calculated. The respective results are shown in the following tables.

Table 2. *Test of Normality of Data (Request Strategies) Related to English Romantic Novel*

Novel	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
English Requests	.414	9	.000	.516	9	.000

As shown in Table 2, to test the normality of data, both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used; however, as the English corpus was of small size (less than 50), it was advised that the Shapiro-Wilk tests results be reported. The P values for English data (P value = .000) was lower than .05; thus, the data related to request strategies in the English novel was not normally distributed. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test which is a non-parametric test was to be used to explore the statistically different significance between the request strategies used in the English and Persian romantic novels. The results of the test of normality related to the Persian data are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Test of Normality of Data (Request Strategies) Related to Persian Romantic Novel*

Novel	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Persian Requests	.429	9	.000	.489	9	.000

As it was demonstrated in Table 3, to test the normality of data, both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used; however, as the Persian corpus was of small size (less than 50), it was advised that the Shapiro-Wilk tests results be reported. The P values for the Persian data (P value = .000) was lower than .05; as a result, the data related to request strategies in the Persian novel was not normally distributed. Hence, the Mann-Whitney U test which is a non-parametric test was to be used to explore the statistically different significance between the request strategies used in the English and Persian romantic novels. The results of the descriptive statistics and the Man-Whitney U test are displayed in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics of Request Strategies in English and Persian Romantic Novels*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentiles		
				25th	50th (Median)	75th
Request strategy	18	3.1111	7.01166	.0000	1.0000	2.0000
Novel	18	1.5000	.51450	1.0000	1.5000	2.0000

It was indicated in Table 4 that in the English romantic novel, the mean score and the standard deviation were 3.11 and 7.01, respectively, and in the Persian romantic novel, the mean score and the standard deviation were 1.50 and .51, respectively. As the table showed, the mean scores were different. To see if this difference is significantly different, the Mann-Whitey U test was run on the data. The results are depicted in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. *Ranks of Request Strategies in English and Persian Romantic Novels*

	Novel	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Request strategy	English	9	8.67	78.00
	Persian	9	10.33	93.00
	Total	18		

Comparing the mean ranks, as shown in the table above, the Persian novel had the greater number of request strategies as it indicated the higher mean rank (r=10.33). This higher number of request strategies in the Persian romantic novel was also observed in Table 1 which showed the frequencies of request strategies in both English and Persian romantic novels. To see if this difference was statistically significant, the date were subjected to the Mann-Whitney U test and the results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. *Mann-Whitney U Test of Request Strategies in English and Persian Romantic Novels*

	Request strategy
Mann-Whitney U	33.000
Wilcoxon W	78.000
Z	-.699
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.485
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.546

Based on the information in Table 6, there was not a statistically significant difference between the request strategies in English and Persian romantic novels (U = 33.000, p = .485 (two-tailed). It occurred since the p value was greater than the specified level of significance (i.e. .05). Consequently, the answer to the second research question is English and Persian novels did not differ in terms of request strategies.

The results of the first research question indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the request strategies in English and Persian romantic novels. Hence, the answer to the second research question is that the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach which highlights the universality of languages and strengthens the existence of similarities among languages exists in English and Persian in terms of the speech act of request.

Discussion

The results related to the first research question indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between the two languages in terms of request strategies. Consistent with the results of this question, Wei (2012) indicated that native speakers of Chinese and English showed no significant differences. It is implied that English, Persian and Chinese native speakers have the same mindset as far as request speech act is concerned; thus, the similar semantic primes can be used in decomposing request speech act in these three languages. Indeed, speakers of English and Persian presumably have common expectations as to what the appropriate behavior is and what its social meanings are. This served to denote that metalanguage is not tied to any single language, either to English or to Persian, and that the semantic primes provide a vehicle whereby cultural outsiders can access and understand requests in other languages such as English much better.

