A Cultural Script Analysis of a Politeness feature in Persian

R. Sahragard
Email: rsahragard@hotmail.com

1.0 Introduction

Many writers have identified the Iranian system of politeness with a complex concept called *ta'arof* (Beeman 1976, 1986; Assadi 1980; Hodge 1957; Rafiee 1992; Koutelaki 1997 among others). In fact, any description or analysis of the Iranian politeness system without a reference to this concept will be deficient and incomplete (Koutelaki 1997). Ta'arof is a very important concept in Iranian interpersonal interactional situations. Beeman (1986) stresses the all-pervasive and subtle nature of ta'arof in his definition: "tæ'arof is the active, ritualized realization of differential perceptions of superiority and inferiority in interaction. It underscores and preserves the integrity of culturally defined roles as it is carried out in the life of every Iranian, every day, in thousands of different ways. Iranian youth cry in despair at its pervasiveness, but they are powerless against it and practice it themselves even while complaining about it" (p. 57). So what is this all-pervading feature of the Iranian culture? This is a question to which this study primarily seeks to provide an answer by looking at it in a rather new approach developed in semantics. This approach is based on the fact that in all human languages there are some basic terms functioning as bases for other concepts. In other words, the former concepts are primitives. These primitive concepts are used to describe cultural rules of speaking or 'cultural scripts'. Thus this study takes a cultural script approach to describe the Persian concept of ta'arof. As far as is known, this is the first attempt at analysing and accounting for a Persian concept using this new approach.

The next section proceeds with a brief discussion of what is involved in the sorts of pragmatic and culture studies which might be applied to ta'arof.

2.0 Approaches in the study of rules of speaking

It is clear that speakers of different languages exhibit different verbal and non-verbal behaviour in their interactions and the possibilities of misunderstanding are rife when two totally different cultures come into contact with each other. Examples of cross-cultural misunderstanding are profuse in the literature on sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and intercultural communication (Thomas 1983; Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Roberts and Sayers 1998; Wolfson 1989; Beal 1998, etc.). A couple of examples for Persian portray the issue here; Assadi (1980) reports that an American nearly possessed an Iranian friend's coat when the Iranian responded to the American's

compliment with a translated ta'arof, i.e. 'you can have it'. Also there have been reports that Iranians have gone hungry and thirsty when they have used their ta'arof strategies of politely refusing hospitality with non-Iranian hosts (Ramazani 1974 cited in Assadi 1980; also mentioned in one of the present interviews by an academic staff in Iran). Wolfson (1989) has reported the same for Arab speakers of English in the USA.

It is thus imperative to describe and explain culture-specific ways of speaking, such as those involved in ta'arof, to minimise such misunderstandings. Goddard & Wierzbicka (1997) relate that the task of describing culture-specific ways of speaking goes beyond merely describing speech patterns in behavioural terms. "The greater challenge is to show the links between particular ways of speaking and the culture of the people involved. To do this, of course, we have to be able to establish the relevant cultural values and priorities independently of the speech patterns themselves" (ibid. p. 231). The essence of this challenge is to establish and analyse these cultural values in the target language and its speech community (Persian in this case) without implicitly filtering the analysis through the ethnocentric frameworks of some other system (such as that of the British English).

Another challenge in an attempt to describe those ways of speaking is choosing the appropriate methodology. Several different approaches have been developed by anthropologists, philosophers, and linguists to tackle the issue. Among the first approaches developed is 'ethnography of communication' which was founded and developed by Hymes (1962). Ethnography of communication looks at the norms in the society that refer to the rules for how people are expected to speak in particular speech events. The main difficulty with this approach is lack of a principled method for describing cultural norms (Goddard & Wierzbicka 1997).

Another method is a pragmatic approach to describing rules of speaking. The first principles of this approach were laid down by Grice (1975) in his 'maxims of co-operation' which was further developed by Leech (1983) to include features of politeness. Building on Goffman's notion of face in English, Brown & Levinson (1978) developed an alternative framework for the universal analysis of politeness in all cultures. This framework has been widely used to describe politeness in wide-ranging cultures. Many other frameworks have also been developed in pragmatics to study different speech acts inter- and cross-culturally; some of which have been used to examine interlanguage pragmatics. This approach also falls short of a comprehensive framework for analysis upon which all researchers in the field can agree. Other approaches include linguistic anthropology and intercultural communication (Goddard & Wierzbicka 1997). A very good example for linguistic anthropology is the work done by Beeman (1986) for Persian. In this approach culture is revealed through extensive examination of language use. Intercultural communication studies, however, focus on the comparison of different cultures to reduce culturally based misunderstandings in business or international relations (Goddard & Wierzbicka 1997).

All these approaches have a basic problem: ethnocentric bias. Goddard & Wierzbicka (1997) view this as "the danger that our understanding of the discourse practices of other cultures will be distorted if we view them through the prism of our own culture-specific practices and concepts" (ibid. p.231). Their proposed solution then lies in employing a universal, language-independent framework that can give descriptions of concepts and cultures in any language about any other language in an unbiased fashion. Wierzbicka and her colleagues have taken the first strides into developing such a comprehensive approach that can describe cultural rules independently and allegedly without ethnocentrism. This framework is called the 'cultural script' approach. In this approach, the device used for giving descriptions consists of a set of basic terms that can be found in all languages. This set is called a 'natural semantic metalanguage' (NSM). These terms will be used to analyse concepts and semantic sets in any language since the NSM terms themselves can, they claim, be found in all languages. Potentially, an NSM analysis can be translated in a straightforward manner into other languages.

3.0 Method

The following elicitation methods have been used to gather instances of ta'arof and also to know the views of the native speakers on this issue: questionnaires, interviews, and observation. 220 male and female participants answered questions in the questionnaires and 27 university lecturers participated in the interviews. The findings of the analysis were then used as bases for the description of ta'arof in the cultural script approach. In a previous study (Sahragard, 2001), the set of terms for NSM in Persian is established. The English equivalents (since the study is written in English, not Persian) are here used to describe ta'arof and its constituents in Persian.

4.0 Significance

There is a huge gap for sociolinguistic or pragmatic studies in the literature on the Persian language. Many aspects of this language deserve to be explored and it appears that little attempt is being made to do so even in Iran. Very few studies have looked at the pragmatics of Persian politeness (Beeman 1976, 1986, Assadi 1980, Jahangiri 1980, Koutelaki 1997). Beeman (1986) is the only authoritative and comprehensive published work done on the Persian language from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. However, it has some limitations.

Within this generally sparse field, ta'arof is an aspect of the Persian language that has received some sporadic attention especially from non-Iranians (Browne 1893[1984 reprint]; Phillot 1919; Hodge 1957; Beeman 1986; Koutelaki 1997). A majority of these studies have looked at ta'arof in terms of linguistic anthropology and only one study has examined ta'arof in terms of pragmatics (Koutelaki 1997).

