Original Article

Politeness Strategies Used in the Iranian and American Newspapers: The Case of Iran's Nuclear Deal

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Abstract

The appropriate employment of language by politicians can settle many of the current global problems and crises. Iran's nuclear deal with all its complexities and subtleties is one of the most contentious global issues that demands a lot of tact and prudence on the part of the politicians to be resolved. Politicians could draw upon different politeness strategies to employ appropriate speech, save the face of others, gain their trust, and resolve problems. Considering the significance of this issue, this corpus based descriptive research investigated the politeness strategies employed in the editorials of Iranian and American newspapers. Fifty news articles from the *Tehran Times* and *New York Times* published from May 2019 to June 2022 were investigated according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. These news articles were relevant to Iran's nuclear deal. The findings indicated that the most frequent politeness strategy in the *Tehran Times* news was the positive politeness strategy and the most frequent politeness strategy in the *New York Times* news was the negative politeness strategy. Finally, the results of the chi-square test revealed that there is a significant difference in the frequency of politeness strategies use in both newspaper articles. The findings highlight the sociocultural dependency of the politeness concept and imply that cultural differences affect preference for the choice of types of politeness strategies.

Keywords: Face, Iran's nuclear deal, negative face, politeness strategies, positive face, pragmatics

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1. Introduction

Over the years, sanctions have exerted a negative and destructive influence on Iran's economy and people. Since 1979, especially in the last decade, the United States along with a global coalition has used sanctions against Iran to make changes in Iran's behavior and policies, including Iran's nuclear program, about which Western governments claim that it is going to be used for nuclear weapons. Iran, on the other hand, counters these allegations stating that it for civilian purposes, such as medical purposes and generating energy. It seems that miscommunication and misunderstanding between both parties is one of the reasons that has turned a common understanding out of reach.

Politeness and the proper employment of politeness strategies, among other factors, is one of the key issues that can help politicians employ appropriate speech, save the face of others, gain their trust, and resolve problems. Politeness is considered the most fundamental issue in the field of pragmatics (Isabella et al., 2022). Therefore, it seems that among other subcategories of the pragmatics field, politeness plays a key role in our everyday communication, and the appropriate employment of politeness, especially in the speech of politicians, can significantly improve our relationship. However, it seems that lack of appropriate employment of polite behavior and politeness strategies in the utterances of politicians is one of the main sources of tension and conflict in international relations (Haerul et al., 2021).

Due to the significance of politeness and politeness strategies in learning an alien or second language, many studies have investigated them according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework (e.g., Alcosero & Gomez, 2022; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Mousavi, 2021). However, it seems that the investigation of politeness strategies in political discourse concerning a very contentious global issue such as Iran's nuclear deal is an under-investigated issue that needs further attention. Therefore, drawing upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, the present corpus-based study tries to explore the politeness strategies used in two corpora of the editorials and news extracted from an international English newspaper (*New York Times*) and a local Iranian English press (*Tehran Times*).

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Politeness

From the etymological perspective, the word 'polite' originated from the Latin term 'poiltus' that denotes 'to soft'. This word nowadays means 'refined', 'cultivated', etc. (Sifianou, 1992). Different definitions have been presented for the term politeness. Yule (1996) stated politeness could be done in the status of societal distance proximity. Suzila and Yusri (2012) believed that politesse is essential because of interaction since it regards the requirements of the face of other people. They also stated that the societal interval, the formalness of the subjects, and the difference in power can influence adherence to expectations of politeness since they can shape behavior in several methods. Jakučionytė (2020) had a sociolinguistic view of politeness; he believed that politeness is perceived as socially allowable verbal and non-verbal behavior. What is clear from these definitions is the vital role of politeness in our communication. However, there is no consensus on what exactly politeness means, maybe due to the breadth nature of the concept of Politeness.

Conventionally, politeness is placed in the field of pragmatic study particularly within the domain of communicative competence. Politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is a pragmatics field that preoccupies those interested in examining language from the point of view of speech. Therefore, it seems that politeness and pragmatics have many similar characteristics, and we commonly use this knowledge in our communication by applying appropriate discourse.

The crucial role of politeness in our communication is clearly perceivable, so we cannot deny the fact that being polite creates respect and consequently culminates in more successful interaction. Concerning the vital role of politeness, many scholars have presented different reasons why we should be polite in our interactions with our interlocutors. For example, Mahmood and Murad (2019) stated that politeness is considered an integral component of almost every social interaction. Besides, it seems that politeness is used as a beneficial tool in order to alleviate any argumentation or struggle. Politeness actively acts as a lessen tool for any type of threat or conflict that might happen between an interlocutor and a listener (Mahmood & Murad, 2019).