In contrast to these results, Wierzbicka (1985) found out that the main difference in the use of request strategies between native speakers of British and Polish is in the use of

interrogatives as a result of cultural differences between these two groups. While interrogatives are frequently used by British speakers because they are considered polite ways of requesting, Polish speakers view them as formal and overpolite and indicate uncertainty on the part of the speaker as to the willingness of the hearer to fulfill the request.

The results of the first research question which showed no statistically significant difference between request strategies used by English and Persian native speakers led to the answer to the second research question. As differences were not statistically significant, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach can be considered in English and Persian concerning request strategies. In line with the result of this study concerning the second research question, the findings of Karimnia's study (2010) showed the applicability of NSM model in terms of compliments for cross-cultural comparisons. Consistent with it, Can's (2011) study revealed that concerning *tebrik* and *kutlama* in Turkish culture, although there were differences, Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach was verified in this study. Parallel with the results of the current project, Karimnia's (2012) study showed the applicability of NSM model for cross-cultural comparisons in offering routine patterns. Moreover, Jafari and Biria (2015) provided evidence of applicable efficacy of NSM model to refusal patterns. Considering the studies conducted on a series of speech acts—compliments, congratulations, offering, and refusals—it can be found out that although cultures are different in general, certain cultural norms such as requesting, complimenting, etc. are shared among certain languages and thus the semantic primes available in the NSM can be drawn on to convey the illocutionary part of meaning behind speech acts.

On the other hand, Maher (2002) indicated that even two quite closely related languages, such as English and Italian, differ considerably in the kinds of speech acts they require. Thus, it is concluded that as there were differences in these two languages, NSM approach is not applicable in these two languages. Moreover, Kim (2008) revealed that expressions of apology made by South Korean and Australian English native speakers differed.

Concluding Remarks

Based on the frequencies obtained and the results which showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between English and Persian native speakers' requests, the first conclusion that is drawn is that American and Iranian native speakers can presumably use imperative structures, with the politeness marker *please* or without it, as a request strategy when the interlocutors are close friends or members of the same family. In other words, in both cultures, when the atmosphere is not formal, imperatives can be used in situations where request is required.

The second conclusion is concerned with the applicability of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach in English and Persian. This applicability implies that the cultural norms and values in these two languages in terms of request are similar; thus, it can be concluded that Iranian EFL learners would not have difficulties when they request in their speaking and writing in English; particularly those difficulties which usually arise from the cultural differences between two the languages. Moreover, request which is one of the frequent speech acts in international and intercultural interactions turns to an easy task for the Iranian EFL learners and this success presumably leads to a positive attitude towards learning English as a second language and thus increasing motivation towards English language learning. Furthermore, availability of semantic primes, as far as speech acts in general and request speech act in particular are concerned, can bridge some kind of cultural gap between ESL/EFL learners and

native speakers of English in international negotiations. Thus, they can be practical in cross-cultural education as well as intercultural communication.

The results of this study can help language professors and language teachers as well as learners. It is evident that if commonalities exist between two languages, learners can probably learn with less difficulties the language structures of the second or the foreign language. Concerning the findings of this study, as request strategies did not show any statistically significant differences, the language professors and teachers at language institutes can devote less time to teach request strategies to Iranian EFL learners and thus devote more time to language structures which are different in both languages. Furthermore, as Rezvani et al. (2014) revealed, both explicit and implicit instructions can be exploited to teach request strategies to EFL learners. Similarly, the results can useful for syllabus designers and material developers in order to provide more exercises on request strategies which are similar in the two languages to internalize these similar strategies. Indeed, more time can be allocated to these request strategies which are different in English and Persian and, on the other hand, less time is allocated to the similar frequent request strategies in both languages.

The present study suggests that many second language learners who have good lexical and grammatical knowledge, but fail to perform speech acts effectively, should explore the concepts embodied in the main speech act expressions studied by decomposing the speech act expressions into the semantically simple units provided by NSM.

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