It is important to note that the present study is the first to use NSM terms for Persian in giving explications for the cultural scripts of ta'arof. It is hoped that this new description of ta'arof opens up new outlooks for others to follow.

5.0 NSM terms[1]

The set of primitives presented here is based on the work done by Wierzbicka (1996), which as she says is "the result of the course of nearly three decades of research by myself and colleagues" (p. 35). Her objective over these years has been to develop an 'alphabet of human thought' which can be identified via a systematic and methodological study of different languages. She calls this 'a natural semantic meta-language'. This consists of a small set of simple meanings, or semantic primitives, which her evidence suggests can be expressed by words or bound morphemes in all languages; for example, PEOPLE, SOMEONE, SOMETHING, THIS, WANT, THINK[2], etc. These appear to be lexical universals, that is, they have meanings that can be translated precisely between all languages because they are universal human concepts lexicalised in all languages. In contrast to the well-known approach of componential analysis (see Lyons 1981, Kronenfeld 1996 among others) that has been substantially developed in semantics and linguistic anthropology (e.g. in the study of kinship terms), Wierzbicka's approach uses everyday commonplace ('natural') terms. These terms combine according to a small set of universal grammatical patterns, functioning as a miniature language, or as a device highly suited for cross-linguistic semantics. Wierzbicka (1996:112) calls this set of patterns a "syntax of universal semantic primitives" or a "universal grammar". By using everyday terms in the language of the grammar (usually English but in theory any language), phrases are set up in a logical order and used as 'formulae' to express the analysis of target terms or 'cultural scripts'. These formulae should then be readily accessible not only to other researchers but also to teachers and students, either in their own or in target languages. This chapter represents the present writer's attempt to begin to apply this system to key terms associated with 'ta'arof'. The aim is thus to further explore ta'arof using a different approach, and in doing so, to evaluate Wierzbicka's approach.

The system of semantic primitives started with a list of 14 concepts in 1972. This was expanded to 37 in 1993. Currently [2003], there are more than 60 concepts, but it is very likely that the ultimate figure will be something just under 100 (as predicted by Boguslawski in 1965 [cited in Wierzbicka 1996:110]). The first 37 concepts (or old primitives) have been used in a large body of empirical semantic

---

[1] This introduction first appeared in Sahragard (2000 & 2003) and has been reproduced here with permission.

[2] Following Wierzbicka's convention, capitals indicate 'semantic primitives', i.e. they are translatable or universal concepts.

research, much of it focusing on cultural 'key words', 'speech acts, and discourse particles (see Wierzbicka, 1991, 1992, 1996; Goddard, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997 among others). The last remaining 18 concepts (or new primitives) have not yet been extensively tested cross-linguistically. The set of old primitives includes the following elements, following the established conventions, cited forms of primitives are capitalised:

substantives	I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING, PEOPLE
determiners	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER
quantifiers	ONE, TWO, MANY (MUCH), ALL
mental predicates	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL
speech	SAY
actions & events	DO, HAPPEN
evaluators	GOOD, BAD
descriptors	BIG, SMALL
time	WHEN, BEFORE, AFTER
space	WHERE, UNDER, ABOVE
partonomy & taxonomy	PART (OF), KIND (OF)
metapredicates	NOT, CAN, VERY
interclausal linkers	IF, BECAUSE, LIKE

The new primitives (Goddard 1998, Wierzbicka 1997, 1999) are:

determiner	SOME
augmentor	MORE
mental predicates	SEE, HEAR
non-mental predicates	MOVE, THERE IS, (BE) ALIVE
space	FAR, NEAR; SIDE; INSIDE; HERE
time	A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME; NOW
imagination & possibility	IF ... WOULD, MAYBE
words	WORD

6.0 Cultural Scripts for ta'arof

An example of a ta'arof exchange in greetings reads:

A: "Hi. How are you?"
B: "I'm barely alive. How are you?"

403

A: "Not terribly bad. How's your mother? How's your father? How's your dog?

How's your spare tire?"

B: "Fine, all thanks to you. May your shadow not be reduced. How about you?

How are your distant relatives? How's the brother of your regular bus

driver? How's the tombstone on the grave of your great grandpa? How's the

vegetable garden? How's your dog's tape worm situation?"

A: "Fine, all because of your generosity, of course. Thank you."

B: "Not at all! You're the crown of my head. This house and everything in it

belongs to you. May my life be sacrificed for you."

A: "May I stroll around you? I'm your slave."

B: "No way! I'm the dirt under your feet."

A: "You have complete control. You're hitting me with a stick"

(www.iranian.com)

One look at the above exchange, which translates the original Persian into English rather literally, reveals some apparently extravagant qualities of the Persian language. This distinctive sort of flattery or exaggeration, as it seems, may commonly be termed as 'ta'arof'. To westerners this commonplace concept may seem very complex in Persian, however. In fact, explaining it in English terms runs the risk of obscuring it rather than clarifying. The chapter first examines ta'arof in terms of social dimensions. Then a fuller analysis and exposition of ta'arof is worked out by a detailed consideration of five key components of ta'arof. For each component a statement in terms of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is constructed. These components are then used to build a summary statement of ta'arof in NSM terms. To the author's knowledge, this is the first time that a comprehensive analysis of ta'arof has been carried out in this manner.

Goddard (1997) believes that this framework is able "to describe speech patterns with rigour and precision, …to identify the relevant cultural values and priorities independently of the speech patterns themselves…and to minimise ethnocentric bias, that is, the danger that any picture we form about the discourse practices of another culture will be distorted by the linguistic and conceptual baggage we bring with us from own culture." (p. 184-5).

Ta'arof expresses one of the most central Iranian cultural values. Etymologically, it is an Arabic word meaning "meeting together" (Beeman 1988:27) or "meeting someone you know" (Abjadian, personal communication). Certainly, ta'arof is

particularly evident in meetings and greetings among Persians. Persian-English dictionaries assign to it a bewildering variety of English glosses such as *soft tongue, honeyed phrase, respect, gift, offer, ceremony, courtesy, flattery, deference, regard, modesty, reserve,* and *restraint*. (see, for example, Steingass 1892; Haim 1960; Aryanpour & Aryanpour 1976). The enormous complexity of this concept is reflected in the diverse range of meaning presented in the form of English words above.

It seems axiomatic, therefore, that to understand the concept of ta'arof one cannot rely on any global English equivalents, because there simply aren't any single terms or epithets that capture the meaning and use of it.