In addition, some linguists like Brown and Levinson believed that politeness is mostly used for the sake of improving and maintaining face. In this regard, Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that generally, people in their interactions have a mutual tendency to

save the face of each other, and this cooperation is based on the fact that the face is vulnerable. Therefore, the participants in an interaction usually are inclined to avoid threatening the face of their interlocutors and prefer to save the face of each other (Brown &Levinson, 1987).

2.2 Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness

Many researchers have proposed different categories for politeness strategies but up to now, one of the great prominent politeness theories is Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework of politeness. They believed that three social factors affect the degrees of politeness of the speaker to the hearer:

1-The social distance that exists between the S and H. For example, if the speaker has recently become familiar with the listener or is unfamiliar with the listener, the speaker will behave more politely.

2- The speaker's relative power over the hearer. In this case, it is clear that when the power is greater, we act in a more polite manner. For instance, we talk with our boss in a more polite way than our colleagues.

3-The absolute ranking of impositions in a particular culture.

Brown and Levinson (1987) stated four sorts of politeness strategies summarize humane politesse " behavior.

1. Bald on Record

This strategy often does not try to reduce the menace to the listener's face. So, it is regarded as a less polite strategy. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated this strategy is a straight method of expressing something, free from any minimalization to the imposition, in a straight, apparent, obvious, and brief manner.

Situations and examples**:**
1.1 Situation with no threat minimization
1.2 Urgency or desperation/advice or warning
    Ex: *watch out!*
1.3 When efficiency is necessary
    Ex: *hear me out…*
1.4 Task- oriented
    Ex: *pass me the hammer*.

1.5 Little or no desire to maintain someone's face

Ex: *don't forget to clean the blinds!*

1.6 Doing the FTAs is in the interest of the hearer.

Ex: *your headlights are on!*

1.7 Situations where the threat is minimized implicitly

1.8 Welcomes

Ex: *come in*

1.9 Offers

Ex: *leave it, I will clean up later.*

Ex: *eat!*

2. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is considered the heart of esteem demeanors and this strategy is "more specified and focused". Negative politeness consists of being commonly indirect; questioning, hedging; being pessimistic; and lessening the imposition. This sort of strategy is usually employed when there is a significant difference in the social position of the interlocutor and listener. So, negative politeness strategy is usually employed in formal circumstances. Negative politeness consists of:

3.1 Be indirect

Ex: *would you know where oxford street is?*

3.2 Use hedges or questions

Ex: *perhaps, he might have taken it, maybe.*

Ex: *could you please pass the rice?*

3.3 Be pessimistic

Ex: *you couldn't find your way to lending me a thousand dollars, could you?*

Ex: *so, I suppose some help is out of the questions, then?*

3.4 Minimize the imposition

Ex: *it is not too much out of your way, just a couple of blocks.*

3.5 Use obviating structures, like nominalizations, passives, or statements of general rules.

Ex: *I hope offense will not be taken.*

Ex: *visitors sign the ledger.*

Ex: *spitting will not be tolerated.*

3.6 Apologetic

    Ex: *I'm sorry; it's a lot to ask, but can you lend me a thousand dollars?*

3.7 Use plural pronouns

    Ex: *we regret to inform you.*

3.8 Minimize imposition

    Ex: *I just want….*

3.9 Adverbial clause hedge

    Ex: *that's just how it is, in fact*

3.10 Impersonalize speaker and hearer

    Ex: *It seems that…*

3. Positive Politeness

The positive politeness strategy is often utilized in informal situations and in this strategy, speakers and hearers feel a sense of intimacy and rapport with each other. Positive politeness is commonly observed in the communities of acquaintances, or where individuals are familiar with each other. Thus, in the positive politeness strategy, the speaker completely regards the positive face of the listener.

 Situations and examples

2.1 Attend to the hearer's interests, needs, and wants

    Ex: *you look sad. Can I do anything?*

2.2 Use solidarity in – group identity markers

    Ex: *heh, mate, can you lend me 3 dollars?*

2.3 Be optimistic

    Ex: *I will just come along if you don't mind.*

2.4 Include both speaker and hearer in the activity.

    Ex: *if we help each other, I guess, we will both sink or swim in this course.*

2.5 Offer or promise

    Ex: *if you wash the dishes, I will vacuum the floor.*

2.6 Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy) with the hearer and his interests

    Ex: *that's a nice haircut you got; where did you get it?*

2.7 Avoid disagreement

Ex: *yes, it's rather long; not short certainly.*

2.8 Joke

Ex: *Wow, that's a whopper!*

2.9 Give or ask for a reason

Ex: *why don't you lend us your record player?*

2.10 Give the gift to H

4. Off Record

This strategy uses implied speech and takes out the interlocutor from the possibility of being imposed. So, here everything is secret and the hearer should have pragmatic knowledge to grasp what the speaker says. So, here the listener should make an inference to find out what the speaker means. Therefore, the off-record strategy deals with pragmatic knowledge, and in this strategy, having enough pragmatic knowledge is necessary. This strategy includes:

