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Identity, Politeness and Discursive Practices in a Changing World

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Identity, politeness and discursive practices in a changing world

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Abstract
This special issue continues the discussion of the impact of culture on identity, communication, politeness, and discourse strategies (see *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 22 (4) 2018, 23 (4) 2019, 24 (2) 2020). The topic has become particularly relevant in the context of two multidirectional processes, i.e., globalization resulting from current geopolitical trends and technological advancements, which have encouraged the intensification of contacts between people, languages, and cultures; and deglobalization focused on the preservation of national cultures and development of a multipolar and multicultural world. In our introductory article, we attempt to trace the impact of communication technologies, language, and culture contacts on digital, face-to-face, and public communication in different settings and discourses and outline its influence on communication, language variation, and change. In this introductory article we present a summary of the contributions of our authors to the issue, which showed that the implications of globalization and language contact are multifaceted, they can have both positive and negative effects on language use, maintenance, and change, as well as on cultural identity and diversity. Pursuing these latter factors contributes to developing trends of deglobalization. Our authors invite the reader to reflect on these processes. In conclusion, we sum up their major findings and suggest a brief avenue for further research.
Key words: *lingua-cultural identity, im/politeness, on/offline communication, discursive practices, language contacts, de/globalization*

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Идентичность, вежливость и дискурсивные практики в меняющемся мире

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Аннотация
В этом специальном выпуске продолжается обсуждение влияния культуры на идентичность, коммуникацию, вежливость и дискурсивные практики (см. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 22 (4) 2018, 23 (4) 2019, 24 (2) 2020). Данная тема приобретает особую актуальность в условиях двух разнонаправленных процессов: глобализации, вызванной современными геополитическими тенденциями и развитием коммуникационных технологий, способствующих интенсификации контактов между людьми, языками и культурами, а также деглобализации, ориентированной на сохранение национальных культур и развитие многополярного и поликультурного мира. В вводной статье мы пытаемся проследить воздействие новых коммуникационных технологий, языковых и культурных контактов на цифровое, межличностное и публичное общение в различных контекстах и дискурсах, а также показать их влияние на коммуникативную и языковую вариативность. Мы кратко представим статьи выпуска, которые показали, что последствия глобализации могут иметь позитивное и негативное воздействие на использование, сохранение и изменение языка, а также на культурное разнообразие и культурную самобытность, стремление к которым способствует развитию тенденций к деглобализации. Наши авторы приглашают к размышлению над этими неоднозначными и полярными процессами. В заключении статьи подведены основные итоги и очерчены направления дальнейших потенциальных исследований.
Ключевые слова: *лингвокультурная идентичность, не/вежливость, онлайн-/офлайн-коммуникация, дискурсивные практики, языковые контакты, де/глобализация*

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1. Introduction

The topic of this special issue is consonant with the dominant anthropological paradigm in modern linguistics, which focuses on *homo loquens* and the study of the language in use, rather than a system. Problems of intercultural communication, as well as the study of communicative and linguistic variations, have become particularly relevant in the context of globalization and the development of digital communication which has encouraged intensification of contacts between people, languages, and cultures. At the same time, we can observe an opposite process of deglobalization, focused on the preservation of national cultures and identities and development of a multipolar and multicultural world.

Communicative strategies, discursive practices, and the styles of interaction, in general, are predetermined by contexts of interaction, both situational and cultural (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini & Kádár 2010, Bilá & Ivanova 2020, Gladkova & Larina 2018, Goddard 2018, Kecskes 2014, Eslami et al. 2023, Lee & Poynton 2000, Placencia & Eslami 2020, Wierzbicka 1999, 2003, 2020 among many others). As van Dijk states (2009: 154) "local, situational contexts are the interface between global, cultural contexts and discourse, by means of the cultural knowledge of the participants". The broader cultural aspects of local contexts should be taken into consideration as, due to different cultural values and attitudes, "interpretations and definitions of social situations in general, and hence of contexts in particular, are variable across cultures and languages" (Ibid). For instance, whereas age and power may be among the top values of Eastern cultures and make the style of communication status-oriented, the value of equality which is characteristic of Western cultures dictates the choice of different politeness strategies, which make the style of interaction person-oriented and egalitarian, even in asymmetric contexts. The same applies to such cultural characteristics as independence vs interdependence, reflected in the I-identity prevailing in individualistic cultures and the We-identity representatives of collectivist cultures which are manifested in language and discourse (Larina et al. 2017).

Ethnic identity, which is one of the prominent manifestations of identity, "derives from the sense of peoplehood within a group, a culture, and a particular setting" (Phinney & Ong 2007: 271). It has been studied with reference to an individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group, that is, a group defined by one's cultural heritage, including values, traditions, and language (Larina et al. 2017:112). Manifestation of ethnic identity can be observed at all levels of language, as well as in communicative strategies, understanding of im/politeness, and discursive practices (Bilá & Ivanova 2020, Eslami 2005, Mirzaei & Eslami 2013, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019, among many others).

Despite different definitions of the term, 'discursive practice' is viewed by most researchers as a linguistic reflection of a social practice defined as "a relatively stabilized form of social activity" (Fairclough 2001: 231). Scholars delve into the analysis of discursive practices as "mechanisms of the discursive construction of various types of relations, starting with power distribution and going into diverse types of communication" (Bilá & Ivanova 2020:224). As a result, "the study of discourse turned out to be closely connected with the study of communication with its various communication strategies" (Ibid). To explain the social, cultural, and ideological values or the discursive relations that underlie the generic or rhetorical variability evidenced in different texts, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is employed (Fairclough 2010, Mirzaei & Eslami 2013, van Dijk 2009). The critical approach to discourse analysis is appropriate for research into social and cultural change, as it foregrounds links between social practice, culture, and language. In this regard, Fairclough (2010:131) argues that "social and cultural changes are changes in discursive practices". Positive discourse analysis, a more recent approach to the analysis of discourse (Guan 2022, Hughes 2018, Martin 2004, Stibbe 2017), in contrast to CDA, is focused "on constructive social action, rather than on the deconstruction of negative social action", "on the discourse we like rather than on the discourse we wish to criticize" (Alba-Juez 2009: 254), on "heartening accounts of progress" rather than on "discouraging analysis of oppression" (Martin 2004: 184), and it also considers social, cultural, and ideological aspects of discourse.

In this special issue, our aim is to further trace the impact of culture and identity on language in use and discourse practices, taking into consideration both the local and global context. The contributors to the issue address questions dealing with:

- identity in language and communication;
- im/politeness in different cultural and situational contexts with a focus on online and face-to-face communication;
- discursive practices in different contexts;
- languages and cultures in contact.

All these issues are considered against the backdrop of the results of globalization caused by geopolitical processes, the development of modern communication technologies, migration, increased mobility and contacts, as well as opposite processes of deglobalization aimed at preserving cultural identity and building a multicultural world.

2. Theoretical overview

2.1. Identity in language and communication

Identity plays a significant role in language and communication, since it shapes how people use and understand language. Language is not only a tool for conveying information but also a way to express one's identity and to signal membership in certain social groups. Language use can reflect an individual's identity in terms of their culture, ethnicity, social class, and gender. For example, people from different cultures may use different language structures or vocabulary to convey the same idea (e.g. Bromhead & Ye, Goddard 2006, Kecskes 2014, Lee & Poynton 2000, Mills 2003, Wierzbicka 2003). Similarly, people from different social classes may use different linguistic registers or accents. In this way, language use can convey information about a person's background, experiences, and identity. Language can also be used to signal group membership and establish social connections. People may use language to indicate that they belong to a certain community or to distinguish themselves from others. The use of slang, jargon or specialized language is an example of this practice, which aims to build a sense of belonging and identity among group members.

Thus, people's communication styles and preferences may reflect their personalities, which are multi-layered and include individual, social, and cultural traits. In this issue, our focus is mostly on lingua-cultural identity which is manifested in "linguistic behavior through which a language user verbalizes all concepts, values, and schemes of conduct practiced in a particular lingua-culture" (Bilá et al. 2020: 347). Particular attention is paid to second language (L2) learners' identity (Ishishara 2019, Mirzaei & Parhizkar 2021, Vovou 2019). When learners engage with languages, they engage in conveying or interpreting social identities (Palmieri 2019). The interplay between identity and pragmatics does not occur in a vacuum but discursively and dynamically evolves over time in sociocultural situated contexts of language use (Mirzaei & Parhizkar 2021). Moreover, the way people communicate can also reveal aspects of their identity. For example, nonverbal communication such as body language and tone of voice can convey emotional states and social status.

With the social turn as well as the recent surge in the dynamic systems approaches in applied linguistics research, the concept of identity has gone through a transformation (Mirzaei & Parhizkar 2021). Identity is conceptualized as a dynamic construct as well as a variable subjectivity or intentionality within and across individuals in different contexts at different times and, thus, a site of conflict, struggle, and change (Darvin & Norton 2015, Miller et al. 2017). This poststructuralist view of identity (e.g., Norton & McKinney 2011) emphasizes the interconnection of the individual language learner and the wider social world, stressing the flexibility or 'agency' of the learner in portraying and jointly negotiating their identity and characterizing "the role of language and discourse practices in the construction of identity" (Mitchell et al. 2013: 276). As it relates to L2 pragmatic performance, L2 learners should not be considered as passive receivers of target language norms, but as having the agency to intentionally choose pragmatic strategies from among the different alternatives they have, actively negotiate social identities, and discursively reshape their identities in a complex, dynamic way. Little research has yet been done related to L2 pragmatics and identity from this poststructuralist perspective, indicating how L2 learners' pragmatic choices and perceptions of sociocultural norms and contextual variables might vary in accord with their identity (re)constructions and agency enactments (Ishihara 2019, Norton 2013).

In summary, identity plays a significant role in language and communication, influencing both the content and style of communication. Understanding the relationship between identity and language use can help improve communication and promote cross-cultural understanding.

2.2. Im/politeness in cross-cultural perspective

The way people interact with each other is greatly influenced by their understanding of politeness, which is a universal and at the same time culture-specific phenomenon. Im/politeness and the way it is realized follows both universal and culture-specific norms (Bargiela-Chiappini & Kádár 2010, Bayraktaroğlu & Sifianou 2001, Eslami 2005, Kádár & Haugh 2013, Kádár & Mills 2011, Leech 2014, Locher & Larina 2019, Mills 2009, Pizziconi 2007, Watts 2003 among many others). Politeness is a cognitive and socio-cultural phenomenon as the politeness strategies are predetermined by people's identity and their understanding of im/politeness based on their social and cultural values (e.g. Larina 2015, Mugford 2020, Sifianou 1992a,b, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019, Watts 2003).

Culturally-based differences concerning what is expected during communication can be a significant source of cross-cultural communication difficulties (Gudykunst & Kim 1992, Thomas 1983). These expectations may be linked to differences in the realization of particular speech acts (e.g. Alemi et al. 2021, Haugh & Chang 2019, Litvinova & Larina 2023, Trosborg 2010, Wierzbicka 2003), or they may be linked to broader and often more diffuse issues of discourse organization and communicative style (House 2006, Larina 2015). Thomas (1983) has shown that when speakers do not share the same cultural background, sociopragmatic failure is more likely, resulting largely from a lack of shared resources for understanding the interlocutor's communicative intention and the pragmatic meaning of their utterance. Cultural values are both reflected by and carried through language. Gumperz (1982: 166) notes that while speech activities exist in all cultures, there might be differences in the ways particular activities are carried out and signaled. With the increased mobility of peoples throughout the world and the breakdown of small, egalitarian face-to-face societies (Gumperz 1982), communicative conventions have become more important in establishing understanding and acceptance. Speech acts and other verbal behavior cannot be truly understood without reference to cultural values and attitudes. Wierzbicka argues that linguistic differences are due to "aspects of culture much deeper than mere norms of politeness" (Wierzbicka 1985: 145) and are associated with cultural values such as, for instance, autonomy, distance, intimacy, closeness, informality, harmony, sincerity, directness vs. indirectness (Wierzbicka 2003). As Suszczynska (1999: 1055) mentions, the issue to be considered is "what face-saving, face-threatening, and support mean for different cultures and language groups".

The development of discourse analysis as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methodology for the study of language in use (e.g. Alba 2009, Fairclough 2010, Ponton & Larina 2016, 2017, Zappettini et al. 2021) led to the extension of the discourse analysis field and offered a discursive approach to the study of politeness as one of the core communicative categories. The discursive approach to politeness (Eelen 2001, Mills 2003, Watts 2003) converted politeness strategies into discursive practices and gave a new impetus to the development of the theory of politeness by including impoliteness in its framework, as well as the Hearer, who evaluates the degree of im/politeness of an utterance. Thus, it contributed to overcoming some limitations of the face-saving approach to politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987), and widened the scope of the politeness theory to include both politeness and impoliteness (e.g. Bousfield 2008, Bousfield & Locher 2008, Culpeper 2011, Culpeper et al. 2017). Culpeper (2011) rightly states, that "impoliteness is an important aspect of social life, and indeed plays a central role in many discourses (from military recruit training to exploitative TV shows), discourses which are rarely described in detail" (Culpeper 2011: xiii). Both politeness and impoliteness involve the study of communicative behavior in social interaction with a focus on situational and cultural contexts (e.g. Alemi & Latifi 2019, Bousfield 2008, Eslami 2005, Fernández-Amaya 2019, Kaul de Marlangeon 2018, Larina & Ponton 2020, 2022, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Pęzik 2021, Locher 2013, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019). The discursive turn contributed to understanding the evaluative and situated nature of im/politeness, the importance of emotions in assessments and the link of identity construction with these discourse aspects (Locher & Larina 2019: 875). To establish and maintain harmony, it should be examined what is appropriate in different cultures and language groups, as what is considered im/polite is strictly connected to cultural and social aspects of context.

2.3. Online communication and online culture

Online communication is a growing area of research aiming to explore everyday interactions and the ways different medium-related affordances impact communication as well as social norms. However, research on how technology enhances or displaces discourses and practices of tradition is scarce (Herring et al. 2013, Placencia & Eslami 2020, Scott 2022, Wilson & Peterson 2002). With the development of online communities on varying platforms, there is a great interest in examining the rise of online cultures and their users' corresponding behavior and language practices (Danet & Herring 2007, Fetzer 2021, Lee 2017). As argued by Bell (2001), online cultures are simultaneously both a product and a producer of culture.

Advancements in technology, the increasing use of online discourse, and globalization are recognized as highly powerful forces influencing everyday language use and practices. This has led to concerns that technologization, in line with globalization, and increasing dominance of the English language will lead to the homogenization of the world, reducing cultural and linguistic diversity in discourse practices, which are at the heart of this interconnectedness (Sifianou 2013). Research findings reveal that increasing use of online SNSs and interconnectedness does not necessarily mean eradication of cultural differences in discourse practices but it does decrease these in language use (Eslami & Yang 2018).

However, as Virtanen and Lee (2022) state, digital interaction is getting "increasingly multilingual and/or transcultural in nature, reflecting 'glocal' practices and multiple conceptualizations of face" (Virtanen & Lee 2022: 1). Multilingualism and the use of multiple languages by users of social networking sites have become the norm rather than an exception. Emerging literature on online language use indicates that despite similarities in online communication on different platforms, the users of social networking sites demonstrate deep cultural differences and different online communities may have their own cultural attributes (Fernández-Amaya 2019, Maíz-Arévalo 2018, 2021, Xie et al. 2021, Zidjali 2019 among many others). The studies show that in online communication the patterns of offline interaction are reproduced (e.g. Eslami & Yang 2018, Lorenzo-Dus 2001, Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez 2013). Thus, they testify to the fact that the linkage between language and culture is indisputable even in a virtual context.

Technology has provided more options and more flexibility in using discourse practices that are aligned with the local/national culture of the speech community as well as the global culture, which is dominated by English speakers' cultural norms. It can contribute to the introduction of new norms and practices not previously observed in face-to-face communication. Technology and the intensification of online communication may promote more changes in cultural values and perspectives. Although traditional values and customs still exist, we cannot deny the force of globalization, the ease of communication through technology, nor the dominant role of English as an international language, in changing people's views, attitudes, and discourse practices.

2.4. Languages and cultures in contact

Globalization not only promotes the intensification of contacts between people, but it also creates new opportunities for intercultural and intracultural communication and dynamic shifts in language use of those in contact. This can lead to a range of outcomes, including language borrowing, code-switching, and creolization. In a bilingual or multilingual community where two or more languages are used in the same context, there is a possibility that one language may begin to dominate and the other may gradually be replaced by the dominant one. In such situations, the languages in contact may influence each other in various ways.

Code-switching can be a sign of bilingual proficiency and may help to create social bonds between speakers of different languages (Gardner-Chloros 2020). On the other hand, if one language dominates the norms and practices of language use, it can lead to the erosion of languages, the loss of cultural heritage, and the suppression of linguistic diversity. The ongoing widespread shift of languages today offers a great opportunity to analyze the linguistic changes displayed by shifting speakers, i.e., identifying language change and loss as a process rather than an outcome (Grenoble & Osipov 2023).

Recent work by Lee (2020) on documenting and preserving contact languages suggests that much more needs to be done to safeguard and conserve the endangered contact languages of the world. There is an urgent need to invest in language documentation, bilingual education, and community-based programs (Bromham et al. 2022), in order to avoid the loss of over 1,500 languages by the end of the century, as "[W]hen a language disappears, so does the whole universe that is imprinted in it" (Kibrik 2021: 508).

Overall, the trend toward languages in contact is likely to continue as mobility, migration and global communication continue to increase. This creates both opportunities and challenges for language preservation and revitalization efforts, as well as for the study of language contact and its effects on linguistic diversity. When two or more languages are in contact, there is a greater potential for linguistic diversity to flourish. This can lead to the preservation and promotion of minority languages, which may otherwise be at risk of extinction. Languages in contact can also facilitate cultural exchange and understanding between different lingua-cultural communities. By learning about each other's languages and cultures, individuals can better understand and respect other cultures and gain a greater appreciation for cultural diversity.

3. Outline of contributions to the issue

The contributions to this volume address some of the issues outlined above and do so from a variety of methodological approaches, using different datasets, and focusing on different settings and discourses. Four articles in the issue explore im/politeness in computer-mediated communication and face-to-face interaction aiming to identify culture-specific communicative features of representatives of different cultures and their impact on interaction.

Seongha Rhee explores im/politeness in social network service communication in Korea. He points out that interactants in social network service (SNS) communication are driven to use language creatively, overcoming the disadvantages and exploiting the advantages of this type of communication. He investigates diverse elements of language used by SNS interactants to show their polite and impolite stances such as interjections, emoticons, exaggerated punctuations, omission of regular punctuation marks, intentional violation of orthographic rules, prolific slang expressions, deviated spelling, etc. He argues that all these creative strategies lead to language change at lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels.

Minoo Alemi and Zahra Maleknia address im/politeness from a pedagogical perspective. They investigate the use of politeness strategies and markers of politeness in English emails from Iranian non-native English-speaking university students addressed to an American professor. The results of their study showed that students did not accommodate to either verbal or structural politeness cues in emails and their knowledge of the rules of etiquette in the genre of academic e-mail, concerning both etiquette formulas and structural features of the text of the message, appeared to be insufficient. The paper emphasizes the importance of students' awareness of the politeness etiquette of the target language and contains some pedagogical implications aimed at improving their knowledge and competencies.

Research on impoliteness in different cultural contexts has received great attention in the past two decades. Adding to this literature, Tajeddin and Rassaei Mogadam conduct a cross-cultural study of impoliteness as perceived by English and Persian speakers. They explore variations in the perception of impoliteness and response to impoliteness by English and Persian speakers focusing on the speech act of refusal. The findings showed that when reacting to impoliteness in refusals, native English speakers used a wider range of strategies in comparison with Persian speakers and were more likely to adopt offensive strategies to counter impoliteness. The results demonstrated that social factors of communication such as social distance and power distance were of more significance for Persian speakers than for English speakers in perceiving the degree of impoliteness.

Tanju Deveci, Jessica Midraj, and Wael Samir El-Sokkary explore the speech act of compliment and its use by students at Emirati universities in communication with teachers in an intercultural context. The results showed that compliment is often used by students to mitigate a subsequent complaint and/or request. The authors identify compliment topics and syntactic structures of compliments used by students. They emphasize the importance of taking into account the context including interlocutors' lingua-cultural backgrounds and their social status to understand their communicative intention and to be able to interact successfully in a multicultural university environment.

Two other papers deal with discursive practices in political and business discourses, and the issues they consider are directly related to processes of globalization. Douglas M. Ponton explores the problem of human immigration across the Mediterranean, which increased significantly in the first part of the 21st century and has become one of the most relevant and acute topics of political debate in Europe. The originality of this study lies in the fact that it approaches the topic from a Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) perspective, rather than one of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is more prevalently used in discourse studies on such themes. It focuses on a discussion with an Italian mayor on recent migration involving Italy. By applying tools of pragmatic linguistic analysis and the socio-political context, the study aims to identify positive discourse and ideologies implicit in it, which may indicate alternative approaches to the phenomenon for example, discourses of human solidarity rather than repudiation.

Addressing business discourse, Elena Malyuga presents the results of a study on corporate communication. She focuses on reports on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which has become an important tool for maintaining the reputation of companies and one of the key concepts of corporate communication. The author substantiates the need for a comprehensive study of the language of CSR reports, reflecting the principles of corporate culture as a phenomenon of intercultural and global significance. The findings, obtained with the implementation of a corpus-based approach and contextual analysis, identified a number of linguistic features in effective CSR reports that reflect the basic principles of modern corporate culture. They contribute, as the author states, to a "systematic understanding of the corporate language policy, which allows maintaining effective communicative interaction with stakeholders" (Malyuga 2023).

Gritsenko and Laletina present the results of an original study that deals with the issues of sociolinguistic authenticity. They examine the notion of authenticity in relation to the linguistic presentation of Russian womanhood. The authors analyze the song "Russian woman" which was performed by the Tajik-Russian singer Manizha at the Eurovision 2021 contest and prompted controversial interpretations of the audience. They also explore the singer's post-performance interviews, and the viewers' online comments in order to reveal the authenticating and deauthenticating discourses of gender and ethnicity in relation to the song, the performer, and the created image. Through a multimodal semiotic analysis, they reveal opposite concepts of Russian femininity and argue that authentication and deauthentication of this textual assemblage are driven by different ideologies and often depend on a single textual level or element.