To sum up the discussion to this point, according to the results of the interview and questionnaire analysis of ta'arof (for a fuller discussion and presentation of authentic examples and comments interested individuals are referred to Sahragard (2000)) presented so far warrant the consideration of T as a complex expression of 5 other concepts as follows:

1. *adab* (politeness)
2. *ehteraam* (respect)
3. *rudarbaayesti* (being shy or ceremonious)
4. *tavaazo?* (humility)
5. *mehmaan-navaazi* or *mehmaan-dusti* (hospitality)

Using the NSM approach the first four concepts will each be explained below in order to come to a final explanation of ta'arof by putting the aspects together. The fifth concept (*mehmaannavaazi*) is not as complex as the others, however.

6.1   *Adab*

Adab is an important concept in Islamic culture. As such it is basically a moral issue. Glasse (1989) defines it as *'courtesy, politeness, propriety, morals,* and *literature'*, (p. 22). The meaning of this concept is not confined to these five words, however. Steingass (1892:28), for example, gives an exhaustive list of no fewer than 17 English equivalents, namely, '*being courteous, polite, well-bred, making a feast, courtesy, politeness, urbanity, good breeding, respect, reverence, propriety of conduct, discipline, chastisement, learning, morality, sound doctrine, the essence of polite learning'*. This list, obviously, is an indication of how far-reaching this concept is and of the difficulty of finding a single word or phrase in English to translate Adab satisfactorily. It is justifiable to consider Adab as virtually an acquired personal feature that is based on '*tarbiyat'* (good breeding).

One can conclude that Adab is a kind of social education as well as training, and that it is based on spirituality. Similarly Al-Hujwiri (cited in Glasse 1989) recounts a Hadith [prophetic saying] from the Prophet, saying: 'Good breeding is a part of faith.'

Glasse (ibid:22), then, adds that "The beauty and propriety of all affairs, religious as well as temporal, depends on a certain discipline of good breeding. Humanly, it consists in noble-mindedness; religiously, in observing the Sunnah [Prophetic traditions]; in love, good breeding is reverence. A person who neglects this discipline cannot ever possibly be a Saint, for the Prophet said 'Good breeding is a mark of those God loves'.

It is clear, therefore, that although Adab is sometimes used for translating English words such as 'politeness', 'courtesy', and 'respect', it stands for a uniquely Islamic (Iranian) concept which cannot be satisfactorily explained by comparing it with any of these supposed English equivalents, either separately or in combination. It should also be noted that the different senses of Adab are undoubtedly related and the senses conveyed by lists of English words are somewhat different from the composite native concept.

As can be inferred from definitions given here, Adab primarily operates on the individual level. It can, nonetheless, be used to refer to a groups' interactive behaviour. Koutelaki's (1997) comment on politeness and formality substantiates this point to some degree: "An Iranian upbringing (tærbiæt, [sic]) aims at producing an individual that will be a helpful family member of the social groups he will belong to. His behaviour must follow the prevalent social conventions so as not to be offensive to others" (p. 110).

The importance of *tarbiyat* (upbringing, i.e. training) which is integral to the concept of Adab has been greatly emphasised by Islamic Teachings. The late spiritual and political leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, in an address to the nation referred to this and commented that *tarbiyat* (training) is even more important than *tahsil* (formal education). He reiterated that *tahsil* (formal education) can be the means for *tarbiyat* (training).

What clearly emerges from explanations given here is that Adab is a positively valued human quality gained through personal development that includes learning. The key to this development is *tarbiyat* (training) as elaborated by Nasr (1982:55). Another aspect is the permanence attached to Adab. In other words, the individuals who have Adab are morally obliged to preserve it in any dealings and continually show good qualities of conduct. The commonplace appraisal by social interactants of one's Adab is another component of any explication of Adab, but being credited with the socially valued merit of having A is a highly judgmental issue. The explication of A in NSM terms, then, takes up the following form, which attempts to gather together some of the key components:

Adab

    a) X feels something like this:
    b) I want to be very good
    c) I want to say good things

d) I want to do good things

e) I can do these things after I know other things

f) I have to do these other things for a long time

g) X thinks people will say something good because of this

h) Because of this X says/does good things

i) X feels good because of this

Components (b), (c), and (d) reflect the qualities of good conduct. Component (e) and (f) account for the fact that Adab is something due to personal development (*tarbiyat & tahsil*). Component (f) also suggests the permanence or continuity attached to it. Component (g) shows how peoples' judgement is involved. Component (h) accounts for the actual practice of Adab as a virtue for its own sake and as a response to social expectations, and the last component suggests the pleasure one feels when recognised as someone with Adab.

6.2   *Ehteraam*

The most pivotal aspect in human relations among Iranians is the concept of *ehteraam*. The importance of this concept is supported by the relatively high percentage of its occurrence in the present data (18.64%). In fact, it is most readily replaced with other concepts suggesting politeness. Any polite behaviour, in other words, can be regarded as the cause for Ehteraam. Ehteramm, then, is the effect of such acts. Koutelaki (1997:10) also implicitly suggests this.

According to the subjects' responses any verbal or non-verbal act performed out of respect can be considered Ehteram. Dictionary definitions of the word in English are *respect, deference, decency, courtesy, moral correctness, obligation, honour*, etc.(see for example, Aryanpour & Aryanpour 1979, Steingass 1892, Haim 1960). Monolingual Persian dictionaries fail to give helpful comments on this concept (see for example, Dehkhoda 1992, Moin 1964).

The account presented here for Ehteram so far suggests that Ehteram is social involvement in a social order requiring adherence to a set of social norms. According to the religious traditions and teachings among Iranians, however, it is considered a duty or an obligation (see Tonekaboni 1987:337 for a Hadith from the Prophet, who considers Ehteram to one's parents as a divine commandment, and see also Shamseddin 1993:81 and Sani 1994:276-277; 301-303, on teachers' duties toward their students and page 374 on the duties of the students towards their teacher).

As a point of departure for framing Ehteram in NSM terms, one can conclude that since Ehteram gives a sense of moral obligation for the holder in socially expected ways, therefore, it is something positively valued by others and, consequently is valued by the holder, too. It is clear that E involves human relations: it is produced as the result

of the interactions between individuals; it is doing socially and morally good things to individuals.

The range of situations resulting in Ehteram is very wide, of course. This includes saying a simple hello, making health enquiries, inviting people for a party, uttering complimentary remarks about someone's ability, showing modesty, exhibiting a good standard of ethics, etc. This enumeration and the explanation given above point to the fact that Ehteram concerns human relations, both publicly and privately. It can be inferred, though, that Ehteram may refer to both face-to-face interactions and distant ones, involving both verbal and non-verbal communication. Examples of considering Ehteram in face-to-face interactions can be found in nearly all speech act forms. This is achieved verbally using polite expressions or non-verbally through showing appropriate normal kinesics or facial expressions and gestures expected of an individual in a given social environment. Distant communication showing Ehteram predominantly means verbal communication, such as telephone exchanges where the interactants are far away from each other, communication by post and, more recently and less commonly, communication by E.mail.