4.1 Minimizing the threat toward the hearers' freedom (S- speaker, H- hearer).

Ex: S: *Do you have a free chair over here?* H: *yes, I do. (Grab the chair for the speaker).*

Ex: S: *Are you going out?* H: *yes, I will come home early.*

4.2 Giving the hearers a chance to show good personality in caring for others.

Ex: S: *My head aches a lot.* H: *oh, I will get some pain-killer pills for you.*

4.3 Overstate

Ex: *why are you always smoking?*

4.4 Understate

Ex*: it's not half bad. (i.e. speaker thinks it's surprisingly good).*

4.5 Use tautology
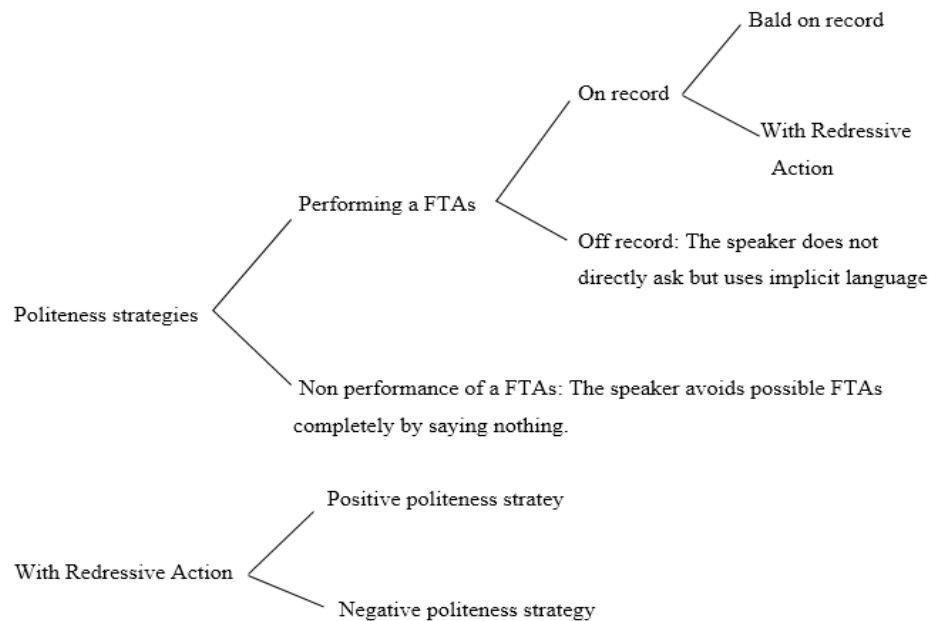
Ex: *war is war*

4.6 Use contradiction

Ex: *yes, and no*

4.7 Presuppose

Ex: *I washed the car again today.*

Figure 1.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) Model for Politeness Strategies

Bald on record

On record

With Redressive Action

Performing a FTAs

Off record: The speaker does not directly ask but uses implicit language

Politeness strategies

Non performance of a FTAs: The speaker avoids possible FTAs completely by saying nothing.

Positive politeness stratey

With Redressive Action

Negative politeness strategy

*FTAs: Face Threatening Acts

2.3 Face

Face is the positive social merit or public identity that we attempt to preserve both for ourselves and for each other in communication, a notion similar to respect, honor, or dignity. The face is a self-figure an individual shape concerning their desire in being fairly or suitably considered or judged by people. It could be a social delineation of an individual showing the honor, care, or confidence others have in them which they both have or are the awareness of themselves and of which people are conscious (Goffman, 1967).

While Goffman regarded the face as a social phenomenon, Brown and Levinson emphasized the individual dimension of the face. Goffman (1967) believed that the face is considered a self-identifying picture regarding the accepted societal features. Thus, he believed that social relations and people affect the face. In this regard, Yule (1996) stated that face want is an individual's expectancy of their public self-image. From his statement, it is perceivable that face is completely related to society because we as a human constantly interact with others, and in their relationship, we want others to see us as good as possible and without any flaws. However, it seems that Brown and Levinson's notion of the face looks at the face as an individual aspect of the face rather than a social phenomenon.

Spencer Oatey (2008) believed that Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of face disregards interpersonal or social aspects of the face. She believed that face is a broader concept. She stated that face is related to an individual's feeling of personality or self–notion: self as a person (personal identity), self as a team member (group or collaborative personality), and self in relation to people (relational personality). Therefore, although Goffman for the first time introduced the concept of the face, it seems that Spencer Oatey presented the most comprehensive definition of the notion of the face in comparison to Goffman and Brown and Levinson.

Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguished the negative face from the positive face. They stated positive face is the will of each individual whose wishes be favorable to at least another. In addition, the negative face is the desire of any worthy mature person that his or her act will not be impeded by others. Besides, Leech (2014) maintained positive politeness designates some good prices to the hearers. He stated offers, invitations, compliments, and congratulations are some instances of positive politeness that boost the positive face of listeners. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that apologies are an instance of a negative politeness strategy.