The next topic raised by the contributors to this issue is language and culture contact, intersections of languages, and the positive and negative outcomes of this process. When languages are in contact, this may not only contribute to the development of a particular language but can also become a threat to its existence, especially in cases where a language or dialect does not have written literature. Khalil Tazik and Mohammad Aliakbari express concern about the fate of the Bahmayeh dialect, a variant of Luri dialect spoken in southwestern Iran. Their research focuses on the stylistic variations of kinship terms in different contexts and the factors influencing these variations. The results showed that while people aged 40 years and older used Bakhmai terms more often, speakers in the 15 to 19 age group preferred Persian kinship terms, which indicates a process of Persification which is more pronounced among young speakers. The authors attribute this trend to the higher status of the Persian language, language contact and migration, which have led to a generational gap. They suggest some strategies that can oppose the dialect's endangered status, including documenting the Bakhmai dialect, encouraging educated speakers to use the dialect, and promoting intracultural communication.

Language and cultural contacts resulting from migration, as well as current geopolitical and technological processes attract the attention of writers and become the subject of literary works. Semyon Galaktionov and Zoya Proshina discuss linguistic and cultural contacts in the novel "House of Many Gods" by Kiana Davenport, a bilingual Hawaiian-American author. They explore translingual discourse in which three lingua-cultures, namely American, Hawaiian, and Russian, intersect and aim to identify linguistic tools that contribute to the creation of translingual and transcultural narratives. They focus on lexical borrowings from Native Hawaiian into English, including endonymic toponyms and culture-specific concepts; transliterated borrowed Russian words, as well as loan translations and allusions from Russian, pidginization of speech among others, and discuss the processes which take place in the linguistic accommodation and alteration.

The volume ends with two book reviews that are in tune with the topics discussed in this special issue.

4. Discussion and conclusion

This special issue further explores the influence of culture and identity on language and communication in today's changing world, showing the impact of new communication technologies, language, and culture contacts on digital, interpersonal, and public communication in various contexts and discourses, as well as their impact on communicative and linguistic variability. It pays special attention to the social and sociocultural factors that influence discursive practices and identity construction. These issues were considered against the background of two multidirectional processes: globalization caused by modern geopolitical trends and the development of communication technologies that contribute to the intensification of contacts between people, languages, and cultures; as well as deglobalization, which is focused on the preservation of national cultures and the development of a multipolar and multicultural world. The contributions of our authors outline directions and prospects for further interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, combining linguistic, cognitive, social, psychological and cultural aspects of offline and online interaction.

The articles showed that the study of politeness and impoliteness in various discourses, contexts and genres of offline and online communication does not lose its relevance (Rhee, Alemi & Maleknia, Tajeddin & Rassaei Mogadam). Influencing the outcome of social relationships, impoliteness plays an important role in communication and can have far-reaching consequences, both constructive and destructive. The conceptualization of im/politeness in various linguistic cultures, identification of strategies of im/politeness and their realisation, as well as the role of the social and sociocultural context in their choice, still remain promising areas of research.

The authors demonstrated the importance of further study of digital communication, in particular, on how technologies improve, change or replace traditional discourses and practices in intracultural and intercultural interaction (Alemi & Maleknia, Rhee). As shown in this issue, communication technologies have provided new opportunities and means for communication, they may promote new norms and practices not previously observed in face-to-face interactions and lead to changes at the lexical, grammatical, and discursive levels (Rhee). The quick advancement in information and communication technology offers greater access to people, leading to the exposure to other languages and cultures. This might change people's perspectives, values, attitudes, personality, and communicative behavior. It seems necessary to continue research to identify the role of social networks and the media in the formation of values and identity construction. Promising areas of research include the use of multimodal messaging, the discursive practices of bilingual and multilingual users, changes in the language code by bilinguals and multilinguals in offline and online communication, and the construction of their identity. Future research could examine the gendered and cultural identities of monolinguals, bilinguals, and multilinguals, manifested in offline and online communication.

Intercultural and cross-cultural communication in various fields including business, politics, etc. continue to be important areas of interdisciplinary research (Ponton, Malyuga). As the authors of this issue (Alemi & Maleknia, Deveci et al.) have shown, academic discourse is a worthy research object, in particular, the interaction of students and teachers in various cultural and multicultural contexts in online and offline communication. Due to the growth of academic mobility and migration processes, the university environment has become multicultural, and to ensure effective communication and positive psychological climate, it is crucial to take into account the cultural and communicative characteristics of students, role relations in their academic culture, and culture-specific features of their national communicative style. However, when teaching international students the norms of communication in the target language, the importance of which is emphasized in one of the articles (Alemi et al.), one cannot ignore the question of to what extent non-native speakers should adapt to the communicative models of their other culture interlocutors in order not to lose the opportunity to express their own identity and self in today's culturally diverse world. According to some researchers, the traditional approach in language education called “native-speakerism”, based on the belief in the superiority of native speakers, is problematic because it often restricts the freedom of expression, reduces international intelligibility and freedom of thought of students and works against cultural diversity (Hino 2021). Researchers are advocating a new approach to language education that ensures the acceptance of lingua-cultural varieties of English and the right of non-English speakers to express their values (Houghton & Hashimoto 2018).

The materials of this issue point to broad prospects for the study of linguistic changes caused by the expansion of contacts between languages and cultures (Tazik & Aliakbari, Gritsenko & Laletina), which can have positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, the spread of linguistic and cultural contacts involves more people in intercultural communication, which can contribute to a better understanding and recognition of different cultures and ways of life, intercultural communication, and cooperation, and the destruction of stereotypes and prejudices. On the other hand, this may cause the erosion of traditional languages and cultures. When one language or culture dominates others, it can lead to linguistic and cultural imperialism, where the dominant language and culture supplant and endanger minority languages and cultures.

As noted, linguistic and cultural contacts, promoted by globalization and the development of communication technologies, may bring new perspectives on assumptions of cultural values. They influence the consciousness of people, their identity and can contribute to changing their views, attitudes, and discursive practices. It is no coincidence that we are witnessing the opposite process – deglobalization, aimed at preserving national cultures and ethnic identity, forming a multipolar and multicultural world. Our authors invite the reader to reflect on these ambiguous and multipolar processes, the discussion of which we will continue in subsequent issues.

We thank the authors of this special issue for their insightful articles and hope that they will serve as an incentive for our readers to do their own research in the directions outlined in this issue.

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1. Введение

Тема этого специального выпуска созвучна господствующей в современном языкознании антропологической парадигме, которая фокусируется на *homo loquens* и исследовании функционирования языка, а не его системы. Изучение проблем межкультурной коммуникации, культурно-специфических особенностей языка и коммуникативного поведения его носителей стали особенно актуальными в условиях глобализации и развития цифровой коммуникации, способствующих интенсификации контактов между людьми, языками и культурами, на фоне которых мы наблюдаем и процессы деглобализации, ориентированной на сохранение национальных культур и развитие многополярного и поликультурного мира.

Коммуникативные стратегии, дискурсивные практики и стили коммуникации в целом предопределены контекстом, как ситуативным, так и культурным (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappini & Kádár 2010, Bilá & Ivanova 2020, Gladkova & Larina 2018, Goddard 2018, Kecskes 2014, Eslami et al. 2023, Lee & Poynton 2000, Placencia & Eslami 2020, Wierzbicka 1999, 2003, 2020 и др.). Как утверждает Т. ван Дейк (van Dijk 2009: 154), локальные ситуативные контексты сопрягаются с глобальными культурными контекстами и дискурсом посредством культурных знаний участников коммуникации. Он также отмечает важность учета более широких культурных аспектов локальных контекстов, поскольку из-за различий в культурных ценностях интерпретации социальных ситуаций различаются в зависимости от культуры и языка (Там же). Например, если возраст и власть являются одними из главных ценностей восточных культур, что делает стиль коммуникации статусно-ориентированным, то ценность равенства, характерная для западных культур, диктует выбор иных стратегий вежливости, которые формируют личностно-ориентированный и эгалитарный стиль взаимодействия даже в асимметричных контекстах. То же самое относится и к таким культурным характеристикам, как независимость *vs* взаимозависимость, которые отражаются в Я-идентичности, преобладающей в индивидуалистических культурах, и Мы-идентичности представителей коллективистских культур, которые проявляются в языке и дискурсе (Larina et al. 2017).

В основе этнической идентичности, как одной из ярких разновидностей идентичности, лежит чувство принадлежности к той или иной культуре, этнической группе (Phinney & Ong 2007: 271), определяемой общим культурным наследием, которое включает ценности, традиции и язык. Проявление этнической идентичности можно наблюдать на всех уровнях языка, а также в коммуникативных стратегиях, в понимании не/вежливости и дискурсивных практиках (Bilá & Ivanova 2020, Eslami 2005, Mirzaei & Eslami 2013, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019 и др.).

Несмотря на различные определения, «дискурсивная практика» рассматривается большинством исследователей как языковое отражение социальной практики, определяемой как «относительно устойчивая форма социальной активности»[1] (Fairclough 2001: 231). Ученые анализируют дискурсивные практики как механизмы «дискурсивного построения различных типов отношений, начиная с распределения власти и включая разнообразные типы коммуникации» (Bilá & Ivanova 2020: 237), в результате чего изучение дискурса тесно связано с изучением общения и различных коммуникативных стратегий. Для объяснения социальных, культурных и идеологических ценностей или дискурсивных отношений, которые лежат в основе общей или риторической изменчивости, проявляемой в разных текстах, используется критический дискурс-анализ (CDA) (Fairclough 2019, Mirzaei & Eslami 2013, van Dijk 2009). Критический подход к анализу дискурса выдвигает на первый план связи между социальной практикой, культурой и языком. В связи с этим Н.Фэрклаф (Fairclough 2010:131) утверждает, что «социальные и культурные изменения – это изменения в дискурсивных практиках». Позитивный дискурс-анализ, который является более поздним подходом к анализу дискурса (Guan 2022, Hughes 2018, Martin, 2004, Stibbe 2017 и др.), в отличие от критического, ориентирован на «конструктивные социальное действия, а не на деконструкцию негативных социальных действий», «на дискурс, который нам нравится, а не на дискурс, который мы подвергаем критике» (Alba-Juez 2009: 254), на «обнадеживающие сводки о прогрессе», а не на «разочаровывающий анализ угнетения» (Martin 2004: 184). С таких позиций позитивный дискурс-анализ рассматривает социальные, культурные и идеологические аспекты дискурса.

Цель данного специального выпуска состоит в том, чтобы продолжить исследование влияния культуры и идентичности на использование языка и дискурсивные практики, принимая во внимание как местный, так и глобальный контекст. Авторы номера обращаются к широкому спектру вопросов, среди которых:

- идентичность в языке и коммуникации;
- не/вежливость в различных культурных и ситуативных контекстах в онлайн- и офлайн-коммуникации;
- дискурсивные практики в различных контекстах;
- языковые и культурные контакты.

Все эти вопросы рассматриваются на фоне результатов глобализации, вызванной геополитическими процессами, развитием современных коммуникационных технологий, миграцией, расширением мобильности и контактов, а также противоположных ей процессов деглобализации, нацеленной на сохранение культурной самобытности и построение мультикультурного мира.

[1] Здесь и далее перевод наш. – *ТЛ.*

2. Теоретический обзор

2.1. Идентичность в языке и коммуникации

Идентичность играет важную роль в языке и коммуникации, поскольку она определяет то, как люди используют и понимают язык, который является не только инструментом для передачи информации, но и способом выразить свою идентичность и сигнализировать о принадлежности к определенным социальным группам. Язык может отражать идентичность человека с точки зрения его культуры, этнической принадлежности, социального класса и пола (e.g. Goddard 2006, Kecskes 2014, Lee & Poynton 2000, Mills 2003, Wierzbicka 2003). Например, люди из разных культур могут использовать разные языковые структуры или слова для передачи одной и той же идеи. Точно так же для людей из разных социальных классов характерны различные языковые регистры или акценты. Таким образом, то, как человек использует язык, может передавать информацию о его происхождении, опыте и личности. Через язык можно обозначать принадлежность к группе и устанавливать социальные связи. Посредством языка люди могут показать, что они принадлежат к определенному сообществу или, напротив, могут отличать себя от других. Сленг, жаргон или специальная лексика, к которым прибегает пользователь, являются примером того, как члены группы сигнализируют о принадлежности к тому или иному сообществу и формируют чувство единения.

Таким образом, стили и предпочтения людей в коммуникации отражают их идентичность, которая многослойна и включают индивидуальные, социальные и культурные черты. В данной статье наше внимание в основном сосредоточено на лингвокультурной идентичности, которая проявляется в «языковом поведении, посредством которого пользователь языка вербализует концепции, ценности и схемы поведения, практикуемые в определенной лингвокультуре» (Bilá et al. 2020: 347). Особое внимание уделяется идентичности студентов, изучающих иностранный язык (Ishishara 2019, Mirzaei & Parhizkar 2021, Vovou 2019). При освоении иностранного языка учащиеся передают и интерпретируют социальную идентичность (Palmieri 2019). Взаимодействие между идентичностью и прагматикой происходит не в вакууме, а дискурсивно, оно динамично развивается с течением времени в социокультурных контекстах использования языка (Mirzaei & Parhizkar 2021). Более того, сам процесс общения также может раскрывать те или иные аспекты личности собеседников. Например, невербальная коммуникация (язык тела и тон голоса) может передавать эмоциональное состояние и социальный статус.

С социальным сдвигом, а также наблюдаемым всплеском динамических системных подходов в исследованиях вопросов прикладной лингвистики концепция идентичности претерпела некоторую трансформацию (Mirzaei & Parhizkar 2021). По мнению исследователей, идентичность концептуализируется как динамический конструкт, а также изменчивая субъектность или интенциональность, проявляющаяся в разных контекстах, что может приводить к конфликтам и изменениям (Darvin & Norton 2015, Miller et al. 2017). Этот постструктуралистский подход к идентичности (например, Norton & McKinney 2011) подчеркивает взаимосвязь отдельного индивида, изучающего иностранный язык, и более широкого социального мира, обращает внимание на гибкость и инициативность учащегося при реализации своей идентичности, а также определяет «роль языковых и дискурсивных практик в построении идентичности» (Mitchell et al. 2013: 276). При этом учащихся следует рассматривать не как пассивных получателей норм изучаемого ими языка, а как субъектов, имеющих возможность намеренно выбирать прагматические стратегии, активно выстраивать и дискурсивно изменять свою идентичность. На настоящий момент еще недостаточно исследований о связи прагматики и идентичности с постструктуралистской точки зрения, которые показывали бы, как прагматический выбор учащихся и восприятие ими социокультурных норм и контекстуальных переменных могут варьировать в соответствии с их действиями и ре/конструированием идентичности (Ishihara 2019, Norton 2013).

Таким образом, идентичность играет важную роль в языке и коммуникации, влияя как на содержание, так и на стиль общения. Понимание взаимосвязи между идентичностью и использованием языка может помочь продуктивному общению и способствовать межкультурному взаимопониманию.

2.2. Не/вежливость в кросс-культурном аспекте

То, как люди взаимодействуют друг с другом, во многом зависит от их понимания вежливости, которая по праву считается универсальной и в то же время культурно-специфичной категорией (Bargiela-Chiappini & Kádár 2010, Bayraktaroğlu & Sifianou 2001, Eslami, 2004, 2005, Kádár & Haugh 2013, Kádár & Mills 2011, Leech 2014, Locher & Larina 2019, Mills 2009, Pizziconi 2007, Watts 2003 и др.). Вежливость является когнитивным и социокультурным феноменом, поскольку стратегии вежливости предопределяются пониманием участниками коммуникации того, какое поведение может рассматриваться как вежливое или невежливое, и формируется оно на основе их идентичности и разделяемых социальных и культурных ценностей (например, Larina 2015, Mugford 2020, Sifianou 1992a,b, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019, Watts 2003 и др.).

Культурно обусловленные различия в том, какое поведение является ожидаемым от собеседника, могут быть источником существенных трудностей в межкультурном общении (Eslami 2004, Gudykunst & Kim 1992, Thomas 1983). Эти ожидания могут быть связаны как с особенностями реализации конкретных речевых актов (Alemi et al. 2021, Haugh & Chang 2019, Litvinova & Larina 2023, Trosborg 2010, Wierzbicka 2003 и др.), так и с особенностями организации дискурса и стиля коммуникации (House 2006, Larina 2015). Когда говорящие не принадлежат к одному культурному сообществу, возможны социопрагматические неудачи (Thomas 1983), возникающие в основном из-за непонимания коммуникативного намерения собеседника и прагматического значения его высказывания в конкретной ситуации общения. Культурные ценности отражаются в языке и передаются через язык. Как отмечал Дж. Гамперц (Gumperz 1982), хотя речевая деятельность существует во всех культурах, способы осуществления определенных действий и их значения могут различаться (Gumperz 1982: 166).

С ростом мобильности людей во всем мире и снижением непосредственной межличностной коммуникации возросла роль коммуникативной конвенциональности в достижении понимания. Речевые акты и другие вербальные действия не могут быть по-настоящему поняты без соотнесения с культурными ценностями и установками (Wierzbicka 1985: 145). А. Вежбицкая (Wierzbicka 1985) утверждает, что языковые различия обусловлены «аспектами культуры гораздо более глубокими, чем простые нормы вежливости» (Wierzbicka 1985: 145), они связаны с различиями в культурных ценностях, таких как, например, автономия, дистанция, близость, интимность, неформальность, гармония, искренность, прямолинейность, косвенность и др. (Wierzbicka 2003). Как отмечает М. Сучинская (Suszczynska 1999: 1055), необходимо рассмотреть вопрос о том, что означают «сохранение лица, угроза лицу и поддержка лица для различных культур и языковых групп».

Развитие дискурсивного анализа как междисциплинарной и трансдисциплинарной методологии изучения использования языка (Alba 2009, Fairclough 2010, Ponton & Larina 2016, 2017, Zappettini et al. 2021) привело к расширению его применения, свидетельством чему стал дискурсивный подход к изучению вежливости (Eelen 2001, Mills 2003, Watts 2003). Этот подход трансформировал стратегии вежливости в дискурсивные практики и дал новый импульс развитию теории вежливости, включив в ее рамки и невежливость, а также сместив фокус с говорящего на слушающего, который и оценивает степень не/вежливости высказывания. Таким образом, данный подход способствовал преодолению некоторых ограничений теории вежливости П. Браун и С. Левинсона (Brown & Levinson 1987), которая была нацелена на сохранение лица, и расширил рамки теории вежливости, включив в нее и невежливость (Bousfield 2008, Bousfield & Locher 2008, Culpeper 2011, Culpeper et al. 2017, Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Sifianou 2019). Как справедливо отмечает Дж. Калпепер (Culpeper 2011), невежливость является важным аспектом социальной жизни и играет центральную роль во многих дискурсах, которые редко описываются подробно (Culpeper 2011: xiii). И вежливость, и невежливость предполагают изучение коммуникативного поведения в социальном взаимодействии с учетом ситуативного и культурного контекста (e.g. Alemi & Latifi 2019, Bousfield 2008, Eslami 2005, Kaul de Marlangeon 2018, Fernández-Amaya 2019, Larina & Ponton 2020, 2022, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Pęzik 2021, Locher 2013, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019). Дискурсивный поворот способствовал пониманию оценочно-ситуативной природы не/вежливости, важности эмоций в их оценке и связи этих процессов с конструированием идентичности (Locher & Larina 2019: 886).

Чтобы установить и поддерживать гармонию в общении, следует знать, что уместно в разных культурах и языковых группах, поскольку то, что считается не/вежливым, тесно связано с культурными и социальными аспектами контекста.

2.3. Онлайн-коммуникация и онлайн-культура

Онлайн-коммуникация – это развивающаяся область исследований, направленная на изучение повседневного взаимодействия и того, как современные технологии влияют на общение и на социальные нормы (Herring et al. 2013, Placencia & Eslami 2020, Scott 2022, Wilson & Peterson 2002 и др.). С развитием онлайн-сообществ на разных платформах возникает большой интерес к изучению новых онлайн-культур и поведения участников соответствующих онлайн-сообществ (Danet & Herring 2007, Fetzer 2021, Lee 2017). Как утверждает Д. Белл (Bell 2001), онлайн-культуры являются одновременно и продуктом культуры, и ее генератором.

Достижения в области коммуникационных технологий, расширение онлайн-коммуникации и глобализация признаны мощными факторами, влияющими на повседневное использование языка. Это привело к опасениям, что технологизация наряду с глобализацией и растущим доминированием английского языка приведет к гомогенизации мира и уменьшению культурного и языкового разнообразия в дискурсивных практиках (Sifianou 2013). Результаты исследований показывают, что все расширяющееся использование социальных сетей и интенсификация коммуникации не обязательно предполагает искоренение культурных различий в дискурсивных практиках, но оно действительно уменьшает культурные различия в использовании языка (Eslami & Yang 2018).

В то же время исследователи отмечают, что цифровое взаимодействие становится все более многоязычным и/или транскультурным по своему характеру и оно отражает «глокальные» практики и «множественные концептуализации лица» (Virtanen & Lee 2022: 1). Мультилингвизм и использование участниками сетевого общения различных языков стало скорее нормой, чем исключением. Проведенные исследования показали, что, несмотря на внешнее сходство онлайн-коммуникации на различных платформах, пользователи социальных сетей демонстрируют глубокие культурные различия и разные онлайн-сообщества могут иметь свои собственные культурные атрибуты (Fernández-Amaya 2019, Maíz-Arévalo 2018, 2021, Xie et al. 2021, Zidjali 2019 и др.). В онлайн-взаимодействии они воспроизводят культурные модели, характерные для офлайн-коммуникации (например, Eslami & Yang 2018, Lorenzo-Dus 2001, Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez 2013 и др.). Таким образом, связь между языком и культурой неоспорима даже в виртуальном контексте.

Современные технологии предоставляют больше возможностей и бóльшую гибкость в использовании дискурсивных практик, которые соответствуют локальной/национальной культуре речевого сообщества, а также глобальной культуре, в которой доминируют культурные нормы носителей английского языка. Они могут способствовать внедрению новых норм и практик, ранее не наблюдавшихся в непосредственной межличностной коммуникации. Они также могут вызвать значительные изменения в культурных ценностях. Хотя традиционные ценности обладают устойчивостью, мы не можем отрицать силы воздействия глобализации, технологий, способствующих коммуникации, и английского языка как международного средства общения на изменение взглядов, отношений и практик общения людей.