The importance of this concept can, then, be recognised as paramount in human relations in Iran. This is due to the fact that the contexts where Ehteram, or lack of it, is implied are so widespread. Almost all types of communications are potentially overshadowed by its presence. It should be noted, however, that Ehteram can be a highly subjective issue. People usually draw their conclusions from the occurrence of a certain act, verbal or non-verbal, and then decide whether the behaviour is respectful or not. One thing is clear, though, and that is there are set standards of behavioural norms by which the individuals can immediately recognise particular actions as acceptable or otherwise according to Ehteram.

As was described earlier in relation to ta'arof, in Iran it is generally expected that individuals will greet each other very warmly. This is especially the case when the initiation comes from someone of lower status, age, etc or from a distant friend or relative. So saying a mere simple 'hello' to the alter may be regarded as *'biehteraami'*, (without respect). In such situations the individuals involved are expected to use extended greetings to ensure that the other party doesn't feel a lack of sufficient Ehteram. As the result of appropriate instances of this kind of language behaviour the interactants feel satisfied and may say *'ehteraam be maa gozaasht'*, (they showed their respect for us).

The notion that Ehteram is essentially concerned with nearly all kinds of social relations is fully in line with the informants' comments in this study. Referring to a so-called philosophy of brotherhood, an informant reflected: "there are three ways of aiding and abetting people in need, namely, financial, physical, and verbal help. If one does any of them, they clearly show their care and Ehteram."

Islamic teachings necessitate observing Ehteram and place a moral obligation on individuals to preserve it (see Koran verses 2:83, 4:36, 6:151, 17:23, 19:11 to give a few citations). Obviously, non-fulfilment of this causes displeasure or distress for the person expecting it. This implies that the NSM semantic explication for Ehteram should refer to the alter's possible feelings. An NSM element can be proposed as follows:

X thinks something like this

I have to do or say something good to others

If I don't do it, people can feel something bad

Another aspect of Ehteram concerns its permanent effect: this can be a positive or negative impact on the relation in which Ehteram is expected to hold. The present writer has witnessed instances of events where negligence in considering others Ehteram has led to the breaking up of relations between families for some time, resulting in feelings of hatred and hostility. The individuals, then, "withdraw and refuse to interact on any level whatsoever. This action is known in Persian as being *'qahr'* (falling out) with someone"(Beeman 1988:25). The fact that this severance of relations is lexicalised as *'qahr',* confirms the common recognition of the serious social consequences of not considering Ehteram.

To account for the permanence in Ehteram, the following NSM explication should be added to the formula: I have to think about this all the time. This implies that to maintain a lasting relationship one has to adhere to this interpersonal principle continually.

It has to be borne in mind that Ehteram is a bidirectional obligation, that is, all parties involved in interaction should exhibit it. Writing on the moral rules expected of both teachers and students, Sani (1994) allocates parts of two chapters to this issue. He gives several guidelines or instructions for the teachers and the students. Among students' duties are:

1. Being silent when the teacher teaches or speaks.

2. Showing enthusiasm for the subject.

3. Being disciplined in front of the teacher.

4. Being attentive to the teacher.

Etc. (Sani 1994:350-415)

Among teachers' duties are:

1. Showing respect for the students.

2. Being kind to the students.

3. Being lenient and humble towards students.

4. Avoiding deriding students.

Etc. (Sani 1994:291-329)

This last notion does not need to be expressly incorporated into the final explication, however. As an organising factor in communication, Ehteram is an obligation which naturally every individual who is a participating member of the Iranian cultural community adheres to and reciprocates. Thus any attempt to present this last instance in the final explication seems redundant.

It is very important to note that Persian culture places great emphasis on considering Ehteram for superiors as well as status equals. Parents teach their children to have Ehteram for *'bozorgtar'*, (literally greater or bigger, i.e. someone older in age or higher in status; a superior or senior). One informant (in the present data) recalled that Ehteram initially starts at home with the parents and older brothers and sisters and extends to the extended family, relatives and friends, and the elderly. This application and locating Ehteram on a vertical scale or a social hierarchy is prototypical, of course, bearing in mind that Ehteram is exalted to be reciprocal. The modern concept, as explained, encompasses all walks of life and starts from the Ehteram individuals consider for themselves, i.e. the self-esteem element noted earlier is quite foundational.

The characteristics associated with Ehteram are: being decent, righteous and honourable. It is interesting to note how in some awkward situations Ehteram stands in contrast with such notions. In an exemplifying situation noted by the present researcher in a baker's, people were queuing to buy bread. The shop assistant who was behind the counter was trying hard to be fair with his customers, i.e. trying to do the right thing. He insisted that he wouldn't sell any bread to the people who jumped the queue. In the meantime an old friend of his entered the shop. The shop assistant secretly beckoned him across and he went through the side door behind the counter. He then took some loaves of bread and, after some exchange of usual ta'arofs with the assistant the customer paid for them and went away. This caused uproar in the shop as people protested about his favouritism for his friend. The shop assistant, who found himself in an awkward situation, angrily turned to the crowd and shouted, "don't you know anything about Ehteram for a *'bozorgtar'* (a senior or superior person), what would you do if a *'mohtaram'* (revered or respected) person came to you for a favour?" In this situation the shop assistant faced a dilemma. On the one hand, he had to treat people fairly according to their rights as queuing customers and on the other he had to observe Ehteram for an elderly person to whom he owed respect and a favour by giving him priority over other customers. He served the elderly customer to the side before the rest because he wanted to escape from being accused of being a person who does not observe Ehteram. But in fact he was ignoring Ehteram for other customers. In such circumstances people feel very bad about such a person who ignores Ehteram. The explanation for this behaviour may be that Ehteram works on two levels of relations; private and public. The individual evaluates the importance of one over the other and it is usually the private relation that receives more importance and attention where they

conflict, as in this example. In any case, the shop assistant is a loser because either side may say or feel something bad about him whatever he does. The NSM formula for Ehteram, then, should take into account the moral dimension as well as the consequences of one's behaviour. As a final semantic formula, the following explication can be given for

Ehteraam

     a) X thinks something like this about person Y:

     b) I have to do good things for person Y

     c) I have to say good things to person Y

     d) It is bad if I don't do this

     e) If I do not do this, person Y can feel/say bad things because of this

     f) Other people will say bad things about me because of this

     g) Because of this, I have to do good things for Y

     h) I will do this all the time

Component (b) and (c) refer to Ehteram as an obligation to do and say good to people. They also suggest an interpersonal relationship. Component (d) implies the moral aspect of Ehteram. Components (e) and (f) suggest the consequences of one's behaviour both public and private. Component (g) shows the necessity of keeping up with Ehteram. The last component (h) implies the permanence in practicing Ehteram.