In addition, Brown and Levinson (1987) differentiated between the concepts of the *Face Threatening Act (FTA)* and the *Face-Saving Act (FSA)*. FTAs might endanger either the interlocutor's face or the listener's face, and they might endanger either the negative face or the positive face. In this regard, Culpeper (2011) proposed a similar concept named face attack acts. Face Attack Act is defined as acts that are evaluated as intentionally unpleasant and malicious. The opposite of FTAs are FSAs that relate to any action done by individuals to decrease any possible threat to others' faces (Yule, 1996). In addition, Hu Chun (2020) stated saving the face happens when you intentionally respect others and have a careful or sensitive act with sympathy and put aside egotism.

2.4 Iran's Nuclear Deal

Since the Revolution in 1979 in Iran, the relationship between Iran and the United States has been strenuous. In these days, Iran encounters with the financial sanction of the United States (Dashti et al., 2020). Today, the United States takes actions to confine and seclude Iran. It has imposed many embargoes on Iran to persuade Iranian authorities to make changes in their behaviors and policies, including Iran's nuclear plans and program. The US-led

coalition is under the assumption that Iran's atomic activity and enrichment are for the purpose of nuclear arms. However, Iran claims that its atomic plan is for amicable aims (Dashti et al., 2020).

The universal demand for the settlement of Iran's atomic plan furnished the ground for the nuclear negotiations between Iran and 5+1 under the Obama administration, which culminated in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2014. The JCPOA was an actual victory of multifaceted diplomacy and could be regarded as the most paramount safety pact from the signature of the Intermediate-Range Atomic Forces Treaty (INF) between Moscow and Washington at the time of the Cold War (Pop, 2020). Trumps administration was profoundly worried about JCOPA that this pact does not guarantee Americas' benefits (Asghar, 2019). So, after Trump's victory in the US elections in 2017, he claimed that he should leave the JCPOA because Iran is the cause of instability in the Middle East; this agreement was defective and could not stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Finally, on May 8, 2019, the US government withdrew from the JCPOA with Trump's signature and stopped its commitments (Asghar, 2019).

On January 20, 2021, after Joe Biden took over the presidency, the new American government believed that it should return to the JCPOA. Anthony Blinken, the United States secretary of state, declared that maximum pressure on Iran has not reached the desired results, and that the US withdrawal has led to a more dangerous nuclear program. Therefore, he stated that in the current situation, the existence of an agreement is better than its absence. Since then, Iran's nuclear negotiations have been an ongoing process, but it has not reached any agreement yet.

2.5 Some Related Studies on Politeness Strategies

Due to the significance of politeness and politeness strategies in our daily interactions, they have been investigated from different perspectives by various researchers. Goudarzi et al. (2015), for example, scrutinized the employment of politeness strategies in English commercial letters written by native and non-native speakers. The results of their study revealed that non-native speakers used negative and positive politeness strategies more than the speakers that were the native speakers. Nisak and Ariyanti (2020) did research to find out the use of politeness strategies and rhetorical tools utilized by Trump at the time of the dispute with Iran through videos on the white house channel on YouTube. The result

indicated that Trump frequently employed positive politeness to gain his Listeners' attention to attain his aims. Unaina, et al. (2021) scrutinized the sorts of politeness strategies employed by instructors and students. Their findings showed that the bald-on-record strategy was frequently utilized by teachers in classroom interaction. Khomeijani Farahani et al. (2021) did a corpus study to analyze the high school's English textbooks from a pragmatic point of view. They found that the bald-on-record politeness strategy and positive politeness strategy were the most frequent politeness strategies in textbooks.

It seems that investigating politeness strategies in political discourse and concerning Iran's nuclear deal is an under-explored area. Therefore, drawing upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) classification of politeness strategies, the present study was an attempt to scrutinize the politeness strategies used in news related to Iran's nuclear deal in Iranian and American newspapers. To attain this purpose, these research questions were formulated:

1- What are the most frequent politeness strategies used in news related to Iran's nuclear deal in Iranian newspapers?

2- What are the most frequent politeness strategies used in news related to Iran's nuclear deal in American newspapers?

3- Is there a significant difference in the frequency of usage of politeness strategies used in news related to Iran's nuclear deal in Iranian and American newspapers?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current study was corpus-based descriptive research and aims to investigate the frequency of usage of politeness strategies used in news related to Iran's nuclear deal in Iranian and American newspapers. Besides, because this study deals with numerical data, it also was quantitative. This study employs purposive sampling: the population of this study is delimited to only news related to Iran's nuclear deal.