2.4. Контакты языков и культур

Глобализация не только способствует интенсификации контактов между людьми, но и создает новые возможности для межкультурной и внутрикультурной коммуникации, для динамичных сдвигов в использовании языка, результатом чего становятся языковые заимствования, переключение кода и креолизация. В двуязычном или многоязычном сообществе, где два или более языков используются в одном и том же контексте, существует вероятность того, что один язык может начать доминировать, а другой постепенно вытесняться. В таких ситуациях контактирующие языки могут по-разному влиять друг на друга.

Переключение языкового кода, являющееся признаком билингвизма, с одной стороны, может способствовать созданию социальных связей между носителями разных языков (Gardner-Chloros 2020), с другой стороны, если нормы одного языка и его употребление доминируют, создавать угрозу существованию другого языка, приводить к утрате культурного наследия и потере языкового разнообразия. Продолжающееся в настоящее время повсеместное смешение языков дает прекрасную возможность анализировать языковые изменения, наблюдаемые в результате смены носителей языка, т.е. определить происходящие в языке изменения либо утрату языка как процесс, а не как результат (Grenoble & Osipov 2023).

Как подчеркивает Н. Ли (Lee 2020) в недавней работе по документированию и сохранению контактных языков, необходимо делать гораздо больше для защиты и сохранения исчезающих контактных языков. Существует настоятельная необходимость инвестировать в языковую документацию, двуязычное образование и программы (Bromham et al. 2022), чтобы к концу века не потерять более 1500 языков, поскольку, по образному выражению А.А. Кибрика, «когда исчезает язык, исчезает и вся вселенная, запечатленная в нем» (Kibrik 2021: 508).

В целом тенденция к расширению языковых контактов, вероятнее всего, сохранится, поскольку процессы мобильности, миграции и глобальной коммуникации продолжаются. Это создает как новые возможности для изучения языковых контактов и их влияния на языковое разнообразие, так и проблемы, связанные с сохранением и возрождением языков. Когда два или более языка находятся в контакте, возникают благоприятные условия, способствующие языковому разнообразию. Это может привести к сохранению и развитию миноритарных языков, которые в противном случае могут оказаться под угрозой исчезновения. Языковые и культурные контакты также могут способствовать взаимопониманию между различными лингвокультурными сообществами и культурному взаимообогащению. Изучая языки и культуры, люди могут научиться лучше понимать и уважать друг друга и больше ценить культурное разнообразие.

3. Авторы и статьи выпуска

Авторы данного выпуска обращаются к обозначенным выше вопросам, исследуя различные дискурсы и контексты с применением разнообразных методологических подходов. Четыре статьи выпуска посвящены проблеме не/вежливости как в онлайн-, так и офлайн-коммуникации, а также этнокультурным особенностям поведения представителей различных культур и их воздействию на процесс коммуникации.

С. Ри исследует не/вежливость в социальных сетях в Корее. Он отмечает, что участники онлайн-коммуникации вынуждены творчески относиться к языку, преодолевая недостатки данного типа общения и в то же время используя его преимущества. В статье рассматриваются различные элементы языка, выражающие как вежливость, так и невежливость, среди которых – междометия, эмотиконы, эмфатические знаки препинания и их отсутствие, намеренное нарушение орфографических правил, использование сленга и др. Автор приходит к выводу, что подобная креативность, нацеленная на передачу близости, приводит к языковым изменениям на лексическом, грамматическом и дискурсивном уровнях.

М. Алеми и З. Малекниа исследуют использование стратегий и маркеров вежливости в электронных письмах иранских студентов, адресованных американскому преподавателю. Результаты их исследования показали, что студенты часто игнорируют принципы вежливости в переписке с преподавателями и не обладают достаточными знаниями правил этикета в жанре академического электронного письма, касающихся как этикетных формул, так и структурных особенностей текста письма. Авторы указывают на важность знания студентами норм этикета изучаемого языка и предлагают пути решения данной проблемы.

В последние два десятилетия большое внимание уделялось невежливости в различных культурных контекстах. Однако З. Таджеддин и Х. Рассаэй Мокадам предлагают новый ракурс рассмотрения невежливости в кросскультурном аспекте. На примере речевого акта «отказ» они анализируют различия в восприятии невежливости и реакции на невежливость со стороны носителей английского и персидского языков. Как показали результаты их исследования, реагируя на невежливость в речевом акте «отказ», носители английского языка используют более широкий набор стратегий по сравнению с носителями персидского языка и чаще используют стратегии нападения в ответ на невежливость. Исследование продемонстрировало бо́льшую значимость социальных факторов, таких как социальная дистанция и дистанция власти, в восприятии степени невежливости для носителей персидского языка, чем для носителей английского.

Т. Девечи, Д. Мидраж и В.С. Эль-Соккари обращаются к речевому акту «комплимент» и его использованию студентами эмиратских университетов в межкультурном общении с преподавателями. Результаты показали, что речевой акт «комплимент» часто используется студентами для смягчения последующей жалобы и/или просьбы. Авторами выделены объекты комплимента и используемые синтаксические структуры, подчеркивается важность учета контекста для понимания коммуникативных намерений собеседников и эффективного взаимодействия в мультикультурной университетской среде.

Две другие статьи посвящены дискурсивным практикам в политическом и деловом дискурсах. Рассматриваемые в них вопросы имеют непосредственное отношение к процессам глобализации. Д.М. Понтон затрагивает проблему э/миграции в Средиземноморье, которая значительно увеличилась в первой половине XXI века и находится в центре политических дебатов в Европе. Оригинальность данного исследования заключается в том, что в нем используется не критический дискурс-анализ, как это традиционно делается при обсуждении подобных тем, а позитивный дискурс-анализ. В центре внимания – дискуссия по вопросу о нынешней миграции в Италии. Применяя инструменты прагматического лингвистического анализа и анализа социально-политического контекста, автор стремится выявить элементы позитивного дискурса и имплицитные идеологии, которые могут указывать на альтернативные подходы к миграции, например, дискурсы солидарности, а не отрицания.

Е.Н. Малюга, в свою очередь, представляет результаты исследования делового дискурса, касающегося корпоративной коммуникации. В центре ее внимания – тексты отчетов корпоративной социальной ответственности (КСО), которая стала важным инструментом поддержания репутации компаний и одной из ключевых концепций корпоративной коммуникации. Автор обосновывает необходимость всестороннего изучения языка отчетов КСО, отражающего принципы корпоративной культуры как феномена межкультурной и глобальной значимости. По мнению автора, результаты, полученные с применением корпусного подхода и контекстуального анализа, способствуют системному осмыслению корпоративной языковой политики, которая позволяет поддерживать эффективное коммуникативное взаимодействие с заинтересованными сторонами.

Е.С. Гриценко и А.О. Лалетина представили результаты оригинального исследования, в котором обсуждаются вопросы социолингвистической аутентичности. В статье рассматривается социолингвистическая категория аутентичности применительно к понятию русской женственности. Авторы сопоставляют текст песни *Russian woman* («Русская женщина»), исполненной российско-таджикской певицей Манижей на конкурсе «Евровидение–2021» и вызвавшей противоречивую реакцию зрителей, а также интервью певицы, которые она дает после исполнения, и комментарии зрителей в социальных сетях, чтобы выявить и описать аутентифицирующие и деаутентифицирующие дискурсы гендера и этничности применительно к песне, исполнительнице и созданному ею образу. В результате мультимодального семиотического анализа они раскрывают противоположные концепции русской женственности и утверждают, что аутентификация и деаутентификация текста песни, ее исполнения, визуальной и музыкальной составляющих созданного образа определяются разными идеологиями, при этом определяющую роль может играть один текстовый уровень или элемент.

Следующая тема, к которой обращаются авторы данного выпуска – это взаимодействие языков и языковые контакты, которые могут не только способствовать развитию того или иного языка, но и стать угрозой для его существования, особенно в тех случаях, когда язык либо диалект не имеют письменной литературы. Х. Тазик и М. Аликбари выражают обеспокоенность судьбой диалекта бахмайе, варианта диалекта лури, на котором говорят на юго-западе Ирана. Их исследование посвящено стилистическим вариациям терминов родства в различных контекстах и факторам, влияющим на эти вариации. Результаты исследования показали, что если лица в возрасте от 40 лет и старше чаще использовали термины на бахмайском диалекте, то говорящие в возрастной группе от 15 до 19 лет отдавали предпочтение терминам родства на персидском языке, что свидетельствует о процессе персификации среди молодых людей. Авторы объясняют эту тенденцию высоким статусом персидского языка, языковыми контактами и миграцией, которые привели к разрыву между поколениями, и предлагают стратегии, которые могут помочь сохранить этот диалект, в частности документирование бахмайского диалекта, поощрение образованных носителей к его использованию и содействие внутрикультурной коммуникации.

Языковые и культурные контакты, связанные с миграцией населения, геополитическими и технологическими процессами, свойственными современному миру, привлекают внимание авторов художественной литературы. С.С. Галактионов и З.Г. Прошина обсуждают языковые и культурные контакты в романе «Приют для ваших богов» (“House of Many Gods”) Кианы Давенпорт, гавайско-американской писательницы-билингва. Они исследуют транслингвальный дискурс, в котором пересекаются три лингвокультуры – американская, гавайская и русская – и выявляют языковые инструменты, которые способствуют созданию транслингвальных и транскультурных нарративов. В центре их внимания – лексические заимствования из гавайского языка, в том числе эндонимические топонимы и культурно-специфические понятия, транслитерация заимствованных русских слов, кальки, аллюзии, пиджинизация речи и др., а также процессы ассимиляции и изменения языковых средств.

Выпуск завершается двумя рецензиями на книги, которые созвучны обсуждаемым в нем темам.

3. Дискуссия и заключение

В этом специальном выпуске рассмотрено влияние культуры и идентичности на язык и коммуникацию в современном меняющемся мире, показано воздействие новых коммуникационных технологий, языковых и культурных контактов на цифровое, межличностное и публичное общение в различных контекстах и дискурсах, а также их влияние на коммуникативную и языковую вариативность. Особое внимание в нем уделено социальным и социокультурным факторам, воздействующим на дискурсивные практики и конструирование идентичности. Данные вопросы рассматривались на фоне двух разнонаправленных процессов: глобализации, вызванной современными геополитическими тенденциями и развитием коммуникационных технологий, способствующих интенсификации контактов между людьми, языками и культурами, а также деглобализации, которая ориентирована на сохранение национальных культур и развитие многополярного и поликультурного мира. В работах наших авторов намечены направления и перспективы дальнейших междисциплинарных и трансдисциплинарных исследований, сочетающих лингвистические, когнитивные, социальные, психологические и культурные аспекты взаимодействия.

В статьях показано, что изучение не/вежливости в различных дискурсах, контекстах и жанрах офлайн- и онлайн-коммуникации не теряет своей актуальности (Rhee, Alemi & Maleknia, Tajeddin & Rassaei Mogadam). Влияя на результаты социальных взаимоотношений, вежливость и невежливость играют важную роль в коммуникации и могут иметь далеко идущие последствия как конструктивного, так и деструктивного характера. Концептуализация не/вежливости в различных лингвокультурах, стратегии не/вежливости и средства их выражения, а также роль социального и социокультурного контекста на их выбор по-прежнему остаются перспективными направлениями исследований.

Авторы продемонстрировали важность дальнейшего изучения цифровой коммуникации, в частности вопросов о том, как технологии улучшают, изменяют или вытесняют традиционные дискурсы и практики во внутрикультурном и межкультурном взаимодействии (Alemi & Maleknia, Rhee). Как показано в данном выпуске, информационно-коммуникационные технологии предоставляют новые возможности и средства для общения, они продвигают новые нормы и практики, которые могут влиять на язык и приводить к изменениям на лексическом, грамматическом и дискурсивном уровнях (Rhee). Развитие технологий обеспечивает усиление контактов между людьми и широкий доступ к другим языкам и культурам, что может оказывать влияние на ценности, отношения, идентичность и коммуникативное поведение. Необходимо продолжать исследования по выявлению роли социальных сетей и средств массовой информации в формировании ценностей и изменении коммуникативного поведение людей и конструировании их идентичности. Среди перспективных направлений исследований можно также выделить использование мультимодальных средств для передачи сообщений, дискурсивные практики двуязычных и многоязычных пользователей, изменение языкового кода билингвами и полилингвами в офлайн- и онлайн-общении и конструирование их идентичности. Необходимо также продолжить исследования, нацеленные на изучение гендерных и культурных аспектов идентичности монолингвов, билингвов и полилингвов, проявляющихся в офлайн- и онлайн-коммуникации.

Межкультурная и кросс-культурная коммуникация в различных сферах – в бизнесе, политике и др. – продолжают оставаться важными направлениями междисциплинарных исследований (Ponton, Malyuga). Как показали авторы выпуска (Alemi & Maleknia, Deveci et al.), заслуживающим внимание исследовательским объектом является академический дискурс, в частности взаимодействие студентов и преподавателей в различных культурных и мультикультурных контекстах в условиях онлайн- и офлайн-коммуникации. В связи с ростом академической мобильности и миграционными процессами университетская среда стала поликультурной, и для обеспечения эффективной коммуникации и комфортной психологической среды необходим учет культурных и коммуникативных особенностей учащихся, знание ролевых отношений в академической культуре студентов, особенностей их национального стиля коммуникации. Однако при обучении студентов нормам общения на изучаемом языке, важность чего подчеркивается в одной из статей (Alemi et al.), нельзя проигнорировать вопрос о том, до какой степени неносители языка должны подстраиваться под коммуникативные модели его носителей, чтобы не потерять возможности выразить свою идентичность и свое «я» в условиях культурного разнообразия сегодняшнего мира. По мнению ряда исследователей, традиционный в языковом образовании подход, называемый термином “native-speakerism”, основанный на вере в превосходство носителей языка, проблематичен, поскольку он часто ограничивает самовыражение и свободу мыслей студентов и работает против культурного разнообразия (Hino 2021). Исследователи выступают за новый подход к языковому образованию, обеспечивающий принятие лингвокультурных разновидностей английского языка и право неносителей английского языка выражать свои ценности (Houghton & Hashimoto 2018).

Материалы выпуска указывают на широкие перспективы изучения языковых изменений, вызванных расширением контактов языков и культур (Tazik & Aliakbari, Gritsenko & Laletina), которые могут иметь положительные и отрицательные последствия. С одной стороны, распространение языковых и культурных контактов вовлекает в межкультурную коммуникацию все больше людей, что может способствовать лучшему пониманию и признанию различных культур и образов жизни, межкультурному общению и сотрудничеству, разрушению стереотипов и предрассудков, с другой стороны – стать причиной эрозии традиционных языков и культур. Когда один язык или культура доминируют над другими, это может привести к языковому и культурному империализму, когда доминирующий язык и культура вытесняют и ставят под угрозу существования языки и культуры меньшинств.

Как отмечалось, языковые и культурные контакты, которым способствует процесс глобализации и развитие коммуникационных технологий, могут позволить по-новому взглянуть на представления о тех или иных культурных ценностях. Они оказывают влияние на сознание людей, их идентичность и могут способствовать изменению их взглядов, отношений и дискурсивных практик. Не случайно мы являемся свидетелями противоположного процесса – деглобализации, нацеленной на сохранение национальных культур, формирование многополярного и мультикультурного мира. Наши авторы приглашают к размышлению над этими неоднозначными и полярными процессами, обсуждение которых мы продолжим в последующих выпусках.

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Politeness and impoliteness in social network service communication in Korea

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Abstract
With the technological benefits and challenges computer-mediated communication provides, interactants in social network service (SNS) communication are driven to use language creatively, overcoming the disadvantages and exploiting advantages. This creative language use leads to innovative language change that often extends beyond SNS environments. In this regard, the medium is not merely a restrictive but also a facilitative factor. Communicative acts are fundamentally bound by the interactants' desire to express politeness, especially in face-threatening acts, well articulated in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model. In recent research, however, the issues of the norms of politeness and impoliteness as well as those of appropriateness have been highlighted (Locher & Watts 2005, Locher & Bousfield 2008). Interactants employ not only mitigating strategies to alleviate face-threatening but also use impoliteness strategies, which are often disguised politeness. Drawing upon the data from a 26-million-word corpus of synchronous SNS communication, involving two or more participants, in 3,836 instances, developed by the National Institute of the Korean Language, this paper addresses how SNS interactants make use of diverse elements of language to show their polite and impolite stances in interpersonal negotiation. For instance, interactants use fragments, interjections, letter-based ideophones and emoticons, exaggerated punctuations for emotiveness, omission of regular punctuation marks, intentional violation of orthographic rules, prolific slang expressions, deviated spelling to create cuteness or intimacy, among numerous others. All these creative strategies lead to language change at lexical, grammatical and discourse levels.
Keywords: *im/politeness, social network service (SNS), face-threatening act, creativity, innovative language change, Korean*

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Вежливость и невежливость в корейских социальных сетях

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Аннотация
Технологические преимущества и сложности компьютерно-опосредованной коммуникации побуждают пользователей социальных сетей применять язык творчески, преодолевая неблагоприятные факторы и используя благоприятные. Творческий подход к языку становится источником языковых изменений, часто выходящих за рамки социальных сетей. Соответственно, данная среда не только накладывает ограничения, но и обладает развивающим потенциалом. Коммуникативные акты осуществлются в соответствии с желанием коммуникантов быть вежливыми, особенно в «угрожающих лицу актах», что хорошо описано П. Браун и С. Левинсоном (Brown & Levinson 1987). В исследованиях, проводимых в последнее время, особое внимание уделяется нормам вежливости и невежливости, а также уместности их применения (Locher & Watts 2005 Locher & Bousfield 2008). Участники коммуникации используют не только стратегии смячения угрозы лицу собеседника, но также и стратегии невежливости, которые часто являются замаскированной вежливостью. Автор опирается на данные корпуса Национального института корейского языка, включающего 26 миллионов слов и 3836 ситуаций общения в социальных сетях двух или более человек. Цель исследования – проследить, как коммуниканты выражают не/вежливость с помощью различных единиц языка. Среди них были выделены междометия, орфографические идеофоны и эмотиконы, избыточная эмоциональная пунктуация, опущение знаков препинания, преднамеренное нарушение орфографических норм, в частности для создания эффекта интимного общения, обильное использование сленга и т. д. Все эти стратегии приводят к языковым изменениям на уровне лексики, грамматики и дискурсивных норм.
Ключевые слова: *не/вежливость, социальные сети, угрожающий лицу акт, языковая креативность, инновационные языковые изменения, корейский язык*

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1. Introduction

With the technological benefits and challenges computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides, interactants in social network service (SNS) communication are driven to use language creatively, exploiting advantages and overcoming disadvantages. This creative language use leads to innovative language change that often extends beyond SNS environments. In this regard, the medium is not merely a restrictive but also a facilitative factor. Communicative acts are fundamentally bound by the interactants' desire to express politeness, especially in face-threatening acts (FTAs), as well articulated in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model. In recent research, however, the issues of the norms of politeness and impoliteness as well as those of appropriateness have been highlighted (Locher &

Watts 2005, Locher & Bousfield 2008). Thus, interactants employ not only mitigating strategies to alleviate face-threatening but also use impoliteness strategies, whereby they take a stance more boldly than in face-to-face communication. Drawing upon the data from a corpus of synchronous SNS communication, this paper addresses how SNS interactants make use of diverse elements of language to show their polite and impolite stances in interpersonal negotiation.

The objectives of this paper are threefold: (i) to describe the manifestations of (im)politeness in SNS in Korea, (ii) to analyze them in terms of communication strategies, and (iii) to discuss the implications in language use and language change. This paper is organized in the following manner. Section 2 presents the theoretical background and review of the literature; section 3 addresses a few preliminary issues such as typological and typographical characteristics of Korean that are relevant to the discussion, and describes the data and methodology; section 4 illustrates (im)politeness strategies; section 5 discusses the implications of the findings focusing on the influence of the SNS interaction on the language and creativity as a driving force of language change; and section 6 summarizes the findings and concludes the paper.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Background

Since all interactions, face-to-face or mediated, are situated, it is essential for interactants to consider the 'face' of others in the interaction. The notion of 'face,' first proposed by Goffman (1967), is defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he [sic] has taken during a particular contact" (p. 5). According to Goffman (1967: 16, 44), interaction ritual is a means a community uses for interactants to value each other's face, i.e., to show respect and politeness. Grice (1975: 45–46) proposes the Cooperative Principle (CP) as a general principle of conversation, and four maxims relating to quantity, quality, relation and manner, the observance of which will guide the conversation to a mutually accepted direction. Building on previous research, Leech (1983) proposes the Politeness Principle (PP) in addition to Grice's CP and elaborates the PP in interpersonal rhetoric with six maxims relating to tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy (Ibid: 131–151).

In their seminal work, Brown and Levinson (1987) further refine the notion of politeness and propose a model of politeness, in which the notions 'positive face,' 'negative face,' and 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs) are crucial. Positive face refers to the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants, and negative face refers to the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition (Ibid: 61). They further specify politeness strategies; fifteen positive politeness strategies, ten negative politeness strategies, and fifteen off-record strategies (see section 4).

Recently, a growing number of researchers began to study not only politeness but also impoliteness (Bousfield 2008, Bousfield & Locher 2008, Culpeper 1996, 2010, 2011, Culpeper et al. 2017, Eelen 2001, Haugh & Schneider 2012, Haugh & Bousfield 2012, Parvaresh & Tayebi 2018, Locher & Larina 2019, Kádár et al. 2021, among others). According to Culpeper (2011: 23), impoliteness is "a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts." Impoliteness is manifested by face attacks, which, according to Tracy & Tracy (1998: 227), are "communicative acts perceived by members of a social community (and often intended by speakers) to be purposefully offensive." These characterizations show that impoliteness is context-dependent and intentional, thus whether an utterance is impolite (or polite) depends not on the semantics of the utterance but on the interpretation based on the context and perceived intention. Thus, Fraser (1990: 233) notes that sentences are not ipso facto polite, which is echoed by Locher and Watts (2008: 78), who say that there is no linguistic behavior that is inherently polite or impolite. Culpeper (1996, 2005), building on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, lists impoliteness strategies as bold on record impoliteness (direct and clear), positive impoliteness (damaging positive face wants), negative impoliteness (damaging negative face wants), off-record impoliteness (through implicature), withhold politeness (absence of politeness work), and impoliteness meta-strategy, sarcasm or mock politeness (insincere use of politeness strategies). He further lists conventionalized impoliteness formulae, in such categories as insults, pointed criticisms/complaints, challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, condescensions, message enforcers, dismissals, silencers, threats, and negative expressives (Culpeper 2010: 3242–3243).