6.3   Rudarbaayesti

Another component of Ta'arof is *'rudarbaayesti',* glossed in bilingual dictionaries as *'standing on ceremonies'*, *'having shame'*, *'being shy'*, *'being embarrassed'*, and *'self-restraint'* (see Aryanpour & Aryanpour 1984:434). Using two other cultural notions, Dehkhoda (1994) defines it as considering *hayaa,* 'shame or being embarrassed' or its synonym *sharm,* 'shame' from saying or doing something in fear of being misinterpreted as not accounting for other person's respect. Pragmatically, however, Rudarbaayesti has a sense of 'propriety'. In other words, it is particularly expected from newly-introduced friends. It also carries with it a 'sense of imposition' that the receiver of a favour may feel. So people try to avoid imposition by recourse to the proper social strategy available to them.

In an attempt to understand this concept fully, it is helpful to look at the two closely related concepts referred to by Dehkhoda (1994) and also look at the context of being *kamru* or *xejaalati*, 'shy'.

hayaa and *sharm* are synonyms in Persian for the English term *'shame'*, or *'being ashamed'*. The former is originally Arabic and indicates a moral and religious necessity. Semantically, however, both these words are identical in the contexts where they appear. The explanation and exemplification presented here, then, alludes to both of them. Jorjani [cited in Dehkhoda, 1994] defines *hayaa* as prevention of the self from

[doing or saying] something and its abandon for the fear that one might be reproached [self-restraint]. So it conveys two senses of meaning; that of the prevention from and the abandonment of committing socially or morally unacceptable acts. Steingass (1947:434) defines *hayaa* by enumerating five English equivalents, namely, *blushing, shame, penitence, modesty*, and *bashfulness,* which is indicative of its broad range of application. In the same line of thought Hughes (1895:169) compares lack of it to being immodest or shameless. It seems obvious that none of these English words convey the sense of *hayaa* elaborated above. One reason for this is that in the Islamic context the audience for *hayaa* is not only the immediate persons or public who might reproach an individual; rather, regardless of any public sense, the audience is Allah (The All-seeing Judge who takes everything into account).

Based on the teachings of Islam, "It is ...being ashamed to do anything of which Allah, the Almighty, disapproves or forbids" (Abughosh & Shaqra, 1992:60). In contrast to the negative connotations of shame, *hayaa* is regarded as a necessity of avoiding behaviour that is known to fall outside the scope of actions approved in Islamic teaching. It has some of the connotations of conscience. Imam Sadegh [cited in Fuladgar, 1997:169] has been reported as saying having faith depends on having *hayaa.* As the result, every part of the human body should observe *hayaa,* that is to say, the eyes, the ears, the hands, etc. This implies a strong self-control of bodily actions and of the senses. According to these moral and religious teachings, an ideal person with *hayaa* never does the following for example:

1. Looks straight into the opposite sex's eyes,
2. Looks at his/her body with the intention of gaining pleasure,
3. Listens to gossip or the like about other people,
4. Touches things which do not belong to him/her,
5. Touches the opposite sex's body,
6. Uses his/her language in an unjust way against others or swears,
7. Behaves rudely,
Etc.

Having *hayaa* is also reflected in 'thinking' (*niyyat*, i.e. intention) as well. In fact, the most important aspect of all this is *niyyat* in Islamic ideology. What follows is that *hayaa* is also a kind of intentional or conscious restraint of the senses and actions or propriety one normally feels or is obliged to observe. In real life situations, however, lack of *hayaa* is tolerated especially when it is not seriously offending.

What emerges clearly from the comments is that *sharm* and *hayaa* are very subtle terms not conveniently comparable to English terms that seem superficially equivalent. *hayaa,* as it appears, is:
1. An inhibiting reaction: the idea that saying or doing something is wrong if people might disapprove of it. Hence, one should refrain from practising such things.

2. A necessary precept to be considered a good person.

The notions presented above are used in the following NSM explication of *hayaa.*

Hayaa or sharm
a) X thinks something like this:
b) 'I will not say some bad things to Y
c) I will not do some bad things to Y
d) I will not think about these things'
e) X doesn't say/do these things
f) People say good things about X because of this

Component (a) indicates that *hayaa* is initially a mental disposition. Components (b) and (c) show that *hayaa* is a kind of self-restraint against saying or doing something morally unacceptable. Component (d) shows abandoning the idea of doing such things, i.e. having pure intentions. Component (e) shows that in reality the person abides by the principle of *hayaa.* Component (f) suggests that people approve of this behaviour as a proper conduct and of the person as a good individual.

kamru or *xejaalati ,*'shy', are also terms which are very closely related to Rudarbaayesti. Generally speaking, people who feel or display Rudarbaayesti are immediately thought of as being *kamru.* Some of the features of Rudarbaayesti, then, can be incorporated into being *kamru.* If this last notion is incorporated into the NSM explications, the general picture for *rudarbaayesti* can, then, be constructed.

kamru
a) X thinks something like this
b) "I can do/say something to Y
c) If I do/say it, Y might say bad things about me
d) Other people will say bad things about me
e) Because of this I don't do/say this"

This explication suggests that there is an ability to do something but the person is hindered by the idea that other people might not like their action or think that it is wrong. So the person refrains from doing it.

Based on the two explications for *hayaa* and *kamru,* the NSM formula for *rudarbaayesti* can be constructed. In order to do so the procedure proposed by Goddard (1998) was used. This procedure is called 'reductive paraphrase explication'. In this procedure the concepts already explicated can be used to give explications for other concepts; Goddard (1998) explains, "It is not always necessary to resolve an explication

413

right down to the level of semantic primitives. An explication can still be reductive- and still be valuable- even while containing some semantically complex terms, provided that none is more complex than the original term being defined and provided none needs to be defined in terms of the original word. So here the two concepts *kamru* and *hayaa* are directly *inserted* to the final explication for *rudarbaayesti* as follows:

Rudarbaayesti
    a) X is a person like this:
    b) X is *kamru*
    c) X has *hayaa*
    d) X does not do some things because X has *hayaa* and is *kamru*
    e) People say good things about X because of this

Component (a) presents a typical person with *rudarbaayesti*. Component (b) and (c) present the idea of having *hayaa* as a self-restraint element in organising relations and that Rudarbaayesti is also the expression of being *kamru*. Component accounts for the fact that this self-restraint in Rudarbaayesti can function as a deterrent to unacceptable behaviour. The last component (e) shows that *rudarbaayesti* can be a good characteristic for a person because people approve of such a person.