3.2 Corpus

The corpus included 50 news articles concerning Iran's nuclear deal news, 30 from the *Tehran Times* and 20 from the *New York Times*. As the number of words in the native newspaper (The *New York Times*) was too much more in comparison to the non-native one (The *Tehran Times*), the researchers of this study decided to investigate them based on the

same number of words in both newspapers. Therefore, regardless of the unequal number of articles in this research, the number of words in both newspaper articles was nearly equal and about 26535 words.

The news published from May 7th, 2019, to June 11th, 2022on Iran's nuclear deal in *Tehran Times* and *New York Times*, as an Iranian and American newspapers respectively, were drawn upon as the corpus of this study. The *Tehran Times* is an English-language newspaper published in Iran, officially started publishing under the name of *Tehran Journal* on May 20th, 1963. This newspaper has an audience of different strata, including students, linguists, tourists, and guests in Iran who have a poor command of the Persian language. The *New York Times* is an American daily newspaper with global readers, published for the first time in New York City in 1851, and until now, the NYT has been awarded the most Pulitzer Prizes (132) among all newspapers (Raymond, et al., 2020).

3.3 Instrument

In this investigation, to discover the types of politeness strategies employed in the newspapers, the politeness strategy classification of Brown and Levinson (1987) was used. Their classification of politeness strategies includes the following major parts:

1. Bald on record
2. Positive politeness
3. Negative politeness
4. Off record (Indirect)

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Due to the availability and accessibility of the contents of the *Tehran Times* and *New York Times,* 50 news articles related to Iran's nuclear deal published from May, 2019 to June, 2022 were downloaded from the websites of these two newspapers.

As the number of words in the news articles of the *New York Times*, as the native newspaper, was generally more than the number of words in the news articles of the *Tehran Times*, the researchers of the present study selected 20 and 30 news articles from each newspaper respectively to achieve an almost equal number of words in both corpora.

Then, drawing upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) categorization, the corpus was carefully and meticulously examined by the two investigators of this study to identify and

categorize the examples of politeness strategies in the data. To ensure the reliability of the obtained data, the researchers of the study invited another expert in the field of TEFL to codify 5 news articles in each corpus randomly again. The inter-rater reliability yielded an acceptable level of r=90%, and the remaining discrepancies were resolved through discussion. For responding to the first two questions of the study, the frequency of the various politeness strategies was counted. A Chi-square test was employed to prepare an answer to the third research question of the study.

4. Result

4.1 The First Research Question

The first question of this research was an attempt to see the most frequent politeness strategies in the Iranian newspaper, the Tehran Times. Table1 depicts the findings of the data analysis of the non-native corpus. The findings revealed that whole four sorts of politeness strategies were used within the *Tehran Times* articles, and their total frequency was 1126. As shown in the table, the highest frequent sort of politeness strategy that appeared in the *Tehran Times* newspaper was the positive politeness strategy (34.6%) with the amount of 390 times. This was followed by the negative politeness (34.2%) with 385 times, off-record politeness strategy (19.8%) with 223 times, and finally bald on record strategy (11.4%) with 128 times.

Table 1.

Politeness Strategies Used in Tehran Times

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive	390	34.6	34.6	34.6
	Negative	385	34.2	34.2	68.8
	Bald on Record	128	11.4	11.4	80.2
	Off Record	223	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	1126	100.0	100.0	

For tangibility of results in the following texts, samples of all types of politeness strategies in the *Tehran Times* articles were prepared.

Example 1:

A: *The UN arms embargo against Iran expired in October 2020 under the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal. Do Iran and Russia have a plan for arms trade, and has Russia sold weapons to Iran since the embargo expired? And what about the future?*

B: *I would answer you briefly. First of all, you are right.* (The *Tehran Times*, November 28th, 2021).

Here both "seek agreement and ask reason" sub-strategies of positive politeness are used. In this example, Speaker (S) asks Hearer (H) to answer his question and H shows his agreement with the S with this sentence "you are right". In this extract, H regards the positive face of S by approving his opinions. Moreover, S tends to show his cooperation with H by answering his question. Presenting reasons is a method for showing mutual aid in the sense that I can assist you or you can assist me, and, supposing collaboration (Brown & Levinson1987).

Example 2:

Apparently, the Iranians and the western countries cannot understand each other's logic (The *Tehran Times*, December 15th, 2021).

In this instance, "hedge" as a strategy of negative politeness is employed. So, here S by using the word "apparently" shows his uncertainty and at the same time softens the possibility of FTAs of his statement because here S expresses disagreement and softens his speech in this way.

Example 3:

How many times do you want to test the Iranian nation and not listen to the words of the country's official?" (The *Tehran Times*, June 11th, 2022).

In this excerpt, S used "rhetorical questions" which are considered a type of off-record strategy. Politicians utilize rhetorical questions when they do not need answers because they intend to make the hearers ponder more concerning a specific subject (Kitenge, 2018). Therefore, it was clear that here, the speaker does not intend to raise a question but he means to complain and through this way implicitly expresses his want. So, in this example, S intended to say do not test Iran.