2.2 Literature Review

A large body of literature addresses diverse issues in CMC and it is beyond the scope of this research to provide a comprehensive review thereof. Locher (2010) presents a diachronic change of CMC research trends in three stages ('waves'), introduced by Androutsopolous (2006), i.e., (i) computer/technical determinism, (ii) the interplay of technological, social, and contextual factors, and (iii) the role of linguistic variability in the formation of social interaction and social identities on the internet.

Indeed, early research focuses on the restrictive aspects of CMC, and some studies on CMC language by Korean researchers are critical of the 'deterioration' of language through blatant violation of orthographic rules (Kim et al. 2008, Lee & Lee 2010). On the other hand, Koo (2002a) views the seemingly erratic language use in CMC as a characteristic of the postmodern ideology, manifested in the form of anti-formalism, non-conformity, pursuit of variety, and claim of distinction (see also Koo 2016 for discussion on post-colonial language change). Adopting a value-neutral perspective, some studies address how technological resources are exploited in CMC, focusing on the use of emoticons (or emojis) (Park 2004, Dresner & Herring 2010, Maíz-Arévalo 2014, 2015, 2016, Ahn 2019) and of CMC language, called the netspeak (Crystal 2001) or net-lingo (Park 2002) with respect to patterns of neologism (Shin 2004, 2018, Daniel 2010, Ahn 2019). More recently, a growing number of studies address the issues of social interaction and social identities, often focusing on the speaker's stance-taking (Langlotz & Locher 2012, Maíz-Arévalo & Sanchez-Moya 2017, Konrad et al. 2020, Fetzer 2021, Dainas & Herring 2021, Zappettini et al. 2021 and works therein, Yus 2022, among many others).

Despite the large body of research on Korean SNS, a comprehensive study on politeness and impoliteness based on a large corpus and the influence of SNS language use on language change is largely underrepresented, and this paper intends to fill the research gap.

3. Preliminaries

3.1. Typological and Typographical characteristics in Korean

Korean is a head-final SOV language with agglutinating morphology. Case markers, information particles, and sentential constituents (even argument NPs) may be omitted, and such omission is often preferred. These typological characteristics make nearly everything in a sentence omissible except for the verb, which is necessarily marked by a number of morphological trappings for tense, aspect, mood, modality, politeness and honorification. These verbal morphologies, especially politeness, honorification and formality markers, known as *hwakyey* 'speech levels', are highly grammaticalized and exist in a complex and elaborate system, modulated by four to six different levels, whose use is mandatory (Rhee & Koo 2017). Thus, one cannot say even very simple sentences like 'How are you?' or 'I'm fine,' without marking the level of their speech, such as [deferential], [polite], [semi-formal], [familiar], [intimate], [plain], etc., depending on to whom the speech is directed (Song 2005, see also Sohn 1999, Rhee & Koo 2017).

The typological characteristics of agglutinating morphology have consequences in linguistic forms in that grammatical forms often show variable degrees of erosion, and when they are stacked, which is often the case, their internal composition can be opaque to variable degrees. Gradience of erosion of grammatical(izing) forms is closely related to the orthographic regulation of interlexical spacing, i.e., words are written with their dependent morphemes as a single unit (called *ecel* among Korean linguists) and these units are written separated by a space between them. Interlexical spacing is a unique orthographic practice in Korean in the light that neighboring Asian languages, such as Japanese and Chinese, do not have such rules. Among the most frequent deviations of orthographic rules in popular writing is auxiliary verbs, which, according to the rule, are written as a separate unit from the host verb but, in popular writing, are frequently written together with the host verb without a space, forming a single *ecel*. A similar situation is observed with complex postpositions. The gap is caused by the fact that, while the rules are conservative, these grammaticalizing forms are conceptualized as a part of their host.

Korean has its own writing system, known as *hangeul* (or *hankul*), invented by King Sejong the Great in 1443. It has 24 characters each with unique phonemic value (e.g., ㅂ for /p/, ㅏ for /a/, ㄴ for /n/, etc., thus an alphabetical system, and the letters are written in combination to form a rough square consisting of C(C)V(C(C)), each square (character) representing a syllable (e.g., 반 *pan* /pan/ 'class(room)', thus a syllabic system. When a syllable does not have an onset consonant, the syllable-initial C may be written with a circle-shaped letter (o), a placeholder with no phonemic value (e.g., 안 *an* /an/ 'inside'; 에 *ey* /e/ 'at, in'), which, however, has the phonemic value /ŋ/ as a syllable-final consonant. Syllabification in writing is also conservative as compared to speech and may try to be faithful to the word origins, whereas in speech the coda of a preceding syllable may be pronounced as the initial consonant of the following syllable. Thus, an expression 'in the interior of the classroom; in the class,' pronounced as *pa.na.ney* [panane] (바나네), is written as *pan.an.ey* /panane/ (반안에), to show the roots *pan* (반) 'class(room)' and *an* (안) 'inside,' by keeping the phonemic letters within unbroken syllabic characters.[1] Since Korean writing has syllabic representation in the form of characters, acronyms are normally syllable-based, unlike the common letter-based acronyms in the languages using Latin alphabet (see 4.1.4 for examples). Along with spacing, Korean orthography also uses a full range of punctuation marks, in contrast with other Asian languages, e.g., Japanese and Chinese using them to a lesser extent and Thai and Burmese with no or nearly none at all.

Keyboards for Korean characters on smartphones come in a few different forms. The most commonly used system is the qwerty keyboard, in which doubled consonants are inserted by pressing the shift key and most vowels have their unique key. The less frequently used system known as the *chenciin* (*cheonjiin*) keyboard, which has much fewer keys, each with multiple consonant letters that can be selected by pressing the key multiple times until the desired letter can be selected, and has only three keys for vowels (a dot, a horizonal line, and a vertical line, known as *chen* 'heaven', *ci* 'earth', and *in* 'person,' respectively, in the philosophy behind the invention of the Korean writing system, hence the name *chenciin*), by which all vowels can be inserted either alone or constructed by combining them. The qwerty keyboard requires fewer strokes but the keys are smaller on the screen because of the multiplicity of keys, whereas the *chenciin* keyboard requires more strokes but keys are bigger on the screen because of the fewer number of keys. There are a few variations of the two major keyboards.

3.2. Data and Methodology

The data used in the present study is taken from a 26-million-word corpus of synchronous SNS communication (the NIKL-SNS Corpus), involving two or more participants, in 3,836 events with 691,535 messages, developed by the National

[1] When the syllable boundary indicated by the character is relevant, a dot will be used to indicate the boundary.

Institute of the Korean Language in 2019 and made available in 2020. A caveat is that the 'word' used here is based on spacing in the texts, and a unit separated by spaces may contain multiple dependent grammatical affixes. Thus, the actual number of 'words' would be greater if the dependent morphemes are counted as words (cf. prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries constitute individual words in English). Furthermore, as shall be discussed in 4.1.5, SNS interactants are largely erratic in spacing, some not using it at all, and thus the corpus size is much larger than the number indicates. The text of each interaction scenario in the corpus has a unique ID and is tagged with the speaker ID, the number of participants, date and time, device, keyboard type, topic, and participant's demographic information including age, occupation, gender, birthplace, principal and current residences, relationship between interactants, intimacy level (0–5), and contact frequency. Personal names are redacted and replaced with [name1], [name2], etc.

The search engine used is UNICONC, developed by Jinho Park. The source texts in the NIKL-SNS Corpus are encoded by JSON (UTF-8 encoding), and the texts were converted into txt-format files to enable UNICONC search, by Tae-ik Sohn. The search engine is convenient for word-based searches, but since most functions are context-dependent and not retrievable from word-based concordance hits, no meaningful quantitative analyses were available. However, certain keywords or strings such as expletives, interactional routines, or letter-based graphicons could be retrieved. Therefore, most exposition in this paper is based on examining the actual data while quantitative analysis is limited to the instances involving keywords. Drawing upon the SNS corpus data, this paper addresses how SNS interactants make use of diverse elements of language to show their (im)polite stances in interpersonal negotiation.

4. Im/politeness strategies in Korean SNS

4.1. Positive Politeness strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987) list fifteen positive politeness strategies, ten negative politeness strategies, and fifteen off-record strategies, as summarized in (1) through (3):

(1) Positive Politeness strategies
- (A) Claim common ground: (i) Notice, attend to H; (ii) Exaggerate; (iii) Intensify interest to H; (iv) Use in-group identity markers; (v) Seek agreement; (vi) Avoid disagreement; (vii) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground; (viii) Joke
- (B) Convey that S and H are cooperators: (xi) Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants; (x) Offer, promise; (xi) Be optimistic; (xii) Include both S and H in the activity; (xiii) Give (or ask for) reasons; (xiv) Assume or assert reciprocity
- (C) Fulfil H's want for some X: (xv) Give gifts to H

(2) Negative Politeness strategies
 (A) Be direct: (i) Be conveniently indirect
 (B) Don't presume/assume: (ii) Question, hedge
 (C) Don't coerce H: (iii) Be pessimistic; (iv) Minimize the imposition on H; (v) Give deference
 (D) Communicate S's want to not impinge on H: (vi) Apologize; (vii) Impersonalize S and H; (viii) State the FTA as a general rule; (ix) Nominalize
 (E) Redress other wants of H's: (x) Go on record as incurring debt, or as not indebting H

(3) Off-record strategies
 (A) Invite conversational implicatures: (i) Give hints; (ii) Give association clues; (iii) Presuppose; (iv) Understate; (v) Overstate; (vi) Use tautologies; (vii) Use contradictions; (viii) Be ironic; (ix) Use metaphors; (x) Use rhetorical questions
 (B) Be vague or ambiguous: Violate the Manner Maxim: (xi) Be ambiguous; (xii) Be vague; (xiii) Over-generalize; (xiv) Displace H; (xv) Be incomplete, use ellipsis

A microscopic analysis of the SNS interaction may reveal many, if not all, of the politeness strategies listed in (1) through (3), but for reasons indicated above (see 3.2), we will discuss only prominent strategies with exemplification.

Among the most fundamental motivations of communication, whether mediated or face-to-face, is the need for social affiliation, because we understand who we are in relation to the world around us through social affiliation (Cohen & Metzger 1998: 49). There are a number of types of SNS practices that are intended to solicit common ground and show positive politeness, and we will illustrate such strategies in turn.

4.1.1. Fragments

A common strategy for building an emotional common ground is to use fragments, a strategy particularly prominent in F-F interaction. This is exemplified in the following excerpt (note that utterances not highlighted are given in the form of English translation within square brackets):

(4) (A: M in 20's, soldier, smartphone; B: F in 20's, office-worker, desktop; relationship acquaintance from online community, intimacy level 3, contact frequency 3+ weekly, interaction time 15:09)
 B: [I've been to Thailand twice already, and this will be my third time, (aren't you jealous)?]
 A: 오
 o
 INTJ:oh

A: 모야
mo-y-a
what-be-END
'no!'

A: 부러워
pwulew-e
be.envious-END
'(I) envy you.'

A: 나 해외
na hayoy
I abroad
'I abroad'

A: 나간적 한번두 없는데
naka-n cek hanpen-twu eps-nuntey
go.out-ADN time once-even not.exist-END
'have not been even once.' (id: MDRW1900000003)

In the excerpt, A sends messages in five fragments, all within the span of one minute. Obviously, the major motivation for sending fragments is to reduce the gap between messages in synchronous communication, whereby the sender A can signal his engagement in and enthusiasm for the interaction with B. In the physical absence of the interlocutor, reception of the message is the only cue for the interlocutor's sustained attention to the interlocutor and interaction. Sending messages in fragments, rather than a complete sentence, confirms in shorter intervals the sender's presence in the scene, displays the sender's enthusiasm, and forges or promotes the sense of sharing epistemic and emotional common ground.

Use of fragments is prominent when the interlocutor uses a hand-held device, like a smartphone, as A does in the above (note that B uses a desktop and her message in line 1 is a complete sentence), when the interlocutors are of high intimacy level, when the interlocutors are young, and when the interlocutors are both female. All these aspects cannot be statistically confirmed, but the patterns are clear from the examination of the corpus data.

4.1.2. Ideophones

The strategies to indicate common ground solicitation include the use of ideophones for initiation of SNS interaction. Korean has a large inventory of ideophones (Rhee 2019b, Koo & Rhee 2018), which carry diverse functions. One of such functions is exemplified in the following:

(5) (A: F in 20's, homemaker, smartphone; B: F in 20's, occupation unspecified, smartphone; relationship friends; intimacy level 5; contact frequency nearly every day; interaction at 15:30)

B: 짜잔
ccacyan
IDEO:'ta-da!'

A: ㅋㅋㅋ
khkhkh
EMO:laugh
A: [Today I left home at 8 a.m. and all I ate was a pack of soy milk, so]
A: [Finished?]
B: 아이구 힘들었겠다 ㅠㅠ
aikwu himtul-ess-kyes-ta ㅠㅠ
INTJ:oh.no difficult-PST-INFR-DECL EMO:tears
'Oh, no. It must have been a rough day for you.'
(id: MDRW1900000008)

In the above excerpt, Speaker B initiates the interaction by sending a message containing only an ideophone *ccacyan*, one used to announce an appearance of something or to exclaim triumph or pride. In face-to-face communication, using such an ideophone to initiate a discourse would be inappropriate, or awkward at best. The message-sender is dramatizing her appearance on the device or availability to exchange messages by way of a fanfare ideophone. Such a usage would be potentially face-threatening because of surprise element but is clearly of a good intention with the presumption that her initiation is desirable on the part of her interlocutor. The presumption is corroborated by A's response ㅋㅋㅋ *khkhkh*, a letter-based emoticon for the laughter ideophone describing the multiple bursts of air in laughter, clearly signaling that B's message is well received (see 4.1.3 below for more on emotion usage). Indeed, A is likely to have been waiting for B to contact her as soon as B finishes her work for the day, as shown in the question '(Are you) finished?' Furthermore, as part of her initial response, A tells B content-rich information as if the interaction had been ongoing for some time already. The playful exchange of ideophones for initiation and response to initiation carries the function of soliciting and acknowledging emotional common ground.

4.1.3. Common ground markers

Another popular positive politeness strategy is the use of diverse markers signaling shared common ground, such as interjections, discourse markers, and, most notably, graphicons. For instance, interjections such as 아 *a* 'oh', 아하 *aha* 'I see', 오 *o* 'oh', 옹 *ong* 'oh', 앗 *as* 'I'm surprised', 헉 *hek* 'How surprisingly embarrassing!', 헐 *hel* 'How surprisingly bad!', 오잉 *oing* 'I'm surprised', 으잉 *uing* 'It's surprising', 와아 *waa* ('wow!'), 악 *akh* 'ouch' for screaming, etc. are frequently used to signal the sender's feeling, mostly surprise, toward the information just received. Incidentally, some of these interjections occur as letter-based contractions, e.g., ㅇㅎ for 아하, ㅇㅇ for 으잉 or 와아, etc. (see 3.1 for typography). Similarly, backchannel signals are frequently used as a signal of listenership and approval. Among them are 웅/웅웅 *wung/wungwung* 'yes', 그니까/그니께 *kunikka/kunikkey* 'That's right', 마자/마쟈 *maca/macya* 'You're right', 그래 *kulay* 'yes', 당근 *tangkun* 'of course', 음/음음 *um/umum* 'yes', etc. Receipt of a backchannel signal while composing a message encourages further elaboration and promotes the feeling of shared common ground between the interlocutors.

A similar effect can be achieved by the use of discourse markers in response to a received message. For instance, discourse marker 대박 *taypak*, literally 'a big gourd' from a fairy tale in which a poor but kind-hearted man gets treasures and becomes rich after opening a super-sized gourd, is a common intensifier and a response token to a message that contains noteworthy information. Discourse markers of a similar, though not identical, function include 진짜 *cincca* 'true/truly', 걍 *kyang* 'just', 겁나 *kepna* 'awesomely, tremendously', 막 *mak* 'just, fiercely', 하긴 *hakin* 'indeed', 아니 *ani* 'no way', 짱 *ccang* 'superb(ly)', etc.[2] Each of these have diverse functions developed across time, observable from in-depth research, but a brief mention is in order for some of them. The discourse marker 하긴 *hakin* 'indeed' often involves the nuance of self-resignation, thus signaling agreement with the interlocutor who describes the situation as not preferred but with no alternatives (see Koo 2012). The discourse marker 아니 *ani* 'no way' is not directed to the interlocutor but to the absurd situation described by the interlocutor, thus carrying the meaning of 'you gotta be kidding me' (see Koo 2008). The discourse marker 짱 *ccang* 'superb(ly)' originates from the Sino-Korean morpheme *cang* 'head of an organization', a bound morpheme used as a suffix. The suffix acquired morphosyntactic freedom in the course of its development into a discourse marker, an instance of 'degrammaticalization' (Norde 2009).

The use of graphicons, emoticons, in particular, deserves special attention. Baumer and Rensburg (2011: 36–37) observe that in CMC, the physical absence of interlocutors is replaced with language and its multimodal, semiotic systems. Diverse audio-visual cues in face-to-face communication, e.g., tone of voice, gestures, facial expression, etc., that carry emotion signal functions are absent in CMC. Graphicons fill the gap in a creative and powerful way in the form of images. In early CMC graphicons were generated by means of keyboard-based symbols (emoticons), but recently still images (emojis, stickers) and animated images (animojis), known as *ccal* in Korea, are more commonly used.[3] Graphicons not only give information but also signal the emotional state of the sender. Kakaotalk, the most widely used SNS platform in Korea, provides a basic repertoire of emojis for free which can be supplemented by more novel and attractive sets of emojis and animojis available for a fee.[4] An extreme case is the known as 'Solitude Room,'

[2] For discussion of the development and functions of the discourse markers, see Rhee (2021) for *cincca*, Ahn & Yap (2020) for *kyang/kunyang*, Yae (2015) for *kepna(key)*, Rhee (2020) for *mak*, among others.
[3] The global popularity of emojis is well confirmed by the fact that *Oxford Dictionaries* announced that the 2015 Word of the Year is the emoji "the face with tears of joy" (PBS news, Nov. 17, 2015, pbs.org/newshour).
[4] The NIKL-SNS Corpus, however, does not show stickers or animojis as they involve image files. Simple graphicons like certain emojis, such as smileys, are included in the corpus texts.

a multiple-party SNS site, where interactants can use emojis and animojis only and are not allowed to use texts. When the use of texts is necessitated, they need to convert the text into an image file, called 'textcon' before posting it (Bae & Kwon 2020).

The use of graphicons in SNS carries a common ground function closing the psychological gap arising from the physical absence. This is well illustrated in the initiation of an interaction, as shown in the following:

(6) a. (A: F in 30's, professional, smartphone; B: F in 30's, other-unspecified, smartphone; relationship no acquaintance, intimacy level 0, contact frequency first time, interaction time 10:14)

A: 안녕하세요~^^
annyenghaseyyo~ ^^
'Hello~ EMO:smile'

A: [What is it that you want to have the most these days?]

B: 많죠ㅎㅎ
manh-cyo hh
be.many-END EMO:smile
'Of course, there are many of them. hh' (id: MDRW1900006856)

b. (A: F in 20's, professional, smartphone; B: M in 20's, service-provider, smartphone; relationship no acquaintance, intimacy level 0, contact frequency first time, interaction time 10:21)

A: 안녕~^_^
annyeng~ ^_^
'Hello~ EMO:smile'

B: 안녕
annyeng
'Hello.' (id: MDRW1900005561)

c. (A: F in 30's, professional, smartphone; B: F in 20's, office-worker, smartphone; relationship no acquaintance, intimacy level 0, contact frequency first time, interaction time 11:15)

B: 안녕하세요ㅎㅎ
annyenghaseyyo hh
'Hello EMO: smile'

A: 와아 안녕 안녕
waa annyeng annyeng
INTJ:wow hello hello
'Wow, hello hello' (id: MDRW19000006861)

Emoticons, such as ^^, ^_^, *^^*, *^_^*, etc., and letter-based ideophones, such as ㅎㅎ *hh* (a syllable-initial consonantal abbreviation, i.e., a letter-based contraction (3.1), from the hearty-laughter onomatopoeia 하하 *haha*), ㅋㅋ *khkh* (see (5) above), and many others, are used in the initiation of SNS interaction. In a situation where the friendly facial expression that would be visible in face-to-face interaction is absent, the interlocutors are conveniently resorting to emoticons as a supplementary means. It is notable that the interlocutors exchanging the messages above are of the intimacy level 0 and these exchanges are the very beginning of their first interaction. In (6a), A initiates the interaction with a casual greeting, marked with a smile emoticon, and immediately asks a question of a personal nature. To signal shared feeling, B also responds with a letter-based ideophone of a hearty-laughter ㅎㅎ *hh*. In the ensuing exchange, they talk about owning a SUV for convenience of picnicking.

The impact of emoticon usage is immediately visible in (6c) as well. In response to greetings with a smile/laughter emoticon, A responds with an interjection *waa* 'wow' and repeated intimate greetings, which show her enthusiasm in the interaction. Among the letter-based contractions, the most frequently used one is ㅋ *kh* for laughter (from the ideophone 크 *khu* /k^{h}ɨ/), which often occurs in a string in which it is repeated at a greater length.[5] For instance, the longest occurrence in the corpus consists of ㅋ *kh* repeated 135 times in an unbroken string, by a female professional in her 20's, using a smartphone, with her female interlocutor, a homemaker in her 20's also using a smartphone, intimacy level 5, contact frequency less than once a month (id: MDRW1900003392). As a consequence of proliferation of ㅋ *kh*, its single occurrence is considered an unenthusiastic, situationally forced agreement to the message; its repetition ㅋㅋ *khkh*, a mild agreement, its triple-repetition ㅋㅋㅋ *khkhkh*, a medium-level of agreement, and only four or more will be considered a whole-hearted acknowledgment of the message being funny.

Another emoticon commonly used in Korean SNS is the vowel letter ㅠ [yu], which cannot constitute a syllabic character for the lack of initial consonant, and thus requires a place-holder 'o' as in 유 *yu* (see 3.1). As is the case with other emoticons, its function is based on its shape not others, i.e., the shape resembling the tears streaking down the face from the eyes. This emoticon is used in a wide spectrum of negative situations, from being merely not agreeable to being disconcerting or even to being extremely embarrassing, etc. Depending on the degree of displeasure, interactants modulate the number of the emoticon, just as they do with ㅋ *kh*, described above. In the corpus, the longest occurrence of the emoticon ㅠ is 60 of them in an unbroken string by A (a female in her 30's, office-worker, desktop) and her interlocutor B also uses as many as 52 (a female in her 30's, managerial worker, desktop), with their intimacy level 4 and contact frequency nearly every day (id: MDRW19000002563). The extraordinary multiplicity may have to do with using a desktop computer (note, however, that even the greater repetition of ㅋ *kh* is observed in the use of smartphones, as indicated above), but prolific use of ㅠ is a general characteristic of SNS

[5] The symbol ㅋ *kh* may be a letter-based contraction (3.1) from the ideophone 크 *khu*, but most SNS users also think that it depicts the air-puff from the mouth unintentionally released from a restrained laughter, thus an emoticon.

communication in Korea. A manual survey of the corpus data shows that there is not even a single interactional episode that does not involve the use of ㅠ *yu* or ㅋ *kh*.