6.4   Tavaazo?

Tavaazo? is an Arabic word meaning '*humility'* or '*modesty'* in English. There are several Persian equivalents for it, however, namely *furutani* (modesty), *oftaadegi* (humility), *farmaanbordaari* (obedience), *narmgardani* (lit. soft neck, i.e. leniency or being gentle also tender words), *xaari (*abjectness or degradation*) shekaste nafsi* (lit. *breaking self, i.e. humility),* etc. (See Dehkhoda 1994:6286). Although the word Tavaazo? is purely Arabic, it is more frequently used in Persian than other original Persian words. This may be due to the fact that Tavaazo? is basically a religious concept. As such it is 'something good' in NSM terms, which necessarily imparts a sense of 'obligation'. Persian-English dictionaries assign to it the two English words: '*humility'* and '*modesty'* (See Haim 1960 or Aryanpour & Aryanpour 1979, among others). According to the Collins Cobuild Dictionary (1987) 'modesty' and/or 'humility' may refer to the quality of objects as well as the kind of behaviour one desires to present. Humility, then, is defined as "the quality that someone has of being modest and not too proud because they know that there are things about them which are not perfect" (p. 711). This definition is very much in harmony with that of the Persian Tavaazo?. Nonetheless, in English, objects can also be qualified as being humble or modest, whereas in Persian, the word '*tavaazo?'* or rather its adjectival form '*motevaaze?'* only refers to human personal characteristics. So one cannot say 'my humble home, flat, article', etc in Persian using this term, although one can downgrade

their qualities or possessions by using other adjectives implying Tavaazo?. Tavaazo?, then, is the result of a kind of verbal or non-verbal behaviour in which an individual avoids, downgrades or completely denies their own abilities, qualities or possessions (See Dehkhoda 1992:6286; Moin 1964:1158). Such a person receives the comment *'u motevaaze? ast'* (he is humble).

As is clear, Persian speakers profusely employ self-lowering strategies in their interactions. Beeman (1986) comments "the most effective and widely used strategic formula in the use of *tæ'arof* [sic] is to aim for a lower relative status position and defer to another person. In doing this, one has … shown virtue by acting modestly in accordance with one's proper relative status" (p. 59). The quotation at the start of this chapter is a very good example of this strategic use. This kind of verbal behaviour immediately manifests the speaker's Tavaazo? since they put themselves in an inferior position. In NSM terms, then, Tavaazo? is 'something good about a person' who says 'I am not good but you/people are good'. The speaker gains a kind of status by lowering himself or herself into an apparent position of humility or modesty; though this is inferior in superficial hierarchical terms, it is regarded as morally good and superior in virtue of humility. There is a famous allegory in Persian about a typical very knowledgeable scholar who naturally should be '*oftaade*' (humble). It reads '*deraxt harche por baar tar, oftaade tar*' (paraphrase: 'A tree heavily loaded with fruit has bent branches'). A knowledgeable scholar is compared to a fruitful tree to suggest that one who knows more is morally obliged to be humble in their dealings with others (i.e. bends low) and as the knowledge increases so does the degree of humility.

Tavaazo? concerns both verbal and non-verbal interaction. The verbal aspect consists of the use of respectful language and expressions suggesting humility.

One of the commonest non-verbal Tavaazo? is 'standing up' in front of superiors as they enter the room or approach. This is occasionally practised for inferiors. This may happen when the superiors are functioning as hosts in a party. If people fail to stand up when the social situation warrants it, they will be branded with having a negative pride. It is interesting to note that the action of standing up is accompanied by uttering *'yaa allah'* (Oh God). Saying this phrase is a sign of *ehteraam* for the alter.

Another aspect of Tavaazo? concerns the choice of verbs and noun phrases. Jahangiri (1980) and Beeman (1986) have written on this socially strategic use of verbs at some length (See also the previous chapter and this chapter for more detail). Briefly, for politeness purposes some sets of lexical verbs in Persian fall into any of the following three categories, namely, low, neutral and high. The low ones are usually used to refer to self; to degrade oneself as a sign of Tavaazo?. These are employed in the self-lowering strategies referred to earlier in this chapter and cannot be used to others. The neutral ones do not convey superiority or inferiority in interaction and occur in socially unmarked situations. The high ones are used to elevate the hearer and to

suggest that their *ehteraam* be recognised. These verbs are used in other-raising strategies, they cannot be used to refer to the speaker. As a commonly occurring classic example take the neutral verb '*goftan*' (to say), which has a low and a high equivalent. The self-lowering equivalent is '*arz kardan*' (lit. to make a petition; i.e. to say) and other-raising one is '*farmudan*' (lit. to command; i.e. to say). This use is exemplified in Example 6.4.1:

Example 6.4.1

A: (makes statement)
B: *che farmudid*?
   "What said you?" [lit. what did you command?]
A: '*arz kardam* …(repeats statement) [lit. I made the petition that….]
   "I said …   (after Beeman 1986:144)

In Example 6.4.1 the utterances cannot be reversed: B cannot put the question in the form '*che arz kardid*?' nor can A reply '*farmudam...*'. That is, in Persian politeness, others 'command' and the self 'makes petition'; to reverse these verbs would be heard as being extremely boastful and utterly arrogant. In this sense, such verbs (there are several common sets) are socially deictic terms or key contextualization cues of ta'arof for self-lowering and other-elevation.

As said before Tavaazo? refers to an 'obligation' one feels as the result of a religious constraint. This feeling is obviously directed toward somebody. It is clear that this obligation can be seen as 'doing something good'. It is important to note that this obligation is not as the result of a favour others have done before for which one has to return it to show their gratitude. It is, then, conceived as a natural obligation. This would suggest that the semantic component should be expanded as follows:

X thinks: I always have to do something good for other people

To account for self-lowering and other-raising strategies in the formulation of the NSM explication, the following sentences can be incorporated into the final outcome:
Self-lowering: X says things like this to others
                 'I am not good'
The sentence 'I am not good' is a comparative general statement that suggests imperfect qualities one perceives or claims of oneself. It is also an indication that the speaker is not proud. For other-raising strategies the following opposite sentence to the above can be added to the explication:
Other-raising: 'but you are very good'

This NSM element hardly accounts for the verbal and gestural intricacies of *tavaazo?* Self-lowering and other-raising in Persian but represents a concise attempt to build something of these elements into the explication. The final explication for TA, then, can be formulated in the following:

Tavaazo?

a) Person X is with person Y
b) X says good things to Y
c) X does good things to Y
d) X thinks: 'I always have to do/say good things
e) X says: 'I am not good, but you are very good'
f) People feel/say good things about X because of this
g) X feels something good

Component (a) shows that Tavaazo? is an interpersonal phenomenon; (b) and (c) show that Tavaazo? is a desired verbal and non-verbal behaviour; (d) is an indication of Tavaazo? as a permanent obligation. Component (e) conveys the crucial idea of self-lowering and other-raising features of Tavaazo?, while (f) shows that the person will be considered acceptable in a Persian-speaking society, and (g) suggests the pleasure one feels because of this recognition which is an acquired moral status.