Example 4:

The Biden administration <u>must</u> find a way to resuscitate the JCPOA and engage Iran" (The *Tehran Times*, December 26th, 2021).

In this instance, the "imperative" verb, which is one sub-strategy of the bald- on record strategy is used. Here, S very directly and without any ambiguity asserts his want from hearer.

Figure 2 indicates the frequency of all politeness strategies employed in the non-native newspaper (*Tehran Times*). As the figure shows, the differences between the frequencies of positive and negative strategies are trivial.

Figure 2.

Percentages of Politeness Strategies Used in Tehran Times

Cases weighted by Count
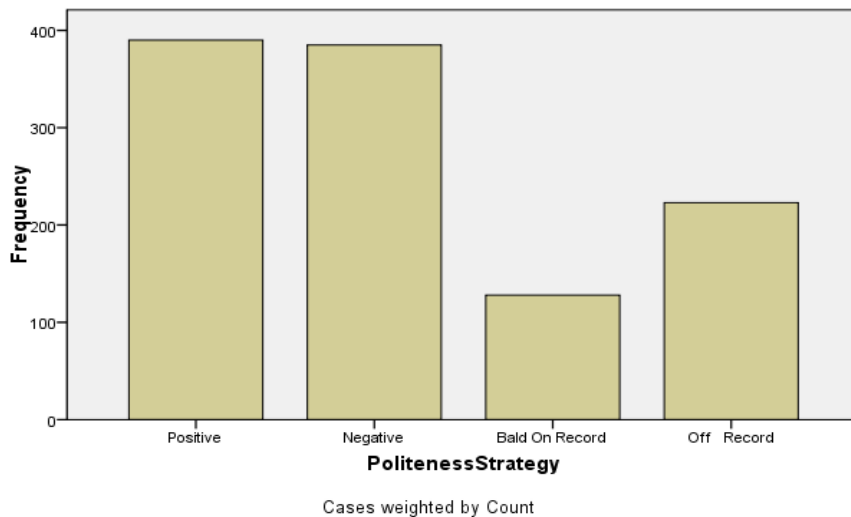
4.2 The Second Research Question

Investigating the most frequent strategies in the news related to Iran's atomic deal in the American newspaper was the main purpose of the second research question. Table 2 exhibits the findings of the data analytics of the native corpus. The findings revealed that whole four sorts of politeness strategies were used in the *New York Times* articles, and their total frequency was 994. Based on the data presented in the table below, the highest frequent sort of politeness strategy that appeared in the *New York Times* newspaper was the negative politeness strategy (40.7%) with 384 occurrences. This was followed by off-record strategy (23.6%) with 223 occurrences, positive politeness (21.1%) with 199 occurrences, and finally bald on-record politeness strategy (14.6%) with 138 occurrences.

Table 2.

Politeness Strategies Used in the New York Times

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive	199	21.1	21.1	21.1
	Negative	384	40.7	40.7	61.8
	Bald on Record	138	14.6	14.6	76.4
	Off Record	223	23.6	23.6	100.0
	Total	944	100.0	100.0	

The samples of politeness strategies used in *New York Times* are shown:

Example1:

"Think about it", he said. Geographically, Iran is greater in size than Germany, France, and the United Kingdom combined. But they have never managed to pursue a clandestine nuclear program without getting caught or protecting their program from sabotage. Are there defectors or traitors inside the system? (The *New York Times*, July 10th, 2020).

In this sentence, S uses "overstating" and "rhetorical question" strategies of off-record politeness. By using the word "never", s/he intends to exaggerate or emphasize their remark. Moreover, the speaker asks a rhetorical question and does not intend to ask questions, but we understand that they want to say there are traitors in Iran.

Example 2:

The Iranian negotiators have said they want to reach a deal in Vienna, but that the United States, having withdrawn, must move first. (The *New York Times*, December 3, 2021).

Here "imperative verb" is used and the speaker, without ambiguity, states his want from H. In this bald-on record strategy, no strive is made to reduce the menaces to the listener's face or minimize the imposition and the message is directly, clearly, and unambiguously conveyed.

Example 3:

"President Biden is trying to rejoin it by promising to again lift punishing economic sanctions against Iran in return for Tehran's returning to the limits in the deal" (The *New York Times*, December 15th, 2021).

In this instance, the "promising" sub-strategy of positive politeness is used. So, like other sub-strategies of positive politeness, here, S tries to show H that he wants and regards the positive face of H. So, here S indicates that he cooperates with H. Thus, to recompense the possibility of danger of FTAs, the interlocutor might decide to emphasize her collaboration with the listener. Also, in this statement, the "assert reciprocity" sub-strategy of positive politeness is used. Here, S once more by using an expression like " in return for" shows their cooperation in such a way that said if he does something for him, he does the desires of H. So, S shows that he and H have the same right.