4.1.4. In-group language

The next positive politeness strategy is the use of in-group language. A prominent aspect of SNS language is the use of 'distorted' spelling and 'deforming' the word shape into popular vernacular forms. Many of them involve simplification but some of them are those that started as a spelling mistake through metathetic keystrokes, which later became popularized for their novelty. Since the inventory of the SNS words is constantly evolving in interaction, none of the forms have been fully developed into exclusive SNS jargon. When the innovative forms are used, the sense of in-group membership is created or promoted. For instance, the conditional connective 아님 *anim* (from 아니면 *ani-myen* [be.not-if] 'if not') occurs 1,166 times, exceeding its 'standard' form occurring 1,083 times. The emphatic sentence-ender 잖아 *canha* (<*ci-anh-a* [NOMZ-be.not-END] 'isn't it?') occurring at 3,782 times has its vernacular counterparts 자나 *ca.na* (2,199 times) and 잔아 *can.a* (55 times). Similarly, the interrogative pronoun 뭐 *mwe* 'what' is often in simplified forms as 모 *mo* (e.g., 뭐해 *mwehay* 'what are (you) doing?' for 493 times and 모해 *mohay* for 92 times; 뭐야 *mweya* 'what is (it)?' for 980 times and 모야 *moya* for 161 times); and 좋아 *coh.a* 'it's good' (10,534 times) is typed as 조아 *co.a* (691 times), which saves one stroke. All these instances involve simplification, which increases the typing speed and reduces the gap between interactions.

Another type of spelling variation is based on the infantile pronunciation, which is considered 'cute' in informal contexts (see 4.1.5 for baby-talk). For instance, the adverb 얼른 *ellun* 'quickly' (occurring 562 times) has its vernacular counterparts 언능 *ennung* (145 times), 언넝 *enneng* (50 times), and 얼렁 *elleng* (34 times). A very similar case is the interrogative adverb 어떻게 *e.tteh.key* 'how' (1,324 times), which is typed as 어떠케 *e.tte.khey* (13 times) and 오또케 *o.tto.khey* (6 times). Another characteristic of slang or vernacular counterparts is the use of tensed consonant in place of a laxed one (as *pp, tt, kk, cc, ss*), a phenomenon motivated by the iconic force dynamics (Koo 2009), as shown in examples such as 좀 *com* 'a little' (8,793 times) occurring as 쫌 *ccom* (414 times), and 당겨 *tangkye* '(it) attracts my appetite' (18 times) occurring as 땡겨 *ttayngkye* (181 times). Using these alternative forms is often denounced by prescriptivists as a practice of the uneducated, but they are well received as forms used by SNS-savvy users, thus promoting the 'covert prestige' of an in-group (Labov 1966).

Another interesting type of in-group language coinage is related to an initial typing error, which, however, was later popularized for its novelty. For instance, a sentence-ender frequently used by early CMC users was ending with ㅁ *m* instead of a long, cumbersome ending of [+deferential] speech level, -ㅂ 니까 *pnikka* (pronounced as ㅁ 니까 *mnikka*) for an interrogative sentence and -ㅂ 니다 *pnita* (pronounced as ㅁ 니다 *mnida*) for a declarative sentence (see 3.1 above). Thus, the new sentence-ender ㅁ *m* was the sound-based innovation for economy. Around 2005, some typing errors of the sentence 뭐임 *mweim* (< *mwe-i-m* [what-be-END] ‘what is (it)?’ [typing order: ㅁ -ㅜ -ㅓ -ㅇ -ㅣ -ㅁ]) through a wrong stroke order resulting in 뭥미 *mwengmi* [typing order: ㅁ -ㅜ -ㅓ -ㅇ -ㅁ -ㅣ] received much attention, and SNS-users began to use the mistake as a SNS jargon for a question ‘what is it?’ (note that the letter o changed from the mute placeholder to the coda /ŋ/, as illustrated in 3.1; also see 4.1.6 and section 5 for more discussion on sentence enders). Similar neologisms from a typing order mistake are 오나전 *onacen* [typing order ㅇ -ㅗ -ㄴ -ㅏ -ㅈ -ㅓ -ㄴ] from 완전 *wancen* ‘completely, very’ [typing order ㅇ -ㅗ -ㅏ -ㄴ -ㅈ -ㅓ -ㄴ], 살마 *salma* from 사람 *salam* ‘a person’, and 시팦 *siphat* from 싶다 *siphta* ‘desire, feel like to’, which, however, lost currency after a short period of popularity, thus occurring at a negligible frequency in the copus.

Also fr equent is the use of SNS jargon, often created by means of, among others, syllable-based acronyms, i.e., taking the first syllable (‘character’) of words in a phrase. For instance, 갑분싸 *kap.pwun.ssa* ‘a situation/person spoiling joy; a wet blanket’ is such acronym constructed from the phrase 갑자기 분위기가 싸늘해지다 *kapcaki pwunwikika ssanulhaycita* [suddenly atmospheres chill] ‘the atmospheres suddenly becoming cold’, 소확행 *so.hwak.hayng* ‘small but easily attainable happiness’ from 소소하지만 확실한 행복 *sosohaciman hwaksilhan hayngpok* [small.but definite happiness] ‘happiness seemingly too small but attainable easily’, and numerous others (see 3.1; note that English acronym is letter-based, so these examples may be KPS and SHH, respectively). For their mysterious nature, the degree of knowledge of this type of acronymic jargon is often considered to represent one’s SNS proficiency.

4.1.5. Baby-Talk

In addition to the instances of ‘cute’ spelling deformation based on child language, alluded to in 4.1.4 above, there is another interesting positive politeness strategy, i.e., the use of baby-talk (CDS; child-directed speech). This is prominent in the use of the addressee’s name instead of a personal pronoun. Koreans have a general tendency of avoiding address terms for the sake of politeness (Rhee 2019a). However, when addressing a social inferior or an equal, the use of a personal pronoun is less inhibited. In face-to-face interaction, names are frequently used as a vocative, but not as a referring expression in non-vocative positions. In baby-talk, names are frequently used as a referring expression and children refer to themselves with their own names, because proper names have stable reference as compared to pronouns, which are shifted depending on speech situations (Moyer et al. 2015, Maillart & Parisse 2019). In SNS messages adult interactants often use the addressee's name in the non-vocative position, where a 2nd person pronoun would be normally used. This is exemplified in the following:

(7) (A: F in 20's, homemaker, smartphone; B: F in 20's, occupation unspecified, smartphone; relationship friends; intimacy level 5; contact frequency nearly every day; interaction at 15:56)
A: [ah, let's do it this way.]
A: [(of the two meals) let's eat one meal at a restaurant and]
B: [let's talk about the detail when we meet on Thursday]
A: [the other meal at my house]
A: [that]
A: [salad]
B: [no, what are you talking about..]
A: [eat]
A: [if you don't like (it), that's OK, too]
B: 설거지하고 name1 이힘드러노노ㅠ ㅠ

selkeciha-ko	[name]-i	himtul-e	no	no ㅠ ㅠ
wash.dish-and	[name]-SUFF	be.hard-END	no	no EMO:sad

'(you have to) do dishes and (other chores), it is troublesome for [name=you], no no.. (sad)' (id: MDRW1900000008)

The context of the interaction is that A says that she is using her mother's credit card and is reluctant to spend a lot for buying food for other friends, to which B suggests that A not buy any food for her (not shown in the excerpt). They already decided to hang out on Thursday and eat two meals together, and thus B suggests that they pay for one meal each (not shown in the excerpt). Realizing that she made B uncomfortable by talking about paying for food, A suggests, at the beginning of the excerpt, that they eat at a restaurant for one meal and eat salad at her home for another. In response to A's suggestion of eating at A's place, B shows concern that it is not a good idea because that will trouble her with chores. B's response is very enthusiastic as shown by the fact that she does not space words at all, and is adamant as shown by the repeated 'no no' and repeated emoticon 'ㅠ ㅠ'. The most notable aspect here is that she uses the name of the addressee, and the redacted name occurs with the hypocoristic suffix *-i*, an instance of intense affective display. Evidently, this practice of using the addressee's name with a hypocoristic suffix is signaling her affective stance, effectively saying that she cares about her interlocutor as a mother does toward her child.[6] The frequent use of this strategy is well illustrated in the fact that there are as many as about 16,732 such instances in the corpus. From a manual survey, this is particularly frequently observed between female interactants and when one is empathizing the other (see 4.1.7 for more discussion on empathy).

[6] Even though it is less frequent, using a proper noun in place of 1st person pronoun also occurs intentionally imitating child speech, a strategy to increase emotional bonding.

Other baby-talk features include pronunciation. For instance, 알았어 *al.ass.e* /aras'ə/ is often written as 아라또 *a.la.tto* /arat'o/ or 아라똥 *a.la.ttong* /arat'oŋ/. In children's speech, a tensed sibilant /s'/ is often pronounced as a tensed stop /t'/, and the mid-vowel /ə/ tends to occur as a rounded back vowel /o/ (id: MDRW1900000438, MDRW1900000428).

4.1.6. Friendly tone of voice

Among the disadvantages of SNS, as compared with face-to-face interaction, the most seriously restrictive features include the absence of the voice quality. The sound-based paralinguistic features such as tone, stress, speed, intonation, rhythm, volume, etc. carry information beyond what the linguistic forms provide, especially with respect to (im)politeness (see Culpeper et al. 2003 for discussion of prosody). In friendly face-to-face interactions, nearly anything can be said without offending the interlocutor by means of modulating these paralinguistic features. As briefly alluded to in 3.1, sentence-enders signal the levels of politeness and formality. However, even informal and intimate enders, when written, tend to sound blunt. In order to overcome this seemingly insuperable obstacle, SNS users have created ways of typographically displaying their friendly tone of voice in the messages, most prominently in the sentence-enders (see 3.1 for mandatory use of politeness and formality marking).

The avoidance of regular endings is manifested in a number of ways. One of them is the contraction to ㅁ *m*, briefly illustrated in 4.1.4. But a much more common means is to add a nasal consonant at the end of the regular ending, as shown in the following list of examples, contrasted with regular forms:

(8)	a. 헷갈렷당 heyskallyestang	cf.	헷갈렸다. heyskallyessta '(I) got confused.'
	b. 알아냇웅 alanayswung	cf.	알아 냈어. ala naysse '(I) found out.'
	c. 신난당 sinnantang	cf.	신난다. sinnanta 'I am excited.'
	d. 노는거딩 nonunketing	cf.	노는 거지. nonun keci '(We will) have fun, right?'
	e. 머잇징 meiscing	cf.	뭐 있지? mwe issci 'What (else) is there?'

Koo and Rhee (2013), in their discussion of the emergence of new sentence-final markers that are created by adding a nasal stop, note that these endings in CMC carry some positive nuance such as 'cute' or 'polite' flavor to the sentence (Ibid: 85). They further note that the use of nasality is typically associated with feminine speech in Korean, especially when a girl tries to win a favor from a male or a social superior (using a *khossoli* 'nose sound') (Ibid: 86). This observation is also consonant with those by Koo (2002b), Park (2002, 2003), Jeong (2003), Kim (2004), and Um (2006). In particular, Park (2002:12) and Um (2006: 30) associate the strategy with the user's intention to create the impression of being 'soft' and 'cute', especially when they are addressing social superiors. Evidently, the trailing of resonance from a nasal is reducing the bluntness of the regular sentence-enders. The effect of trailing in reducing bluntness is also observed in the use of multiple emoticons at the end of a sentence or fragments. Furthermore, the feeling of being engaged in deviance in that they are using the new forms that do not conform to the imposed rules and regulations may give them a sense of shared in-group membership and promote solidarity.

4.1.7. Empathy

The use of baby talk, briefly discussed in 4.1.5, is, among other things, an instance of empathy display. Empathy is an extreme form of positive politeness in that the distance between the interlocutors is minimized, i.e., the sender is temporarily identifying with the recipient. It is the personal-center switch from S to H, in the sense of Levinson and Brown (1987). One noteworthy positive politeness strategy involving empathy is co-construction, i.e., an interactant is completing the other interactant's message.

(9) (A: F in 20's, homemaker, smartphone; B: F in 20's, occupation unspecified, smartphone; relationship friends; intimacy level 5; contact frequency nearly every day; interaction at 15:42–15:43)

A: [we went to the restaurant]
A: [just.. on the meat]
A: [strange]
B: [yes, yes, it's long time ago that you went there last time]
A: [powder, some kind of dirt was on it]
B: [oh, my.. on the food?]
A: [at first, just frost]
A: [we thought it was that]
A: [and put everything in the hot pot and boiled]
B: [yes, yes, it must have looked like it]
A: [then, as we ate, we realized]
B: [gosh, everything was mixed together] (id: MDRW1900000008)

The exchange between the two interactants is fast-paced, and B continuously gives a go-sign by saying 'yes, yes'. At the last line of the excerpt, B completes A's unfinished message from A's viewpoint, as if she is the one who experiences the bad incident. This type of co-construction is commonly found in SNS interaction. Also called 'collaborative completion' (Lerner 1992, Lerner & Takagi 1999), co-construction is a good interactional device to confirm the interlocutors' mutual understanding and achieve intersubjectivity (Koo 2002b: 12).

4.2. Negative Politeness strategies

Since most instances of SNS involve casual and/or familial discourse, deliberate distancing to support the negative face is not prominently found in the corpus. Most interactional scenes between relatively aged interlocutors with low intimacy level use polite and honorific forms in their choice of address forms and verbal inflection. Our discussion, therefore, is rather limited in negative politeness strategies and, for the same reason, and impoliteness (4.3).

Jokes are commonly used as a positive politeness strategy, i.e., to build interpersonal solidarity. However, certain instances of jokes are intended to increase the distance and attribute superiority to the other interactant, i.e., self-derogating jokes. Since the one sending jokes is fundamentally motivated to create a positive atmosphere between the interlocutors, self-derogating jokes perform a double-duty, negative and positive politeness.

(10) (5) (A: M in 20's, soldier, smartphone; B: F in 20's, office-worker, desktop; relationship acquaintance from online community, intimacy level 3, contact frequency 3+ weekly, interaction time 16:24–26)

B: [I don't like to work]
B: [I want to go home.]
A: [come on, I want to go home, too]
A: [I have a colleague working together and]
5 B: [oh, I see]
A: [he just bothers me all the time]
B: [cheer up]
B: [oh, no]
B: [my senior, too]
10 B: [loses his temper on small things]
A: [on what kind of things?]
B: [he doesn't give me clear instructions and]
B: [becomes mad at me saying why I don't know, so]
A: [I see, I see]
15 B: [I am very sad]
A: [why on earth is he doing that?]
B: [but I should work hard]
B: 돈이없으면 나도없으니가
ton-i eps-umyen na-to eps-unika
money-NOM not.exist-if I-too not.exist-CSL
'because without money, I'm nothing (lit. if there's no money, there's no me')]
B: [hew!]
20 A: [kh (x 19 times)]
A: 나도 우리 관리자분한테
na-to wuli kwanlica-pwun-hanthey
I-too our supervisor-HON-to
'I, too, to my supervisor'

A: 맨날 알랑방구 꾸ㅣ 는걸^^…
maynnal allangpangkwukku.i-nunkel ^^…
every.day flatter-END EMO:smile
'I brown-nose him every day (lit. I flatteringly fart to him every day)'
A: 나부르면 쪼르르 달려가서 네?^^
na pwulu-myen ccolulu tallyeka-se ney? ^^
I call-if IDEO:rolling run-and yes? EMO:smile
'if he calls me, I roll and run to him, (say) 'yes, sir?''
B: [wow, you used to fart so much and]
25 B: [you still fart much, it seems] (id: MDRW1900000003)

In the excerpt above, A and B are complaining about their work. A is complaining about his work, where he is not well treated by his senior colleague. In an attempt to cheer him up, B says she also has a problem with her senior who does not give clear instructions and then scolds, and then makes a self-derogating joke in line 18. Obviously, she wants to make A feel better with such an extreme joke. The joke seems to work well, and in reciprocation, A, in lines 21–23, makes even more seriously self-derogating joke, describing graphically his subservient attitude using an ideophone of a small rolling object (*ccolulu*) and a vulgar expression brown-nosing ('flatteringly fart'). Again, this joke seems to have produced good effect, as shown in lines 24 and 25, where she is cracking a pun associating brown-nosing with fart.

The whole exchange clearly shows that by using a self-derogating joke, an interlocutor wants to make the discourse partner feel better, i.e., by effectively saying 'I am bad,' but the overall effect is drawing the interlocutors closer by the sign of support, which contributes to emotional solidarity.

In rare occasions, interactants switch from intimate or polite sentence-enders to a higher-level sentence-enders in the politeness-formality scale. It is when the message sender gives full authority to the interlocutor. For instance, while the ongoing speech style is informal polite, a formal polite utterance like 알겠습니다 *alkeysssupnita* 'I understand' is used in response to a superior's suggestions, informing the willingness to comply with them (e.g. MDRW19000005264), or 아닙니다 *anipnita* 'No, not at all' (formal polite) is used in response to the interlocutor's apology for a delayed response, in order to signal definite nature of the negation of the necessity of apology (e.g. MDRW1900005639).

4.3. Impoliteness strategies

Impoliteness is not frequently observed in SNS because one-on-one synchronous interaction tends to be of a polite nature. Furthermore, the data collection procedure, i.e., volunteer-based data collection with all participants' consent, also makes it nearly impossible to include a message showing conflictual interaction. There are, however, certain cases that are amenable to an impoliteness strategy analysis, i.e., other-derogating jokes, banter, and puns, burdensome requests, name-calling, and even reproach, among others.

In one scenario, an interactant requests his interlocutor, in the context of discussing vacation plans, to take him with her in a trip abroad, an instance of direct and clear (bold on record) impoliteness in Culpeper's (1995, 2005) sense (see 2.1). Being a conscripted soldier without income, taking a vacation is impossible, and their relationship is such that the two, man and woman, cannot vacation in a foreign country together without arousing suspicions among their acquaintances. But he texts 나좀데려가조… *nacomteylyekaco* 'please take me with you' to his interlocutor. The message is written without proper spacing, and childish spelling of the benefactive as 조 *co*, instead of the formal 줘 *cwe*. This style suggests that he is playing the senseless baby (see also 4.1.5 for baby-talk features). On the part of the recipient, accepting the request is sure to incur a great burden, financially and socially, and most of all, it is not possible. She, then, responds to the insincere, jocular request with a joke, 캐리어에 넣어줄까..? *khaylieey nehecwulkka..?* 'Should I put you in my carry-on baggage?' (id: MDRW1900000002). This type of seemingly impolite interaction is in fact based on the assumption that the imposer is insincere and that the request should not be taken seriously, an assumption based on their knowledge of each other's personality and situation. Thus, this is a positive politeness strategy with a mask of impoliteness strategy (cf. 'mock impoliteness' Haugh & Bousfield 2012).

Similarly, there are many instances of name-calling, coarse language, and taboo terms, classifiable as conventionalized impoliteness formulae (Culpeper 2010; see 2.1). Frequently found terms include 바보 *papo* 'fool, stupid', 꺼져 *kkecye* 'get lost', 지랄 *cilal* 'freak', 염병 *yempyeng* 'to hell (typhoid)', 병신 *pyengsin* 'cripple', 씨팔 *ssiphal* 'f***', 좆나 *cocna* 'f***ingly', etc. Such avoidable words nearly always occur in the interaction of young males with a high level of intimacy, clearly suggesting 'covert prestige' among in-group members. Therefore, these instances are seemingly impolite interaction, but on their deeper side, they are instances of positive politeness strategy, i.e., 'mock impoliteness' (Culpeper 2010).

In this regard, it is also notable that the 'aggressor' uses a subtle supplementary device to weaken their negative illocutionary force. The most common devices include spelling variation to disguise them, a popular strategy to avoid cyber-policing in CMC, e.g., 시발 *sipal* (instead of 씨팔 *ssiphal*), 존나 *conna* or 졸라 *colla* (instead of 좆나 *cocna*), 붕신 *pwungsin* (instead of 병신 *pyengsin*), and adding a superfluous prefix 아 *a*, e.g., 아시발 *asipal* (instead of 씨팔 *ssiphal*), 아염병 *ayempyeng* (instead of 염병 *yempyeng*), etc. The origin of the prefix may be the interjection 아 *a*, which signals that the avoidable word is only a monologual interjection, not directed to the receiver, a subtle strategy of reducing the force of aggression. As is the case with the impositive request, the deeper motivation of the use of avoidable words may be related to covert prestige and positive politeness.

Another instance of impoliteness strategy is reproach, a display of negative impoliteness (Culpeper 1996, 2005). Though not frequent, interactants present a reproach to the interaction partner, when they believe that it is beneficial to the partner and that they are close enough to tolerate such an impositive speech act. For instance, an interactant sends a message 넌왜케밥을잘안챙겨먹닝??????!!! *nenwaykheypapulcalanchayngkyemekning*??????!!! (< *nenun way kulehkey papul cal an chayngkye mekni* 'How come you are not eating well, skipping meals like that?') (id: MDRW1900000008). This type of blaming is in the common repertoire of mothers' complaints toward their children. The reproach is usually not well received by the children, and this message has a high potential of being perceived as impolite, damaging negative face wants. Similar to other cases elaborated before, however, the message sender uses a range of mitigating devices, i.e., writing without interlexical spacing, using popular 'incorrect' spelling (compare with the source form above), adding a velar nasal (see 4.1.6 above), and adding multiple punctuation marks, all of which suggesting that the sender is claiming intimacy and intends to look 'cute' and not too serious. For this reason, this apparently impolite action is closely related to politeness strategy as well (cf. 'mock impoliteness' Haugh & Bousfield 2012).