6.5 Mehmaan-navaazi

The characteristics of *mehmaan-navaazi*, hospitality, can be exemplified in the typical exchange of expressions and nonverbal behaviours that the hosts use towards the guests. This includes, among other things, using flowery language, expressing strong and repetitive insistence that the guest eat something, degrading the host's belongings and capabilities, etc. Using an NSM explication, this last component of Ta'arof will be formulated here as hospitality at home, although the characteristics can apply elsewhere, e.g. in restaurants. Mehmaan-navaazi shares some of the formulaic elements mentioned for the other components of Ta'arof. This shared part mostly concerns 'good conduct' in verbal and non-verbal interaction between individuals. In NSM terms this is 'saying or doing good things to others'. It is important that in Mehmaan-navaazi, however, doing or saying good things are iterative and insistent. This can take the formula:

X says/does good things many times

Another component in Mehmaan-navaazi is giving offers of food, etc. elaborated above. This can take the formula:

X thinks of A as something good for Y

But, then, this should be emphasised to show insistence on the part of the host:

X says this many times

In Mehmaan-navaazi, use of *tavaazo?* in language is in place. So one denies or downgrades their possessions, abilities, etc. This can be expressed in NSM terms as:

X says A is not very good

The final product for Mehmaan-navaazi in NSM terms could be the following:

Mehmaannavvazi

a) Person Y is in home[3]of person X
b) X says good things to Y
c) X does good things to Y
d) X says/does these things many times
e) X thinks of A as something good for Y
f) X says to Y: 'You have to have A'
g) X says this many times
h) X says 'A is not very good'
i) Y wants A
j) X feels good because of this

Component (a) shows that Mehmaan-navaazi is an interpersonal phenomenon. Components (b) and (c) indicate that Mehmaan-navaazi concerns acceptable behaviour or good conduct. Component (d) points the repetition and insistence involved in the exchanges. Component (e), (f), and (g) refer to the offer of things to the guests and also the host's insistence that the guests accept them. Component (h) concerns downgrading remarks a host may say about themselves or about food they offer. Components (i) and (j) suggest that in the end the guest accepts the offer and the host feels happy as the result of this.

Ta'arof: A final construction in NSM terms

Based on the five major elements discussed above, an explication for ta'arof in NSM terms can be constructed. It is important to note, however, that Ta'arof is a kind of language strategy that Persian speakers normally use in their interaction. As such it may not necessarily be a simple combination of all the five elements in all speech events. As has been elaborated in this chapter, Ta'arof can mean different things in different situations and different contexts will elicit different emphases or combination of

---

[3] 'Home' is assumed to be definable in NSM terms and since it considered a less complex element than the explication of which it is a part, this is hold to be acceptable in NSM scripts (Goddard 1998)

elements. In order to have a simple and more understandable picture, however, the NSM explication for Ta'arof presents it as a combination of the above mentioned elements.

Ta'arof

   a) Person X is with Person Y
   b) X has *adab* to Y
   c) X has *rudarbaayesti* to Y
   d) X has *ehteraam* to Y
   e) X does *mehmannavaazi*
   f) X is with *tavaazo?*
   g) People say good things about X because of all this
   h) X feels good

Component (a) indicates that Ta'arof is an interpersonal phenomenon. Component (b) accounts for the fact that Ta'arof may a reflection of one's *adab* as shown to others. Component (c) refers to *rudarbaayesti* as a kind of self-restraint toward others practised in Ta'arof. Component (d) stands for *ehteraam* as a basis to maintain others' respect. Component (e) shows *mehmaan-navaazi* side of Ta'arof in terms of X treating others with hospitality and open generosity. Component (f) also shows *tavaazo?* in Ta'arof as presented in X's language and behaviour.

7.0 Conclusion

In conclusion this study tried to root out the basic meanings and functions of ta'arof by analysing it using both conventional methods of giving descriptions and cultural script approach. To reiterate once more, this study demonstrated that Ta'arof is a part of the culture of being polite in Persian (*adab*). It is manifested in both verbal and non-verbal communication. The language and the strategies involved are controlled by *tavaazo?* (humility), urging individuals to lower themselves in self references and raise others in referring to others. Power, distance, social class, and age are very important in its use. The direction of the frequency of use is from the lower to the upper for all of the above variables. This points to the fact that Persian culture places great emphasis on having *ehteraam* (respect) for superiors. Having restrain and limiting one's wants and wishes in front of others is another aspect of ta'arof usually referred to as *rudarbaayesti.* Ta'arof is also shown in receiving guests warmly by being polite and respectful and serving them with best possible refreshments (*mehmaan-navaazi*). Thus Ta'arof can be the manifestation of *adab, ehteraam, tavaazo?, rudarbaayesti,* and *mehmaan-navaazi.* So a typical person who, knows Ta'arof and uses it reasonably, is polite in the use of his

language and behaviour, respects others, is humble in his words and actions, harasses his desires, and is openly generous and cordial towards others.

Clearly, the framework for cultural and pragmatic analysis used in this study needs to be explored and expanded. Thus replications of this study can be made to explore more subtleties of ta'arof and to validate the framework used. Collaborative research efforts are required to integrate the cultural script approach with other methods of culture and pragmatic studies to devise a more comprehensive framework for such studies. Further research is required to improve the explications given for ta'arof and the other five concepts. There is also a need to explore further the meaning and functions of concepts that Ta'arof manifests. Both this aspect and detailed validation of the five proposed concepts subsumed by ta'arof could be investigated through questionnaire surveys. The distribution of Ta'arof with regard to status, distance, age, gender, and education still needs further exploration using more probing methodologies. Now that these have been identified as influential factors, with some detail, their relation to each other in Ta'arof contexts can be explored. The language and strategies used in Ta'arof in different speech acts still needs further investigation, but this study has given a detailed preliminary account with some explanation in terms of the five subcomponents.

Further research is needed to expand and validate the NSM terms for Persian. The syntax of NSM terms is also another issue that needs more cultivation. The influence of Ta'arof in EFL learners' performance in English is a subject worthy of investigation. Research has to be carried out using awareness techniques to aware EFL learners of the pragmatics of the English language. Finally, the comprehension and production of EFL learners in English on politeness needs to be explored.