Example 4:

"US officials say that they do not believe an attack is imminent and they think Mr. Bennett is so publicly preparing for military action. May be seeking far tougher terms in an ultimate deal between Iran and the west" (The *New York Times*, December 13th, 2021).

Again here "Hedges" strategy was used to speaker indicate his uncertainty. Therefore, the quality hedge perhaps indicated that S was not responsible for the truth of his speech. (Brown & Levinson, 1987). So, seemingly, here S tends to not impose something on oneself and others.

Figure 3 represents the comparison of the frequency of politeness strategies employed in the native newspaper (*New York Times*). As the figure represents, the negative politeness with a notable difference was the most frequent politeness strategy in the native articles.

Figure 3.

Percentages of Politeness Strategies Used in the New York Times

Cases weighted by Count
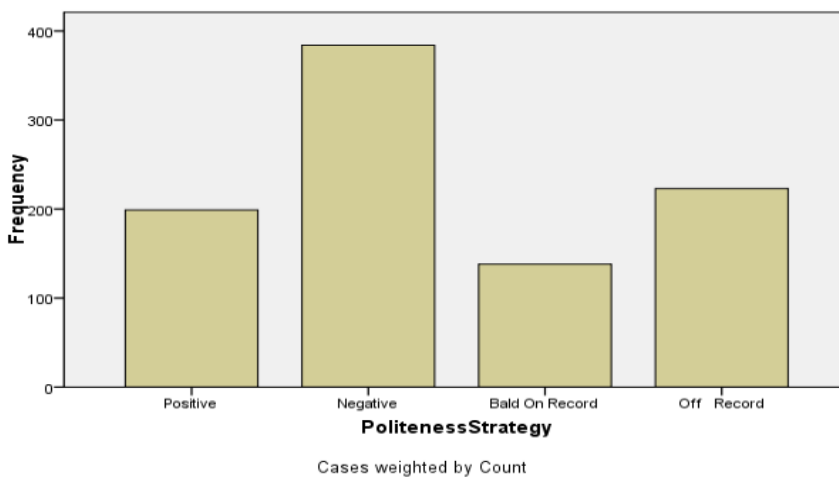
4.3 The Third Research Question

Figure 3 represents the comparison of the frequency of politeness strategies employed in the native newspaper (*New York Times*). As the figure represents, the negative politeness with a notable difference was the most frequent politeness strategy in the native articles

Table 3.

Chi Square Test for Politeness Strategies Used by Newspapers

Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	47.230[a]	3	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	47.993	3	.000	
N of Valid Cases	2073			

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 121.52.

Figure 4 below depicts and compares the frequency of whole sorts of politeness strategies in both newspapers. The table reveals that positive politeness strategy occurred in the *Tehran Times* as the highest frequent strategy and negative politeness strategy, on the other hand, was the highest strategy in the *New York Times* newspaper.

Figure 4.

Comparative Frequency Percentages of Politeness Strategies by Newspapers
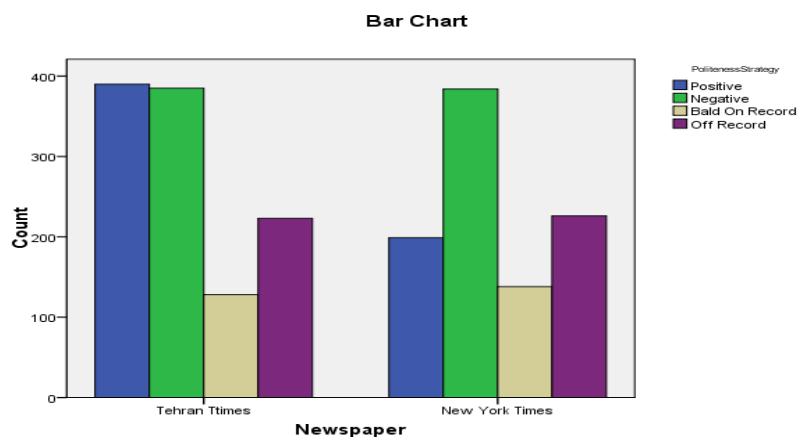
5. Discussion

The present corpus-based investigation was intending to scrutinize the frequency of the politeness strategies used in two corpora of the editorials and news extracted from an international English newspaper (*New York Times*) and an Iranian English press (*Tehran*

Times). In addition, the study sought to find out whether there is a significant difference between these two corpora concerning the frequency of usage of politeness strategies.

The findings revealed a statistically meaningful difference between the *New York Times* and *Tehran Times* regarding the frequency of politeness strategies. It came to light that positive, negative, off-record, and bald on-record strategies were the most frequent strategies in the Iranian English press, respectively. Moreover, negative strategies, off-record, positive, and bald on-record strategies were the most frequent strategies in the American corpus.