5. SNS and language change

It is a truism that language is constantly changing, and the change is a cumulative effect of use. Since the language use is influenced and constrained by the context, including technology, the widespread use of SNS (and more broadly, CMC) leads to language change. Bolander and Locher (2020: 1) note that discourse analytic and sociolinguistic scholarship has increasingly highlighted the relevance of the blurring of borders between online and offline and the convergence of different modes for the ways individuals use resources. As elaborated in the above, language in SNS involves diverse strategies for interactional and transactional purposes.

Among the notable changes in Korean as a result of SNS is largely lexical, e.g., neologisms based on syllable-based acronyms. CMC-based neologisms are so vast that the National Institute of the Korean Language has published glossaries annually, each containing a large number of new words, many of which come from CMC. Since SNS has become inseparable from daily life, SNS neologisms have become a part of common vocabulary in the Korean language. This shows how the lexicon can be enriched by the language use in SNS.

Since Korean has a highly grammaticalized system of politeness, honorification, and formality, marked in the finite verb as inflected verbal morphology, the change is particularly prominent in sentence-enders (3.1). In early research, Jung (2010) already hypothesized that the notable increase in the use of a dependent noun followed by the politeness particle *-yo* is the influence of SNS, which was popularized in the 2010s. According to Jung (2010: 62–63), the operation is motivated by the desire for politeness marking in informal style as well as the desire for economy and facility. Similarly, Lee (2011) suggests that the emerging *hanta-yo* construction, a combination of plain speech level and the politeness particle, as a sentence-ender, is an influence of Twitter language. Once these are recognized as full-fledged grammatical change, they will constitute instances of grammaticalization from SNS practices.

Some SNS practices have made way into more formal communication genres. In a more formal genre, such as argumentative essays and formal letters, an increasing number of instances of using multiple punctuation marks, emoticons, and incomplete sentences are observed. Obviously, these practices have originated from SNS language. Furthermore, since SNS interactants do not send messages in a form of complete sentences and neither do they wait for the partner's message before composing their own, messages are typically fragmented and their connections are not streamlined but are connected in a crisscross fashion. Even though it cannot be quantitatively proven, the impression that a recent speech style of multiple-floor gradually departing from the strict single-floor conversation style may be due to SNS language as well.

Most importantly, all the changes being made in SNS and moving into everyday language exhibit the creative use of language. Heine and Stolz (2008: 332) observe that language is essentially creative activity, and Lehmann (1987, as cited in Heine & Stolz 2008) also highlights the role of creativity in language change. Some creative practices may have been necessitated by the inherent limitations of SNS communication, such as physical absence of the interlocutor in the interactional scene, the absence of paralinguistic features, inevitable temporal gap between messages, etc. However, as it has been shown above, SNS interactants overcome such limiting factors through creative use of the given resources.

6. Summary and Conclusion

Drawing upon the data from SNS communication in Korean, this paper looked at some of the (im)politeness strategies, from the perspectives of politeness and impoliteness theory, as elaborated in Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (1983), Culpeper (1996, 2005, 2010), among others. Positive politeness strategies aim at reducing the distance between the interlocutors and forging common ground. A number of positive politeness strategies are found in the corpus, e.g., the use of fragments, ideophones, common-ground markers, in-group language, baby-talk, friendly tone of voice, and empathy. Negative politeness strategies, aiming at increasing the distance between the interlocutors in consideration of H's negative face, do not surface prominently in the corpus. Self-derogating jokes and intentional upward adjustment of sentence-enders in the politeness-formality scale in speech level can be regarded as strategies of negative politeness, but it was also argued that they may have been motivated by the desire to forge emotional solidarity. Impoliteness strategies are similarly not prominent in the corpus. Some instances, e.g., making a burdensome request, name-calling, reproach, etc., may be, in appearance, instances of impoliteness, but it was also argued that at the deeper level, such speech acts are likely to be positive politeness strategies.

All instances of strategies are creative work of language users in their attempt to overcome the limitations and to make the language use more pleasurable. It becomes increasingly apparent that these strategies in the SNS language make influence on the lexicon and grammar. This echoes what Rhee and Koo (2014: 334) observe: "speakers of a language are not mere consumers of linguistic forms but are active manipulators of the existing forms, and thus creators and innovators of language."

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Abbreviations

ADN: adnominalizer; CSL: causal; DECL: declarative; END: sentence-ender; H: hearer/addressee; HON: honorific; IDEO: ideophone; INFR: inferential; INTJ: interjection; NOM: nominative; PST: past; SUFF: suffix

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Politeness markers in emails of non-native English speaking university students

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Abstract
The use of computer-mediated communication including emails has become pervasive in academic contexts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. What seems to be significant but simply overlooked by students is meeting politeness netiquettes while sending emails. To this end, the current study investigated the extent to which non-native English speaking university students adjust the level of politeness in their response emails written in English to that of the emails received from an American professor. To collect data, four versions of an academic email message with different levels of politeness were prepared in advance. The emails either included or excluded verbal and structural politeness markers and asked for the participants' demographic information and their reason for participation in the study. Then, 73 university students enrolled in a general English course were selected and divided randomly into four groups each of which received one version of the email message from the professor. The results of the data analysis on the participants' response emails, based on accommodation theory (Giles 1973) as a theoretical framework, revealed that they did not accommodate either verbal or structural politeness cues in emails. Besides, the participants' knowledge of the politeness etiquettes in the academic email genre seemed inadequate. Finally, the article provides some pedagogical implications for course designers, materials developers, and instructors to devise some plans to raise students' awareness of email politeness etiquettes and for students to be aware of the significance of meeting politeness principles in their academic emails.
Key words: *computer-mediated communication, email communication, politeness markers, politeness netiquettes*

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Маркеры вежливости в англоязычных электронных письмах студентов

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Аннотация
В результате пандемии COVID-19 компьютерно-опосредованная коммуникация, включая электронную почту, приобрела особую значимость в сфере образования. При этом студенты не придают особого значения использованию в мейлах сетевых этикетных норм вежливости. Данное исследование посвящено анализу того, в какой степени студенты – station неносители английского языка – приспосабливаются к уровню вежливости американского преподавателя при ответе на его мейлы. Для сбора данных было заранее подготовлено четыре версии электронных сообщений, в которых запрашивалась информация о демографических данных участников, а также причинах их участия в исследовании и при этом использовались либо не использовались вербальные и структурные маркеры вежливости. Далее было отобрано 73 студента университета, проходящих курс английского языка, каждому из которых была направлена одна из версий электронного сообщения. В результате анализа ответных мейлов студентов, основанного на теории аккомодации (Giles 1973), было выяснено, что студенты не адаптируются к вербальным и невербальным показателям вежливости в мейлах преподавателя. Более того, студенты демонстрируют неадекватное представление об этикетных нормах академического общения в форме мейлов. В результате проведенного исследования авторы формулируют рекомендации разработчикам курсов и преподавателям относительно способов выработки у студентов понимания норм сетевого этикета при написании мейлов и значимости вежливости для достижения их академических целей.
Ключевые слова: *компьютерно-опосредованная коммуникация, коммуникация с помощью мейлов, маркеры вежливости, сетевой этикет вежливости*

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1. Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years, students worldwide have been provided with more opportunities for distance learning and offered online courses (Sykes 2021). As a result, student–instructor face-to-face interactions gave way to computer-mediated communication (Codina-Espurz 2021). The latter (CMC) refers to different types of communication that occur through electronic mediums (Alemi, Pazoki Moakhar & Rezanejad 2021), such as emails, instant messaging, video chatting, or new social media platforms. With the growing application of distance learning over the last years, a new trend of research emerged which emphasizes the need for further studies on the analysis of digitally-mediated discourses (Oandasan 2021). In fact, getting engaged in digital discourse might cause new challenges for users as they will experience interaction failures if they are not familiar with the right genre or language patterns which occur in digital communications (Sykes 2021).

Therefore, this commonly used medium of communication has its own politeness etiquette which needs to be learned by those involved in such interactions (Almoaily 2018). The necessity of acquiring these politeness strategies is intensified in academic contexts where communication occurs normally between students and their professors through emails and entails a higher level of formality, a high social distance, and different status levels (Campillo 2018). According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of positive and negative politeness, a higher level of politeness using more formal politeness markers is required when students are communicating with their instructors or other faculty members; otherwise, they might be perceived as impolite (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2016), fail to have successful communication with that faculty member, and it might even influence the instructors' level of willingness to work with that student (DiBartolomeo 2021). Therefore, the use of appropriate language in emails and e-politeness might have implications for students' further academic success.

To avoid unwanted face-threatening acts such as using inappropriate salutations or closing remarks which might cause misconceptions or even communication breakdowns, students need to become cognizant of the nature of formal emails and right netiquettes (Campillo 2018, Konuk 2021). To this end, a number of studies in the area of CMC have investigated the nature of emails sent by students to their professors. However, there is still a need for further research addressing politeness manifestation in emails (Almoaily 2018, Oandasan 2021). Indeed, it seems significant to shed more light on contexts where students are still struggling with the appropriateness of emails in unequal communications with their professors (Campillo 2018) and to raise email users' awareness of these netiquettes (Níkleva 2017). In order to contribute to the existing literature, the current study drew on both accommodation and politeness theories to investigate the degree to which non-native English speaking university students tend to adapt the level of politeness in their response emails to the inclusion or exclusion of verbal and structural politeness markers in academic emails they receive.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Communication Accommodation Theory

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) explains cognitive reasons for possible changes in individuals' speech as they strive to minimize or emphasize the social differences between others and themselves (Giles 1973). CAT seeks to "clarify the motivations underlying, as well as the constraints operating upon, speech shifts during social interactions and the social consequences of these" (Giles et al. 1987). Convergence and divergence are the two key models associated with CAT. Convergence refers to the process through which individuals adapt their speech to others' speech (Giles 1973). However, divergence occurs when individuals adjust their speech away from that of others in order to distinguish their differences. By accenting the linguistic differences between the “us” and “them”, speakers maintain their separate and favorably distinct group identity. The current study concentrated on convergence aiming to see if the students will attempt to mirror verbal and structural politeness markers in the professor’s emails.

Giles et al. (1991) have identified several convergence features including speech rate, utterance length, vocal intensity, information density, self-disclosure, expressing opinions or solidarity, gesture and posture, facial expression, and head nodding. Giles and Smith (1979) and Scotton (1980), asserted that while the convergence of speech patterns is typically met with a positive evaluation, there is a line where excessive convergence can be seen as patronizing. Due to the fact that even the most trifling aspects of speech take on crucial importance, individuals seek or avoid identification with others through the medium of language, either consciously or unconsciously. In this way, accommodation theory can shed light on why individuals may accommodate their communication in email messages.

2.2. Politeness Theory

Politeness is considered as a social behavior which can be shaped based on social principles and conventions that a sociocultural community defines; therefore, it is a form of communication strategy (Níkleva 2017). The degree of politeness can be defined based on the context of communication and the interlocutors’ expectations and status (Graham & Hardaker 2017). Goffman’s (1959) theory of linguistic politeness is centered on ‘face’. Protecting your own face or identity and preserving and validating other people’s face/identity is a universal concept and important in face-to-face (FtF) communication where there is the possibility of face-threatening action (FTA). Face-threatening actions may include disagreeing, criticizing, interrupting, asking a favor, imposing, or requesting information (Morand & Ocker 2003). Face management strategies, including general politeness strategies, are used to navigate interpersonal relationships. Just as in FtF interaction, FTAs are also inevitable in CMC. Common digitally-mediated interactional events, such as requests for help or information, criticism, disagreements, giving directives, or requests for a previous message clarification, can be considered as FTAs.

Goffman (1959) focused on activities designed to reinforce and maintain face, while politeness emphasizes activities designed to sustain other’s face. Essentially, politeness means “phrasing things in such a way as to take into consideration the feelings of others” (Brown & Gilman 1989). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when the need to commit a FTA arises, a choice must be made between either directly performing the FTA or mitigating the FTA with face managing strategies to save the interlocutor’s positive/negative face. While the positive face can be conceptualized as a person’s desire for solidarity and inclusion, the negative face is a person’s willingness for privacy and deference, For instance, addressing a professor with the first name in emails indicates that both the professor and student are in academic solidarity; however, the title and last name address signifies the distance between the faculty and student (Eslami & Ko 2015).

Mitigation strategies are labeled as politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987). Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed two types of politeness strategies: the positive and the negative strategy. Positive politeness strategies refer to the desire to be liked, appreciated, and understood. Conversely, negative politeness strategies take place when the speaker strives to minimize the sense of imposition on the listener.

Individuals choose to employ different strategies depending upon the seriousness of the FTA, their evaluation of the social situation, the degree of imposition, social distance, and power relationships (Eslami & Ko 2015). There is little doubt that FTAs and the politeness strategies used to defuse the face threat occur frequently in digitally-mediated environments including emails. This need for approval led the current study to look at the possibility that politeness strategies are embedded in accommodation theory and may affect the way people communicate through email.

2.3. Email: Its Nature and Politeness

One of the most commonly used types of out-of-class interaction between faculty members and university students is email communication (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2018). In fact, nowadays emails can be sent easily from cell phones and therefore the majority of students rely exclusively on this medium of communication (Alemi et al. 2021). Email communication is placed within the computer-mediated discourse (CMD) field, which is in turn the branch of a broader field called computer-mediated communication (CMC) (DiBartolomeo 2021). The function of emails can be both transactional and interactional. It means that they are sent with the purpose of not only receiving and sending information but also establishing and maintaining a social relationship (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2018). Graham and Hardaker (2017) defined emails as a highly asynchronous medium of communication as there is usually a time-lapse between the time something is sent and the time that message is read. Then, they emphasized that “the more asynchronous an environment is, the more likely it is that any perception of impoliteness will expand and multiply within a community” (Ibid: 787).

Writing an email based on the right politeness etiquette is not an easy task and requires both pragmalinguistic (the knowledge of what the appropriate forms are) and sociopragmatic (the knowledge of when these forms are contextually appropriate) knowledge (DiBartolomeo 2021). Adhering to appropriate language functions in academic contexts where the relationships are mainly hierarchical is significant and students are expected to use language and email markers which comply with and acknowledge the higher status of their professors (Biesenbach-Lucas 2007). Therefore, they need to make appropriate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices to meet e-politeness etiquettes. This seems to be more challenging for non-native speaker students who are sending emails in a foreign/second language (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2018).

Academic emails follow a specific template which includes a greeting, a body, as well as a closing. Email formats can vary dramatically depending on the situation and different communicative functions (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2018). Emails are asynchronous and their authors have an opportunity to revise them based on the format compatible with their particular context before sending them (Pratama 2019). However, faculty members usually complain about the informal styles of emails they receive from their students and claim that they sometimes have impolite tones, lack appropriate formality, have inappropriate greetings or closings or even simply lack them (Campillo 2018). This arises from students' lack of awareness of different factors including the use of mitigations, the choice of the form of address, and the type of greetings and closings which might influence the level of politeness in their emails (DiBartolomeo 2021).

2.4. Previous Studies on Politeness in Email

Digital or computer-mediated interaction is an inseparable component of everyday life and therefore the attempt to the scrutiny of different facets of CMC including emails is no surprise (Graham & Hardaker 2017). From the perspective of politeness theory as a conceptual framework, the nature of email has been recently addressed by numerous researchers from different angles. For instance, Níkleva (2017) investigated the markers of (im)politeness in student-instructor interactions in emails at the university level. The results indicated that the level of politeness in the students' emails did not meet the politeness adequacy required for this low-to-high type of interaction. In fact, the participants' email messages lacked politeness markers and linguistic correctness to some extent. However, the phase of intervention helped the students make significant progress in politeness strategies, linguistic accuracy, spelling, and the usage of emoticons. It was then suggested that writing email as an independent discourse genre needs to be taught to students at different educational levels. Almoaily (2018) also discovered EFL students' awareness and use of salutations as a politeness marker in academic emails. The types of email analyzed in this study were highly formal as they were the first-time contact with a supervisor and there was a high social distance between the students and that faculty member. The results indicated that only a small proportion of email messages consisted of formal greetings and the majority of them contained informal or null greetings. It was concluded that, as the participants lacked the essential knowledge of politeness cues in formal emails, they need to be provided with an opportunity for politeness etiquette training.

Another study by Campillo (2018) analyzed the use of structural politeness markers by Spanish students in their first-contact emails to their lecturer. One group of participants was asked to employ their mother tongue in their email message and the other was supposed to use English as a foreign language. The findings revealed that both groups, regardless of their language, were not aware of the degree of formality required for openings in this type of email interaction. Contrarily, in their choice of closings, they showed deference to the lecturer. In light of the gained results, Campillo suggested teaching students how to write appropriate salutations as an urgent task. Moreover, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2018) examined the nature of requests to faculty members made by the students via email interaction. It was revealed that the participants who preferred utilizing highly formal address terms in writing emails to a faculty member who is seen as an authority. On the contrary, they tended to employ direct strategies to make even high imposition requests signifying the students' inability to adapt the level of directness in their strategies to the degree of imposition. It was then concluded that, as their request strategies did not meet the appropriate level of politeness, they caused face-threatening acts which led to the imposition on their professor. University applied linguistics lecturers' perception of (im)politeness in the academic email genre was also scrutinized by Hashemian and Farhang-Ju (2019). It was found that the participants' perception of polite email etiquette was influenced by the appropriate use of openings and closings, linguistic accuracy, and the level of request directness. More precisely, both appropriate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of language seemed to be prominent in the view of lecturers.

Furthermore, Savić (2019) analyzed email requests of a group of Norwegian students regarding the range and frequency of the opening and closing occurrence and their variation based on the degree of request imposition and the lecturer-student social distance. A high frequency of opening and closing occurrence was revealed signifying the students' orientation to rapport–building. Besides, while a preference for respect was identified in closings, a tendency for familiarity and solidarity was found in openings. Also, Pham and Ye (2020) investigated politeness strategies utilized by Vietnamese students while sending request emails to their professors. It was revealed that the participants' mother tongue greatly influenced their email writing as they overused the word 'please'. Besides, they were revealed to lack knowledge of the honorific language and sociopragmatic competence due to the inflexible use of fixed lexical devices and phrases in every context. It was then suggested that students' sociopragmatic and intercultural awareness should be raised. In addition, Codina-Espurz (2021) explored the impact of power and social distance on Spanish students' use of requestive and politeness strategies. Unexpectedly, students employed more indirect strategies, a higher number of politeness elements, and more mitigation in email messages sent to a person of an equal status such as their peers than in high-to-low email interactions with their professors. This reveals students' concern about their classmates' face and maintaining their interpersonal relationships. Besides, they might consider the request as a simple transaction between them and their professor in the academic context pursuing no personal relationship. Finally, Konuk (2021) investigated the email literacy of a group of students at higher-level education and revealed that they had problems with spelling and punctuation, paragraph structure, the level of language formality, contact information, opening and closing statements, etc. In view of these findings, the necessity of teaching email etiquette to students was highlighted.

3. Purpose of the Study

A great deal of early research was conducted on asynchronous communications such as emails within the CMC environment. Since then, however, the scope of using emails has been expanded from business communications to personal connections or interactions in academic and professional contexts. Therefore, the idea of what forms (im)politeness in emails has been widened and changed significantly, particularly with respect to the audience (Graham & Hardaker 2017). In such an evolving context, email users might encounter new challenges regarding the use of appropriate language while addressing interlocutors of particularly higher status (Campillo 2018) and might commit a face-threatening act unintentionally as they lack the knowledge of politeness netiquettes. Consequently, further studies on email communications are warranted to shed more light on the nature of emails and factors which cause an email to be considered as (im)polite (Oandasan 2021). In order to bridge this gap, this study strived to expand the study by Bunz and Campbell (2004) who adopted accommodation theory as a conceptual framework of their study and scrutinized the extent to which the use of verbal politeness markers including ‘thank you’ and ‘please’ and structural politeness elements, such as salutations and closings in email messages, influence the level of politeness in native students’ response emails.

The current research presented in this paper investigated the same issue on Iranian non-native students. Therefore, the following research questions were pursued:

1. Do non-native English speaking university students accommodate politeness in email messages by mirroring verbal markers (i.e., ‘please’ and ‘thank you’) in a response email?
2. Do non-native English speaking university students accommodate politeness in email messages by mirroring structural elements (i.e., salutation and closing remark) in a response email?

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

Seventy-three Iranian non-native English speaking university students enrolled in a general English course were selected through convenience sampling to participate in the current study (n =73, response rate of 81%). C onvenience sampling was used based on availability and voluntary basis. There were 21 (29%) female and 52 (71%) male subjects with Persian as their mother tongue. The average English language proficiency level of the students was intermediate. All the students were Engineering majors. The students’ ages ranged from 18 to 24, but the majority of the participants were 18 (17%) or 19 (59%) years old. On average, the participants used email one (19%), two (30%), or three-to-four (15%) hours per week. Also, they had been using email for approximately three to six years. Besides, while 42% of the subjects reported using email primarily for task-related purposes, such as school or work, 19% of them claimed to use email secondarily for social reasons such as interacting with family and friends.

4.2. Instrumentation

A self-report questionnaire developed and tested by Bunz and Campbell (2004) was used for this study. The participant's demographics including age and sex and email use information, specifically years of email use, the amount of email use per week, and the types of email (work/ school and personal/social usage) were assessed (see appendix A). In fact, the only materials used in the current study were email messages that asked for the participants' demographic information (using the aforementioned questionnaire) and their reason for participation in the study. Four emails with different short messages consisting of different politeness markers were sent to the participants. More precisely, the messages contained either: (1) verbal politeness markers including the phrases 'please', 'thank you', or expressions such as 'I would appreciate' or 'I'm grateful'; (2) structural politeness elements which included salutations and closing sign-offs; (3) both verbal and structural politeness markers; or (4) no politeness elements at all (see short messages in appendix B). The participants were assembled randomly into four groups and each group received one of the four different messages.

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect data, a number of students from Sharif University of Technology in Iran were invited to take part in the current study via email and were provided with enough information about the research project. The subjects who gave their informed consent to participate were informed by their instructor that a professor from an American university is looking for subjects to fill out a survey for a study being conducted on the email used by university students. All the students were provided with a free email account by their university and were asked to send their email addresses to their English course instructor. They were further told that the professor would contact them via email containing more information about the project.

Later, the students were divided randomly into four groups and each received a different email message from the American professor, whose pseudo-identity was Dr. Davidson. The reason why an American identity was selected for the professor was the complaints made by the targeted participants about sending emails to foreign professors who either do not answer them or consider them rude. Therefore, the current study aimed at investigating the root of this problem. Also, no first name was mentioned for this professor to prevent the gender factor from influencing the participants' responses. Besides, in order to neutralize the impact of the existing student-instructor relationships on the level of politeness in the participants' responses, rather than a familiar professor, an unknown professor was selected.