References

Abughosh, B. S. & Shaqra, W. Z., (1992), **A glossary of Islamic terminology**, London, Ta-Ha.
Aryanpour, A. & Aryanpour, M. (1976), **The concise Persian- English Dictionary: One Volume**, Tehran, Amir Kabir Publications.
Assadi, R. (1980), 'Deference: Persian style', **Anthropological Linguistics**, vol. 22, pp.221-224.
Beeman, W. O., (1976), 'Status, style, and strategy in Iranian interaction', **Anthropological Linguistics**, vol. 18, pp. 305-322.
Beeman, W. O., (1977), 'The Hows and Whys of Persian styles: A pragmatic approach, in Fasold, R. W. & Shuy R. W., **Studies in language variation**, Washington, Georgetown University Press, pp.124-145.

Beeman, W. O., (1986), **Language, Status, and Power in Iran**, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Beeman, W. O. (1988), 'Affectivity in Persian language use', **Culture, Medicine, and Psychology**, vol. 12, No. 1, pp.9-30.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S., (1987), **Politeness. Some universals in language usage**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Browne, E. G., 1893 (1984 reprint), **A year among the Persians**, London, Century Publishing.

Dehkhoda, A. A., (1994), **Loghat naameh** (Persian Dictionary), edited by Shahidi, J. & Moin, M., Tehran, Tehran University Press.

Fuladgar, M., (1997), **Simaa-ye axlaaq dar aayene-ye qoraan va ahaadis** (perspectives of ethics in the light of the Koran and Prophetic sayings), Isfahan, Isfahan University of Technology.

Glasse, C., (1989), **The concise encyclopaedia of Islam**, London, Stacy International.

Goddard, C., (1992), 'Traditional Yankunytjatjara ways of speaking- A semantis perspective', **Australian Journal of Linguistics**, vol. 12, no. 1, pp.93-122.

Goddard, C., (1994), the meaning of *lah*: Understanding 'emphasis' in Malay, **Oceanic Linguistics**, vol. 33, no. 1, pp.145-165.

Goddard, C., (1996), 'The social emotions of Malay', **Ethos**, vol. 24, no. 3.

Goddard, C., (1997), 'Cultural values and 'cultural scripts' of Malay', **Journal of Pragmatics**, vol. 27, pp.183-201.

Goddard, C., (1998), **Semantic Analysis**, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Goddard, C. & Wierzbicka, A., (1994), **Semantic and Lexical universals: Theory and empirical findings**, Amsterdam, Benjamins.

Goddard, C. & Wierzbicka, A. (1997), 'Discourse and Culture', in van Dijk, T. A. (ed.), **Discourse as Social Interaction, Vol. II of Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction**, London, Sage Publications, pp.231-57.

Goffman, E., (1975), **The presentation of self in everyday life**, New York, Doubleday.

Goffman, E., (1967), **Interaction ritual: essays on face-to-face behaviour**, New York, Doubleday.

Goffman, E., (1972), 'On face-work: an analysis of ritual elements in social interaction', in Laver, J. & Hutcheson, S. (1972), **Communication in face-to-face interaction**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, pp.319-346.

Grice, H. P., (1975), 'Logic and conversation', in Cole, P. & Morgan J. J. (eds.) (1975), **Syntax and semantics 3: speech acts**, New York, Academic, pp.41-58

Haim, S., (1960), **The shorter English-Persian Dictionary**, Tehran, Yahuda Brukhim.

Hodge, C., (1957), 'Some aspects of Persian style', **Language**, vol. 33, pp.335-369.

Hymes, D., (1962/1968), 'The ethnography of speaking', in Fishman, J. A., **Readings in the sociology of language**, The Hague, Mouton, pp.92-107.

Jahangiri, N., (1980), '**A sociolinguistic study of Tehrani Persian'**, unpublished PhD thesis, University of London.

Jazayery, H., (1967), 'Observation on stylistic variation in Persian', **Actes de Xe Congres International des Linguistics**, Bucharest, pp.447-45.

Kronenfeld, D. B., (1996), **Plastic Glasses and Church Fathers: Semantic Extension from the Ethnoscience Tradition (Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics ; 3),** Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Koutlaki, S., (1997), **Persian system of politeness and the Persian concept of face with some reference to EFL teaching to Iranian native speakers**, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales at Cardiff.

Lampton, A. K. S., (1954), **Persian vocabulary**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Leech, G., (1983), **Principles of Pragmatics**, London, Longman.

Lyons, J., (1981), **Language, meaning, and context**, London, Fontana.

Moin, M., (1982), **Farhang-e Farsi** (Persian Dictionary), Tehran, Amir Kabir Publications.

Nasr, S. H., (1982), **Muhammad, man of Allah**, London, Muhammadi Trust.

Phillot, D. C., (1919), **Higher Persian Grammar**, Culcuta, Culcuta University Press.

Rafiee, A., (1992), **Variables of communicative incompetence in the performance of Iranian learners of English and English learners of Persian**, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London.

Sahragard, R., (2000). **Politeness in Persian: A Cultural Pragmatic Analysis**. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leicester.

Sahragard, R., (2003). Semantic Primitives in Persian. **Humanities and Social Sciences Journal of Shiraz University**, Special issue on language.

Sani, S., (1994), **Manners of teaching and learning in Islam**, translated from Arabic into Persian by Hojjati, M. B., Tehran, Daftar-e Nahr-e Farhang-e mo?aaser.

Shamseddin, M., (1993), **Aadaab-e dusti va mo?aasherat** (manners of friendship and relationship), in Persian, Tehran, Shafaq Publications.

Steingass, F. J., (1892, 1947 printing), **A comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary**, London, Kegan Paul.

Takahashi, T. & Beebe, L., (1987), 'Development of pragmatic competence by Japanese learners of English', **JALT Journal**, vol. 8, pp.131-155.

Tonekaboni, M. F., (1987), **Al-hadith**, Tehran, Daftar-e Nashr-e Farhang-e Eslami.

Wierzbicka, A., (1992), **Semantics, Culture, and Cognition**, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Wierzbicka, A., (1994), ' "Cultural Scripts: A Semantis Approach to Cultural Analysis and Cross-cultural communication', in Bouton, L. & Kachru, Y. (eds.) (1994), **Pragmatics and Language Learning**, Urbana, University of Illinois, pp.1-24.

Wierzbicka, A., (1996), **Semantics, Primes, and Universals**, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Wierzbicka, A., (1997), **Understanding Cultures through their Keywords**, Oxford University Press.

Wierzbicka, A., (1999), **Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.