The findings of this study, like many other studies (e.g., Almusallam, 2022; Amanda et al., 2021; Bagheri Nevisi & Mousakazemi, 2020; Khomeijani et al., 2021; Leech & Larina, 2014; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Mousavi, 2019; Smith et al., 2020) suggest that culture and cultural differences play a crucial part in the choice of politeness strategies in different cultural contexts, and that lingual politeness differs between west and east cultures. In a collectivist culture like Iranian culture, one important way of being polite in the communications is using positive politeness strategy to save the positive image of the listeners, establish rapport and sense of closeness with them (Khomeijani et al., 2021), and create an emotional bond between the interlocutor and the listener (Amanda et al., 2021).

A compelling body of evidence supports the fact that culture affects the notion of the face and politeness strategy selection in different cultures (e.g., Hassen, 2016; Jakučionytė, 2020; Leech & Larina, 2014; Liu, 2022). These studies suggest politeness is dependent on culture and culture affects politeness. In this regard, Hassen (2016), for example, stated what is considered to be polite to one culture may be shaming to another. Highlighting the relationship between face and culture, Almusallam (2022) asserts that due to the existence of the collectivist culture among Arab countries, they put more emphasis on positive face. Smith et al. (2020) reported that people of Eastern Asian cultures are substantially more worried about the face of others in comparison to people in individual cultures. Liu (2022) found that Chinese EFL speakers employed positive politeness strategy more frequently in their speech. He noted the significant role of the culture concerning the choice of the politeness strategies and argued that in English-speaking countries, individualism is stressed and negative politeness is more emphasized to ensure the freedom of the listener; however, in the Chinese culture, as a collectivist culture, positive politeness is more appreciated. In the same vein, in their study, Leech and Larina (2014) concluded that in the collectivist

cultures in the East, group worth is stronger; whereas the solitary culture of the West mainly advocates individual worth.

Another possible justification for the frequent utilization of positive politeness strategy in foreign corpus might be contributed to the fact that Iranian politicians tend to show the world that the Iranian government preserves its unity with their people and is determined in Iran's nuclear deal issue. The results of the investigation manifested that strategy "includes both speaker and hearer in the activity" as a sub-strategy of positive politeness strategy denoting cooperation, solidarity, and unity, was used frequently in the *Tehran Times*. Positive politeness is an action of protecting the face towards the positive face of others. This positive face of the individual inclines to represent unity and stresses that the two interlocutors desire something and possess an overall objective. Moreover, positive politeness strategy is usually employed to reach unity and solidarity by suggesting friendliness. Therefore, it seems that politicians rely upon positive politeness to help them save their face and create unity among members (Oda, 2022).

The native corpus extracted from the *New York Times*, on the contrary, indicated that negative politeness was the most frequent strategy. One possible interpretation of this result could be related to the truth that the professional authors of the articles of the *New York Times* wanted to show to the public that they did not impose anything on Iran. In other words, perhaps, through the utilization of negative politeness they wanted to regard the negative image of hearers (Njuki& Ireri, 2021) to indicate that Iran is free to their choice and that the Americans have friendly relations with Iran and want to reach a true agreement in this respect. The results of this investigation manifested that the hedge strategy, as a sub-strategy of negative politeness strategy, was used frequently within the native corpus. It seems that due to the significance of public image to politicians (Alavizadeh, 2018), they heavily draw upon hedge strategy to persuade people, attain their trust, regard their face, and refrain from any Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). In addition, the heavy reliance of professional authors of the *New York Times* on negative politeness, in general, and hedge strategy, in particular, could stem from their expertise in that nothing is absolute in politics. Therefore, as Mansour and Alghazo (2021) found in their own study, the politicians use more conservative hedge expressions so as not to commit themselves to their utterances.

6. Conclusion

The results of this investigation highlighted the essential role of the face in the political context and indicated that politicians resort to different politeness strategies to regard the face of others. The findings revealed that politeness is a multifaceted phenomenon in the political context and that politicians draw upon politeness strategies for many different purposes such as creating a positive public image for themselves, persuading others, disguising the bitter truths, or not committing themselves to their utterances.

However, it should be noted that, regardless of the politicians' purposes, cultural differences also might affect their preferences for the choice of various sorts of politeness strategies. Contrary to the belief of some researchers like Lakoff (1973), who advocates the universality of politeness, the findings of this study, like some other studies such as Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini (2010) and Kádár and Haugh (2013) underscore the sociocultural dependency of the politeness concept.

This finding foregrounds the significant role of the culture and cultural awareness in English language teaching classrooms. Culture and raising language learners' awareness with regard to the politeness should find their way into teachers' and material developers' agendas. It should be noted that to get a full appreciation of politeness and whether it is a universal or sociocultural-dependent phenomenon as well as the variables that might affect the selection of different politeness strategies in different contexts, other investigation must be done. For example, politeness frameworks other than Browns and Levinson's (1987) categorization could be used in different contexts with different genders, age groups, ethnic communities, and social classes.

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