The email messages aimed at stimulating a reply that could be later studied to determine if the students experienced any accommodation to the professor's email. Since at least two or three sentences in the response message would be necessary to allow an opportunity for convergence to occur, the professor's email asked the students to explain their reasons why they wished to participate in the present study. Finally, the students' responses were saved in the excel file for data analysis.

4.4. Data Analysis

In order to explore whether the four groups of participants accommodated to different levels of politeness in email messages in their responses and indicate if there was a significant difference among the responses provided by each group, a one-way ANOVA was used along with the calculation of means and standard deviations. The first group received an email including verbal politeness markers, the second group received an email consisting of structural politeness elements, the third group received an email with both verbal and structural politeness elements, and the fourth one received an email with no politeness elements. These four groups made up the independent variables. The total of the politeness indicators (total politeness score), in the response emails, made up the dependent variables.

The measurement process to determine the total politeness score was a simple form of content analysis. First, words or terms that were considered politeness indicators were identified for use in the coding scheme. Then, verbal and structural politeness markers in the email responses were identified and counted. Student responses containing expressions of 'please', 'thank you', 'I would appreciate', or 'I'm grateful' were counted as including verbal politeness markers. Response messages which contained a salutation and/or a closing were counted as including a structural politeness element.

5. Results

In this section, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data is presented.

5.1. The Result of Descriptive Statistics and One-way ANOVA

This study investigated politeness as an element of communication accommodation in email between a professor and university students. The research sought to provide information on whether politeness context cues are accommodated by the students. The results of the SPSS analysis are listed in Table 1 presenting descriptive statistics and Table 2 showing the one-way ANOVA results.

According to the Table above, the participants' responses to the third version of the email consisting of both verbal and structural politeness markers contained the most politeness indicators (M = 2.25, STD = 1.39), followed by responses to the second version of the email including just structural politeness markers (M = 1.76, STD = 1.044), and the fourth version of email with no verbal and structural politeness markers (M = 1.67, STD = 1.23). Responses to the first version of the email consisting of just verbal politeness markers contained the fewest politeness elements (M = 1.58, STD = 1.579).

Table 1. **Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Version 1	26	1.58	1.57	0	6
Version 2	21	1.76	1.04	0	4
Version 3	16	2.25	1.39	0	5
Version 4	12	1.67	1.23	0	4
Total	75	1.79	1.34	0	6

Then, one-way ANOVA was run to specify the significance of differences among the participants' responses to different versions of email messages (Table 2). Checking the f-values with f-critical for the distribution of F with the appropriate degrees of freedom, and overall F (F observed) revealed no meaningful differences among different versions, F (3) = 0.869, p = 0.462.

Table 2. **One-way ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares(SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.764	3	1.588	.869	.462
Within Groups	129.822	71	1.828		
Total	134.587	74			

The findings in the Table above indicate that the difference between the means of the responses to the different versions of email received by the students was not significant enough to allow the researchers to say there are any differences. The small differences between the means that were found were likely either due to chance or other possible factors but not due to which version the student received. As a result of this statistical non-significance, no further post hoc tests were performed. Thus, it can be concluded that the participating students did not accommodate verbal or structural politeness markers in this particular genre of email writing.

5.2. The Examples of Email Responses to the First Version of Email

Looking more closely at the following examples from the participants' responses will give more insight into the issue under investigation. In response to the first version of the email which contained verbal politeness markers only, one of the participants sent the following message:

> *Helping such international research aiming at the enhancement of my countrymen's life is a must; consequently, I will participate in it to boost the progress of human being's lifestyle.*

As indicated in the example above, none of the elements of politeness was used by the targeted participant. He did not even accommodate politeness in his response by mirroring verbal markers in the email received from the professor. Another participant answered the first version of the email in this way:

> ***Hello*** *Mr. Davidson,*
> *I just wanted to help you to make a more valid survey.*

In this case, the student began his email message with a simple greeting as he said "*Hello Mr. Davidson*". This can be considered as a structural politeness marker. However, no element of verbal politeness was observed revealing that the participant did not adjust the level of politeness in his response to the one in the received email.

5.3. The Examples of Email Responses to the Second Version of Email

In response to the second version of the email which consisted of just structural politeness markers, one of the participants revealed a slight accommodation:

> *Actually, I prefer email as a means of communication. So, I think it is an amazing opportunity to participate in such research.*
> ***Kind regards***
> *Amin Karimi (pseudonym)*

In this example, the participant ended his message with a formal closing, i.e. 'Kind regards', which is an indicator of structural politeness. However, this student ignored the significance of salutations in writing emails, particularly to a person of higher status as his email message contained no greeting. This indicated the participant's incomplete knowledge of structural politeness markers in the email genre. In response to the same version of the email, another participant sent the message below:

> *I participated in this activity to help you to conduct your study.*
> *I* ***wish*** *this project to be done well and its results help to have a more successful society.*

The only sign of politeness in the example above was the use of the verbal marker 'wish' in the second line. However, this message did not include any greetings or closings signifying that this student did not adapt the level of politeness in her response to the received email containing structural politeness elements.

5.4. The Examples of Email Responses to the Third Version of Email

Regarding the third version of the email consisting of both verbal and structural markers, one of the participants replied in this way:

> ***Dear** Dr. Davidson*
> *I attended this test because I wanted to have a part in research as an Iranian resident. And I also wanted to know what other people in the world think about these questions.*

The only element of politeness in the example above is that this message started with a salutation, i.e. "Dear Dr. Davidson". However, there was not any trace of verbal politeness markers throughout the whole message. Besides, no closing was written at the end of the email. Based on the available evidence, it is obvious that this student lacked enough knowledge of the politeness elements necessary in the formal email genre. Therefore, the use of greeting at the beginning of the message could be possibly by chance rather than the student's awareness of the existing politeness strategies. Another student's response to the third version of the email was as follows:

> *I will participate in this research to get more information about students in Iran and their interests and introduce Iranian students to academic groups.*

Although the email sent by the professor included politeness elements at both verbal and structural levels, no sign of accommodation was observed in this example. In fact, none of the elements of politeness was used by this student.

5.5. The Examples of Email Responses to the Fourth Version of Email

In response to the fourth version of the email including no verbal or structural politeness markers, one of the participating students sent the following message:

> *As a freshman, I believe that participating in such research increases my knowledge and ability. Besides, I like topics related to technology and its uses in life.* ***Thank you*** *for considering my answers in your research.*

In this case, the participant finished her message with the verbal politeness expression of 'thank you' disregarding the fact that her received email contained no sign of politeness. Therefore, she was not completely under the influence of the level of politeness in the received email. Another participant replied the same message in this way:

> *I think it would be nice to help such inexhaustible researchers who work for us in order to have a better life. If these researches could change the new age even a little, I'm a lucky one to have an effect on this happening. Finally,* ***thank you*** *for your scientific works.*
> ***Best wishes*** *to you.*
> *Parsa Pirooz (pseudonym)*

Observing the instances of a verbal ('thank you') and structural (Best wishes') politeness markers in the example above reveals that the participant did not adjust the level of politeness in his response to that of the email received. These signs of deference in the students' response email might partly go back to his cultural background based on which people of a higher status deserve to receive respect.

However, as in other examples, in these two last cases the participants' knowledge of politeness indicators in the email genre also seems insufficient. More precisely, although some degrees of politeness could be traced through these messages, these participants did not use all politeness elements required for an academic email signifying their lack of awareness in this regard.

Overall, it was obvious that the participating non-native students in the current study were not thoroughly cognizant of the politeness principles in the academic email genre. Thus, the random traces of verbal or structural politeness markers within the response messages were more likely due to chance or factors other than accommodation to the level of politeness in received emails or knowledge of politeness elements in formal emails.

6. Discussion

The current study aimed at investigating whether non-native English speaking university students accommodate verbal and structural politeness markers in academic email interactions. Although existing research shows that email recipients detect politeness makers, consciously or not, and accommodate to the level of politeness in received emails by including similar indicators in their emails, this study showed that this might not be true in an EFL context. In fact, the findings indicated that contrary to previous research done by Bunz and Campell (2004), the targeted university students here did not accommodate either verbal or structural politeness cues in emails. However, the means and standard deviations revealed some slight differences. These differences in the means of the politeness level of four versions of the email showed that version 3, containing both verbal and structural politeness cues, stimulated the most polite responses. Version 2, containing structural cues, motivated the second level of polite responses. These findings are in agreement with the study done by Bunz and Campell (2004).

However, this study found that version 4, containing no politeness cues had higher means than version 1, containing verbal politeness cues only. It could be argued that in an EFL context and without instruction on how to write an academic email based on politeness principles in the English language context, possible factors such as L1 culture (power/respect hierarchy, age/respect hierarchy), and L1 linguistic structures have a greater impact on student responses compared to the need to converge and accommodate to politeness. While it cannot be proven in this study, cultural differences might be a factor affecting the unexpected results of this study. In the context of this study, there is an inherent expectation of respect, and therefore the level of politeness in situations where the power level or age level differs between participants. Individuals will most likely respond and react politely when engaged with an older person or a figure of authority (professor). Thus, the high-to-low professor-student relationship might cause the participating students to respond politely regardless of the nature of the email they received.

Another possible complication is the use of the word 'dear' as a structural politeness indicator. Indeed, in the participants' mother tongue (L1), the use of this term has a higher emotional connotation than in English. These non-native students would normally use the term Agha = Mr. or Khanoum = Mrs. rather than 'dear' which translates literally into sweetheart or love. This factor is normally more prevalent in the culture of female students or when male students address female professors. As this study did not give the participant any clues about the sex of the professor, they could have elected to give more polite answers to be safe. The majority of the participants' reluctance to use this structural politeness marker might stem from the existing intercultural differences and the participants' lack of experience in communicating with international parties.

Such unexpected results probably caused by students' L1 culture were also observed in previous studies. For instance, Pham and Ye (2020) revealed that the participating Vietnamese students overused the verbal politeness marker ('please') and other hedges in their request email to their professor under the influence of their cultural background. In another study by Codina-Espurz (2021), Spanish students' use of more direct strategies and fewer politeness strategies and mitigation suggested that the participants might be employing their first language sociocultural norms in writing emails in the English language, as the student-professor relationship is not too distant in Spain and therefore it seemed unnatural to them to utilize a formal form of address. In view of this finding, what sounds significant is that raising students' intercultural awareness as the incomplete knowledge of the target language culture and over-reliance on the first language culture might cause pragmatic failure.

Scrutinizing the results of this study from the politeness theory perspective also revealed that the participating students' knowledge of politeness elements in the academic email genre was inadequate as they either randomly used verbal or structural politeness markers in their emails or completely neglected them. This finding which proved the participants' deficit knowledge of politeness strategies in academic emails is in alignment with the results of some studies conducted previously in this area. For example, Konuk (2021), investigating the nature of emails sent by students to their professors at higher-level education, indicated that they had problems with opening and closing statements. Campillo (2018) also revealed that the participants were not cognizant of the degree of formality required for openings in their first-contact email to their instructor. In another study by Almoaily (2018), only a small proportion of academic email messages consisted of formal greetings, while the majority of them contained informal or null greetings. In the same direction, Níkleva (2017) showed that the participants' email messages to their instructor lacked politeness markers and linguistic correctness to some degree signifying their lack of awareness of politeness elements in the low-to-high type of interaction. Overall, what was concluded at the end of these studies was the necessity of training students on how to meet politeness requirements in their emails.

7. Conclusion

Investigating the extent to which non-native English speaking university students adjust the level of politeness in their response emails to that of the emails received from their professor indicated no desire for convergence. Besides, comparing the means of the politeness level of four email versions and a more in-depth analysis of email responses suggested the probable impact of the participants' L1 language and culture on the politeness strategies utilized by them while writing academic emails. Moreover, it was revealed that the participating students lacked adequate knowledge of politeness etiquettes in the academic email genre as they either randomly used verbal or structural politeness markers in their emails or completely ignored them.

As a result of this lack of awareness, serious steps need to be taken to provide students who are involved in email communications with the opportunity to be trained on how to use the right politeness netiquettes including appropriate greetings and closings while writing emails, particularly in contexts where a high level of formality dominates, such as sending emails to professors, supervisors, or instructors who are of a higher social status. Besides, students' awareness of intercultural differences should be raised to avoid the probable pragmatic failure. Therefore, the first implication is for professors who could design a course for English speaking university students addressing how to write an academic email according to the target language politeness principles. The second implication is for material developers who should consider email writing as an independent genre of writing and use materials aiming to booster students' knowledge of politeness etiquette in academic emails. It is also suggested that instructors should train students in the appropriate language and set of politeness procedures required to communicate effectively in emails. The last implication is for students who should be cognizant of politeness strategies and cultural differences to be able to communicate with their instructors more properly.

In view of the findings here, there are some suggestions for further studies. First of all, as the non-native students in the study did not adjust the level of politeness in their response email, in contrast with the results of the previous study conducted on non-native speakers, it is recommended to replicate the same study in other EFL contexts to see if the results will vary or not. Also, it is suggested to conduct some intervention studies to raise students' awareness of email politeness markers and intercultural differences to investigate their progress in email writing. Finally, exploring other social and contextual factors including the level of formality (student to student or professor to professor), age, the experience of email use, gender, and the communicative accommodation in personal or professional email messages are avenues for future studies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Self Report Scale of Email Usage and Demographics, Administered via Email

This survey consists of items designed to provide information about your use of electronic mail and demographics. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to each item according to the scale provided.

1. How many years have you been using email to interact with others?
   (1) Less than 1
   (2) 1–2
   (3) 3–4
   (4) 5–6
   (5) 7–8
   (6) 9–10
   (7) More than 10

2. How many hours per week would you estimate you currently spend using email to interact with others?

(l) 0
(2) 1
(3) 2
(4) 3–4
(5) 5–6
(6) 7–8
(7) 9–10
(8) 11–12
(9) 13–14
(10) 15+

3. I use/would use email primarily for ...

(1) interacting socially with acquaintances, friends, or family
(2) school, work, or other task-related purposes
(3) gathering information on current events/special interests
(4) gathering information about an upcoming purchase
(5) all of the above
(6) none of the above

4. I use/would use email secondarily for ...

(1) interacting socially with acquaintances, friends, or family
(2) school, work, or other task-related purposes
(3) gathering information on current events/special interests
(4) gathering information about an upcoming purchase
(5) all of the above
(6) none of the above

5. What age group are you a member of?

(1) 17–18
(2) 19
(3) 20
(4) 21
(5) 22–23
(6) 24–26
(7) 27–29
(8) 30–35
(9) 36–45
(10) 46+

6. What is your sex?

(1) female
(2) male

Appendix B

Email message 1: Verbal politeness markers

You expressed interest in being a participant in a research study I am conducting. Thank you for that. Participation would involve filling out a short survey asking about your uses of electronic mail and basic demographic information. If you are still interested, please send a response to me via email and I will forward the survey to you. As a visiting professor, I am not familiar with the research requirements of the COMS 130 course, so please also provide a brief explanation of why you wish to be a participant in this study. If you are no longer interested, please disregard this message. Thanks again for your interest.
Dr. Davidson

Message 2: Structural politeness markers

Dear [insert participant first name].
Recently you expressed interest in being a participant in a research study I am conducting. Participation would involve filling out a short survey asking about your uses of electronic mail and basic demographic information. If you are still interested, send a response to me via email and I will forward the survey to you. As a visiting professor, I am not familiar with the research requirements of the COMS130 course, so also provide a brief explanation of why you wish to be a participant in this study. If you are no longer interested, disregard this message.
Regards,
Dr. Davidson

Message 3: Both Verbal and structural politeness markers

Dear [insert participant first name],
Thank you for expressing interest in being a participant in a research study I am conducting. Participation would involve filling out a short survey asking about your uses of communication technology and basic demographic information. If you are still interested, please send a response to me via email and I will forward the survey to you. As a visiting professor, I am not familiar with the research requirements of the COMS130 course, so please also provide a brief explanation of why you wish to be a participant in this study. If you are no longer interested, please disregard this message.
Thanks again.
Regards,
Dr. Davidson

Message 4: None (Neither verbal markers nor structural elements)

Recently you expressed interest in being a participant in a research study I am conducting. Participation would involve filling out a short survey asking about your uses of communication technology and basic demographic information. If you are still interested, send a response to me via email and I will forward the survey to you. As a visiting professor, I am not familiar with the research requirements of the COMS 130 course, so also provide a brief explanation of why you wish to be a participant in this study. If you are no longer interested, disregard this message.

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Захра МАЛЕКНИА имеет докторскую степень по специальности «Преподавание английского языка как иностранного (TEFL)», преподает в Западно-Тегеранском отделении Исламского Университета Азад, Тегеран, Иран. В сферу ее научных интересов входит исследование идентичности учителя, педагогического профессионального развития, английского языка как иностранного (EIL) и компьютерно-опосредованной коммуникации.
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Research article / Научная статья

Perception of impoliteness in refusal and response to it by native speakers of English and Persian

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Abstract
Impoliteness entails the employment of strategies oriented toward attacking face and bringing about social disruption. Although research on impoliteness has received great attention in the past two decades, how impolite utterances are perceived and what the recipients of impoliteness do in return has remained relatively under-addressed. The current study set out to examine native English and Persian speakers' perceptions of and response to impoliteness in the production of the speech act of refusal. To this end, 90 native English speakers and 120 native Persian speakers were administered a written discourse completion task containing eight refusals that either observed politeness or contained various degrees of impoliteness. The results showed that native Persian speakers did not perceive any of the refusals to be impolite whereas three of the refusals were considered impolite by native English speakers. When reacting to impoliteness in refusals, native English speakers exploited a wider range of strategies than did Persian speakers. The results showed that social distance and power relations were of more significance for Persian speakers than for English speakers in perceiving the degree of impoliteness; however, in responding to an utterance perceived as impolite, English speakers were more likely to adopt offensive strategies to counter impoliteness, including positive and negative impoliteness strategies. These findings indicate both cross-cultural divergence and convergence in the perception of impoliteness and responses to impoliteness.
Keywords: *politeness, impoliteness, speech act, refusal, native English speakers, native Persian speakers*

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Восприятие невежливости в речевом акте «отказ» и ответ на нее в английской и персидской коммуникативных культурах

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Аннотация
Невежливость связана с использованием ликоугрожающих стратегий, приводящих к нарушению социального взаимодействия. Хотя в последние два десятилетия исследованию невежливости уделяется значительное внимание, восприятие невежливых высказываний и обратная реакция на них изучаются недостаточно. Цель данного исследования – выявить, как носители английского и персидского языков воспринимают невежливость в речевом акте «отказ» и как реагируют на нее. Для этого 90 носителям английского и 120 носителям персидского языков было предложено задание на завершение дискурса, содержащее восемь отказов, высказанных в вежливой форме либо с разной степенью невежливости. Результаты показали, что носители персидского языка ни один из отказов не посчитали невежливым, в то время как три отказа были восприняты как невежливые носителями английского языка. Реагируя на невежливость в отказе, носители английского языка использовали более разнообразные стратегии, чем носители персидского языка. Исследование показало, что социальная дистанция и отношения власти более значимы для носителей персидского языка, нежели английского; однако при ответе на невежливый отказ носители английского языка проявляли тенденцию к использованию стратегий нападения, включающих стратегии позитивной и негативной невежливости. Полученные результаты указывают как на сходства, так и различия в восприятии невежливости и ответной реакции на нее в разных культурах.
Ключевые слова: *невежливость, речевой акт, отказ, вежливость, носители английского языка, носители персидского языка*

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1. Introduction

Impoliteness comes about when a face attack is intentionally communicated by the speaker and/or is perceived by the hearer as intentional (Culpeper 2005, 2011, Mills et al. 2010). According to Culpeper and Tantucci (2021), impoliteness is an evaluative perception of specific in-context-behaviors. This definition suggests that the speaker and hearer construct impoliteness within interactions. Both Culpeper (2011) and Bousfield (2008) maintain that impoliteness comprises the purposeful communication of intentionally face-threatening acts. According to Culpeper (2011), face-threatening acts can be incidental, accidental, or purposeful. Nevertheless, impoliteness in Culpeper's model is a purposeful act communicated in particular social contexts. When performing a face-threatening act (FTA), the speaker decides on their choice of strategy according to their assessment of the three most common variables affecting the (im)politeness of an utterance: social distance between speaker and hearer, their relative power, and the size of the imposition in the cultural context (Archer et al. 2012). FTAs can occur in various interactions within any culture, but perceptions of these three variables vary across cultures, highlighting the significance of impoliteness arising from FTAs as a notable aspect of any cross-cultural interaction (Haugh 2010, House 2012, Izadi 2022, Litvinova & Larina 2023, Lugman 2022, Tajeddin et al. 2015, Tzanne & Sifianou 2019). Investigating (im)politeness entails scrutiny of emic perceptions of these variables, which in turn can shed further light on how impoliteness is perceived and reacted to in different cultures. Whilst failing to notice these variables can lead to threatening an interlocutor's positive and/or negative face and cause impoliteness, knowledge of such emic perceptions can contribute to pragmatically appropriate cross-cultural communication. As Bousfield (2008) maintains, "studying how and under what conditions impoliteness is generated is an important and worthy object of study", which can reveal how participants in linguistic interactions manage impoliteness; "it will, in effect, show how impoliteness may potentially be countered, controlled and managed" (Ibid: 4).

For successful cross-cultural communication, it is vital to know what the receiver of a face threat/attack does in response. According to Culpeper et al. (2003), the importance of this issue lies in the fact that much can be revealed about how an utterance is to be taken through the analysis of the response to it. Bousfield (2007) likewise argues that traditional approaches to the study of impoliteness fail to allow for "how addressees respond to a producer of a face-threatening utterance" (Ibid: 2185). Against this backdrop, the current research focused on native English speakers' and native Persian speakers' perceptions of and response to impoliteness in the production of the speech act of refusal. Its seemingly inherent face-threatening quality and strong links with sociocultural norms make refusal suited for a cross-cultural study on the perception of impoliteness. The study also explored the variations in the perceptions of and verbal reactions to impoliteness across the two cultures to discover potential cultural differences.

2. Literature review

2.1. The concept of impoliteness

The study of politeness has long been pursued without adequate attention to its closely linked counterpart, i.e. impoliteness (Leech 2014). Brown and Levinson (1987) viewed impoliteness simply as the absence of politeness and thus did not thoroughly investigate what constitutes impoliteness (Mills 2009). Bousfield and Locher (2008), likewise, argued that, notwithstanding a surge of interest in politeness, our understanding of impoliteness has barely improved. The paucity of research on impoliteness can partly be ascribed to the fact that the research largely rests on a view of conversation that stresses the observation of politeness maxims and the tacit acknowledgment of balance between interactants. Such a view underscores the harmonious aspect of social relations (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang 2003). Claiming that the focus of politeness theories has been on communicative strategies for establishing or maintaining social harmony, Culpeper (1996) proposed that impoliteness exerts the opposite effect. Impoliteness is, hence, identified as the employment of strategies oriented toward attacking face and bringing about social disruption (Culpeper 1996, 2010). There exist occasions, as Mills (2003) and Bousfield (2008) argued, when interactants do indeed attack their interlocutors, and those attacks are occasionally regarded as impolite and sometimes they are not.

Researchers who studied (im)politeness have sought to define the impoliteness phenomenon. Culpeper (1996) and Culpeper et al. (2003) characterized impoliteness as the employment of communicative strategies to attack face and hence to cause social disharmony. Critical of this definition, however, Culpeper (2005) stated that it neglects the role of the hearer and does not reveal what social disharmony entails, and that the occurrence of social conflict is not an essential condition for impoliteness to take place. A clearer definition, according to Culpeper (2005), is provided by Tracy and Tracy (1998), who took face attacks as communicative acts which members of a social community perceive to be purposely offensive. The ambiguity surrounding the speaker's and hearer's roles in the definition prompted Culpeper (2005) to propose a revised definition for this phenomenon: "Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)" (Ibid: 38). This definition, as Culpeper noted, clarifies that impoliteness is constructed in the interaction between the speaker and the hearer. In most linguistic interactions, he argued, impoliteness encompasses both (1) and (2), suggesting that the speaker purposely causes offense to the hearer, and the hearer recognizes that offense. Bousfield (2008: 72) maintained that "impoliteness constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts" which are unmitigated, and the face threat is exacerbated to maximize the face damage.

Based on the above definitions, the key elements signifying truly impolite behavior include the speaker's intention of causing offense and the hearer's recognition of that intended offense. This portrayal of impoliteness, manifested in both Culpeper's (2005) and Bousfield's (2008) definitions, was adopted as the operational definition of impoliteness in this study. Framed by this definition, impoliteness is purposeful behavior that is perceived to be so by the addressee. Furthermore, impolite behavior is unmitigated, particularly where mitigation is required, bringing about a face attack to the hearer. The relevance of this definition to the purpose of the current study is that the participants were requested to picture themselves as the recipients of the impolite acts in the refusals and to evaluate the degree of impoliteness.

2.2. Responses to impoliteness

A major theme in impoliteness, according to Culpeper et al. (2003), is the consideration of what the receiver of a face threat or attack does in return. This, according to Culpeper et al., is important because much can be revealed about how an utterance is to be taken by analyzing the response to it. This is a criticism leveled by Culpeper et al. at Austin's (1990) paper, exploring how hearers perceive and interpret impoliteness. The examination of perlocutionary and face-threatening consequences of impoliteness should, as Culpeper et al. (2003) and Bousfield (2007) maintained, be given precedence in future research. The call for the consideration of the recipient's response to an impoliteness act corresponds to the other chief aim of this study, i.e. the investigation of the response to impoliteness across the two cultures under study.

Theoretically, the recipient of an exacerbated FTA has two options at their disposal**:** to respond or not to respond (e.g., stay silent) (Culpeper et al. 2003). Interactants opting to respond to the impoliteness act have more options open to them, i.e. they can either accept the face attack or they can counter it. In the former case, the recipient may shoulder responsibility for the impoliteness act, thus risking further face damage to themselves. Alternatively, as Culpeper et al. (Ibid) put it, countering the face attack involves a set of strategies that can be examined according to whether they are offensive or defensive. Offensive strategies counter face attacks with face attacks whereas defensive strategies are aimed to counter face attacks by defending one's own face, a pattern proposed by Lakoff (1973). According to Culpeper et al. (2003), these strategic groupings are not mutually exclusive and are best viewed as a scale in that a secondary goal of offensive strategies, for instance, appears to be protecting the responder's face.

Impoliteness has been the subject of several studies examining it in various contexts (see Culpeper & Hardaker 2017, Locher & Larina 2019) including army training (Culpeper 1996), political speeches and campaign debates (Alemi & Latifi 2019, Garcia-Pastor, 2008), workplaces (Mullany 2008, Schnurr et al. 2007), television quiz shows (Culpeper 2005), telephone calls between citizens and police call-takers (Tracy & Tracy 1998), and social media platforms and discourse (Demjén & Hardaker 2016, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Pęzik 2021, Teneketzi 2022, Zidjaly 2019). However, research on the perception of impoliteness and response to it is in its infancy, meaning that comparatively fewer studies have explored the hearers' responses (Farnia & Sheibani 2019, Tajeddin et al. 2015, Xiang et al. 2020).

Schnurr et al. (2007) examined how, through interaction with their subordinates, leaders in two ethnically diverse workplaces in New Zealand construct themselves as effective bosses while they also take heed of the politeness norms of their workplaces. Having carefully analyzed meeting openings and the use of contestive humor, the authors found that what was viewed as appropriate behavior in one organizational context and what was considered polite behavior by group members might be perceived as inappropriate and even impolite by members of another organization. Schnurr et al. concluded that leaders and other organizational members reinforce, maintain, and shape politeness norms by behaving based on the norms developed in their communities of practice. Limberg (2009) investigated verbal threats utilizing a DCT comprising six hypothetical scenarios constructed in a way that the target group could relate to them. The data were obtained from native British sixth-grade students at various high schools in the United Kingdom, who were asked to respond to the threats in every scenario. Limberg found that many responses either complied or failed to comply with the threat. Variable degrees of compliance or non-compliance were observed within each category, but threats uttered by individuals of equal status enjoyed a higher degree of compliance. To explore impoliteness in computer-mediated discourse, Hatipoğlu (2007) examined whether there was a relationship between such factors as national and professional identities, the medium of interaction (i.e., e-mails), and the interpretation of (im)politeness. Hatipoğlu compared whether writers with different cultural backgrounds, while attempting to achieve their goal (i.e., collect conference papers), (dis)obeyed the politeness principles put forth by Brown and Levinson (1987). The findings suggest that doing (im)politeness is an intricate process, which is 'culturally very slippery' (Daly et al. 2004, as cited in Hatipoğlu 2007). Hatipoğlu argued that there is an interface between cultural norms and professional identities and the purpose of interaction, and that various social settings may require different impoliteness principles. Further, when constructing their call for papers for international conferences, Turkish and British writers had to take account of the macro facets, the interactants' relationship to each other, the interactants' relationship to the situation, and the aim to be achieved. In a study of impoliteness strategies used by Iranian and English students in English and Persian Languages, Farnia and Sheibani (2019) elicited responses to different threatening situations and found variations in the use of strategies based on variations in social power in different situations.

Given the above literature, exploring how impoliteness in refusals is perceived by native speakers of English and Persian was the first purpose of the present study. Additionally, the study sought to examine variations in native English speakers' and native Persian speakers' responses to impoliteness. To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1. How do native Persian speakers and native English speakers perceive impoliteness in the production of the refusal speech act?
RQ2. How do native Persian speakers and native English speakers respond to impoliteness in the production of the refusal speech act?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants consisted of 120 native Persian speakers and 90 native English speakers. The minimum and maximum ages of native English and Persian speakers were identical: 17 and 71, respectively. The mean age of the native English speakers was 39.06. The mean age of native Persian speakers was relatively lower, i.e. 26.11. The ratio of males to females was 36 to 54 for native English speakers and 53 to 67 for Persian monolinguals.

The Persian participants came from different educational backgrounds to enhance the validity of the results. They were selected through convenience sampling by contacting friends, colleagues, and others who were willing to participate. To recruit a large number of participants, snowball sampling was used by asking friends and colleagues to recruit future participants from among their acquaintances. The native English speakers, coming from various social and educational backgrounds, were contacted via Facebook and LinkedIn. Since Iran is a Persian-speaking context where native English speakers are few and far between, it was not viable to have many native speakers to administer the discourse completion task (WDCT). A request was, therefore, posted in various groups on Facebook and LinkedIn, asking them to fill out the WDCT.

3.2. Data source

The instrument used to collect the data was a refusal WDCT containing eight different situations, where the participants were asked to imagine that their request or apology had been refused. The speech act of refusal was selected as it violates the addressee's expectations and is thus potentially face-threatening and more likely to bring about impoliteness. Concerted attempts were made to detail each situation in the WDCT in such a way that the respondents could easily understand what each scenario required them to do. Thus, each situation was carefully designed so that the respondents could easily understand what triggered impoliteness to enable them to provide appropriate responses.

Central to the design of the WDCT were the three factors of social distance between speaker and hearer, their relative power, and the size of the imposition. Deliberate attempts were made to ensure that the scenarios captured a variety of situations and roles with different social distances. All three types of power relationships were reflected in the situations: interlocutors with equal power, the addressee having more power, or the addressee having less power than the speaker. As to the rank of the impositions of the requests, each situation was prepared to include one of the high, low, or mid-rank impositions. Also, the degree of social distance between the interlocutors varied across the situations.

The participants were asked to evaluate the degree of impoliteness in the refusals, using a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from *not impolite at all, a little impolite, neither polite nor impolite, somewhat impolite* to *totally impolite*. Next, in a section labeled "*your response to his/her refusal*", the participants were asked to respond to each given refusal as spontaneously as they would in face-to-face interactions. For the native Persian speakers, the same eight situations were translated from English into Persian, paying attention to the subtleties which were lexicogrammatically and culturally important. Below there is an example from situation 5:

Situation 5:
Your father arrives home and sees that you are upset. He notices that you have bumped into his antique vase while cleaning the table and have broken the vase. You apologize to him, but he doesn't accept your apology.
He says: Things don't change back to normal with an apology.
1. Not impolite at all 2. A little impolite 3. Neither polite nor impolite
4. Somewhat impolite 5. Totally impolite
Your response to him: ____

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The WDCT was first administered to several proficient English learners and native English speakers to gain sample refusals. Eight refusals, varying in their degrees of (im)politeness, were selected for the final version of the WDCT. The native Persian speakers were provided with print copies of the WDCT, whereas an online version of the WDCT was prepared for the English speakers on surveymonkey.com, a website particularly designed for creating online surveys and collecting data online. The link to the online WDCT was then posted on two social networking websites, namely Facebook and LinkedIn.

To address the first research question, the overall distribution of the ratings of impoliteness was analyzed based on descriptive statistics, i.e. the mean and standard deviation for the entire WDCT as well as those akin to every situation on the ratings given by both native English and Persian speakers. To address the second research question, however, content analysis was conducted to discover the patterns of the responses to impoliteness by both native English speakers and native Persian speakers. Each response was read and classified based on the literature on im politeness strategies and pragmatic appropriateness criteria such as directness/indirectness, degree of formality of the context, power relationship between interlocutors, and social distance. The framework which informed the content analysis of the responses was the list of output strategies for positive and negative impoliteness developed by Culpeper (1996) and Culpeper et al. (2003). According to Culpeper (1996), for each politeness super-strategy there is, in terms of orientation to face, an opposite impoliteness super-strategy to attack face rather than promoting or supporting it. Below is an outline of impoliteness super-strategies from Culpeper (1996) and Culpeper et al. (2003):

(1) bold on record impoliteness: the FTA is carried out in a clear, unequivocal, concise fashion in situations where face is not irrelevant or minimized;

(2) positive impoliteness: the employment of strategies devised to damage the addressee's positive face wants;

(3) negative impoliteness: the employment of strategies devised to damage the addressee's negative face wants;

(4) sarcasm or mock impoliteness: in order to perform the FTA, politeness strategies are adopted in an evidently insincere way, and thus they remain surface realizations; and

(5) withhold politeness: stay silent or fail to be polite where politeness is required.

To enhance the reliability of the classification of the responses, the two authors compared notes to codify the responses since some of them were not, at first glance, explicit enough to signify a specific strategy.

4. Results

4.1. Perception of impoliteness

Tables 1 and 2 provide descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and standard error for the total WDCT along with those of every single situation on ratings of the degree of refusal (im)politeness given by the two groups of native English speakers and native Persian speakers.

Table 1. **Descriptive statistics of the total WDCT and every situation for native English speakers**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
S1	1	5	1.99	1.090
S2	1	5	4.19	1.121
S3	1	3	1.02	.210
S4	1	5	2.05	1.089
S5	1	5	3.50	1.309
S6	1	5	2.55	1.285
S7	1	5	1.75	1.081
S8	1	5	4.10	1.283
Total	2	4	2.64	.464

The largest differences in the values of the means obtained for native English speakers' ratings, as displayed in Table 1, were observed in situations 2 ($M = 4.19$), 5 ($M = 3.5$), and 8 ($M = 4.10$). This means that the overall ratings fell within the category of "somewhat impolite" on the scale. The refusals in these three situations are as follows:

Situation 2: The boss refuses a request for promotion and says:
I would never dare to ask for a promotion if I were you. I mean you have been here only for 3 years.

Situation 5: The father refuses his son's or daughter's apology and says:
Things don't change back to normal with an apology.

Situation 8: The waiter refuses the customer's apology and says:
Look what you've done! You ruined my shirt!

Based on the standard deviations, it seems that native English speakers' ratings exhibited a wider range of variation in judging the impoliteness degree in situations 2, 5, and 8, suggesting that the participants did not agree greatly on the degree of impoliteness in the refusals in these situations. However, in the other situations which involved politely mitigated refusals, variation in the ratings was comparatively smaller.

As Table 2 displays, the largest means for the ratings of native Persian speakers were observed in situations 2 ($M = 2.71$), 6 ($M = 2.56$), and 8 ($M = 3.15$).

Table 2. **Descriptive statistics of the total WDCT and every single situation for native Persian speakers**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
S1	1	5	1.81	1.015
S2	1	5	2.71	1.203
S3	1	4	1.12	.471
S4	1	5	2.05	1.248
S5	1	5	2.14	1.271
S6	1	5	2.56	1.419
S7	1	5	1.58	1.042
S8	1	5	3.15	1.482
Total	1	4	2.14	.601

Data presented in Table 2 indicate that the ratings of this group fell between the categories of "a little impolite" and "neither polite nor impolite." In other words, native Persian speakers did not consider any of the refusals to contain a high degree of impoliteness.

4.2. Response to impoliteness

The refusals subjected to content analysis were selected based on whether or not the mean for their respective ratings exceeded 3.5 (the mid-point on the Likert scale), that is they were considered to be impolite by the participants and hence strategies were suggested by the participants to respond to them. Accordingly, the native English speakers' responses in situations 2, 5, and 8 were the only ones meeting this condition. However, the means obtained for the native Persian speakers' ratings did not surpass the point in any of the situations, meaning that they considered none of the situations to be "somewhat impolite" or "totally impolite;" as such, they did not suggest any strategies to react to impoliteness.

Five general strategies with varied sub-strategies, outlined below, were unraveled as a result of the content analysis:

(1) Counter defensively
   a. Be assertive; Defend the request
   b. Abrogation of responsibility
   c. Show insincere or surface agreement
   d. Express limited choice
   e. Accept responsibility
      (i) Apologize
      (ii) Acknowledge mistake

(2) Counter offensively
  a. Positive impoliteness strategies
    (i) Use taboo words
    (ii) Be unsympathetic
  b. Negative impoliteness strategies
    (i) Threaten or Frighten
    (ii) Challenge the refuser indirectly (off-record)
    (iii) Challenge the refuser directly (on-record)
    (iv) Use sarcasm to express annoyance
    (v) Block the hearer by leaving the scene
    (vi) Warn the hearer
(3) Counter by combining offensive and defensive strategies
(4) Stay silent, i.e. do not respond
(5) Politeness strategies
  a. Positive politeness strategies
    (i) Attend to the hearer's positive face
    (ii) Offer repair or monetary compensation
    (iii) Express agreement
    (iv) Promise to be careful in future
    (v) Offer help
  b. Negative Politeness strategies
    (i) Admit impingement or minimize impingement by thanking

To elaborate, the native English speakers occasionally employed a combination of offensive and defensive strategies in their responses. A number of the participants used only negative politeness strategies. In other words, they admitted their impingement and tried to minimize it by thanking the refuser. Adoption of such strategies would in turn do more

4.2.1. Impoliteness response strategies in situation 2

In situation 2, those respondents who decided to protect their own face did so by being self-assertive and providing the manager with reasons as to why they felt they deserved a promotion. Some respondents chose to be totally polite and defensively counter the refusal even when they perceived the refusal to be highly impolite. Nevertheless, such a strategy would also indirectly exert a potential and probably unintentional effect, i.e. challenging the refuser's idea that the refusee is not worthy of a promotion. In other words, questioning the refuser's position was the upshot, intentional or otherwise, of the refusee's defending their face and being assertive. The following excerpt from a native English speaker (NES) clarifies this point.

(1) *It's true that I've only been here for 3 years but if you look at my work, you'll know I have completed various key projects this year (say what they are) / I have achieved my budget goals / I have increased profits by X%.* [NES 62]

NES 62, attending first to the refuser's positive face wants, shows agreement with the manager. He then, by offering several reasons, goes on to prove his valuable role to the company, thereby attempting to defend his own face. By doing so, he is also indirectly challenging the manager for only considering the number of years spent at the company. The employee's self-assertiveness to maintain face seems to be an off-record, peripheral attack on the refuser's positive face wants.

Many of the respondents who questioned their interlocutor's position did so without raising a question contrary to Bousfield's (2008) argument that "challenges are always issued in the form of a question" (Ibid: 132). Lachenicht (1980), in his classification of negative face-damaging strategies, subsumed *challenging indirectly* under negative aggravation. The researchers, following Lachenicht, labeled the instances in which the respondents used the challenge strategy without asking a question as *off-record* or *indirect challenge*.

In response (2), NES 52, by recourse to *off-record challenge,* seems to be implicating that the manager (the refuser) is wrong in evaluating her staff's position based only on the years spent at the company. Thus, the response seems to have incorporated criticism as an underlying component.

(2) *I don't think you should measure my value by my time spent at the company.* [NES 52]

Similarly, in response (3), NES 7 apologizes (negative politeness strategy) twice while seeming to be indirectly challenging the manager's judgment by stating that "I feel I'm doing a great job and thought I would contribute more to the company by being in a different role".

(3) *I'm sorry you feel that way but I feel I'm doing a great job and thought I would contribute more to the company by being in a different role. I'm sorry you took offense to it.* [NES 7]

In response 4, the participant indirectly takes issue with the manager (i.e. off-record challenge) and argues that, unlike them, the respondent considers three years to be long enough to allow for an impartial judgment of one's value to the company.

(4) *Three years is a long time to go nowhere.* [NES 36]

Response (4) can be considered a stronger form of off-record challenge as the idiom "go nowhere" seems to be a booster, implying that the respondent deems herself worthy of a salary raise. Having been uttered in the form of a general statement of FTA (a mild criticism), the challenge is off-record.

Similar to NES 38, several other respondents used on-record challenges by posing a direct rhetorical question (see response 5).

(5) *How long would I have to work to get a promotion? And isn't quality better than quantity?* [NES 13]

The response above calls into question the manager's stance that the interlocutor should not have dared to ask for a promotion due to insufficient years of service. This corresponds with Bousfield's (2008) characterization of challenge as involving a challenging question directed at the hearer to "question h's position, stance, beliefs, assumed power, rights, obligations, ethics, etc." (Ibid: 132).

Some respondents expressed surface agreement with the manager and did not pose any challenge whatsoever, suggesting their unwillingness to defend their face regardless of the damage inflicted by the refusal (see response 6).

(6) *Ok. I understand. Thank you for your time.* [NES 26]

In response 6, the respondent first gives the interlocutor (the manager) a gift (i.e. understanding), while trying to make her feel good (a positive politeness strategy) by thanking her. NES 26, in a note under his response, wrote that being deeply offended by the refusal, he would curse at the manager in sheer frustration but only in his head. Despite his resentment about the refusal, presumably, to placate the manager, NES 26 expresses surface agreement rather than saying anything that might agitate the hearer.

The following excerpt (response 7) shows the participants' use of offense.

(7) *What the hell. I quit.* [NES 11]

Here, NES 11 counters the refusal offensively and directly threatens (a negative impoliteness strategy) the manager to leave the company. Aa s mildly offensive phrase, "what the hell", according to Culpeper (2005), is a positive impoliteness strategy.

Attempting to justify the request for promotion to restore one's threatened face was a recurrent pattern in the responses. Response (8) is an illustration of such a strategy.

(8) *I am surprised you would think that, after having had no salary increase in 3 years my pay level does not reflect or allow for inflation and the increase in the price of living. It is a perfectly reasonable request.* [NES 60]

NES 60 points to the living and economic conditions which, in his view, sanctions a salary increase. His last statement, i.e. "it is a perfectly reasonable request", clarifies the respondent's true intention (i.e. defending the request) while intensifying his effort to defend his positive face by using a booster like "perfectly".

4.2.2. Impoliteness response strategies in situation 5

The recipient of an FTA can, in theory, either respond or stay silent (Culpeper et al. 2003). The latter was seldom adopted in response to situation 5. While classifying the response, the researchers put politeness strategies under a separate category. The decision was made based on Culpeper et al.'s (2003) argument that defense strategies predominantly defy a face attack by defending one's own face rather than attending to the h's face wants. Hence defensive strategies are distinct from positive or negative politeness strategies.

In their responses in situation 5, only 11 native English speakers chose to counter the impoliteness offensively by either a direct or an indirect challenge (see response 9).

(9) *Dad, I was cleaning and I made a mistake, are we going to harp on this? You are making me feel like a jackass*. [NES 3]

A couple of superstrategies seem to be at work in response (9). The use of an appropriate identity marker, i.e. a positive politeness strategy, implicates the close social distance between the interlocutors. Although assuming responsibility for his mistake, the respondent, by posing a rhetorical question, directly challenges the refuser (i.e. offensive). Yet, the verb "harp on" carries a negative denotation, suggesting that the refuser is annoying. The refuser continues to criticize the refuser for overreacting. The word 'jackass', a mildly offensive term, is taboo language, thus functioning as a positive impoliteness strategy, indicating the refusee's annoyance. However, the offensive term was never directed at the refuser, most probably because of the refuser's higher power position. Rather, directed at the refusee herself, "jackass" can imply that the refuser is making a big deal out of the incident.

Another defense strategy in the responses was abrogation, which, according to Culpeper et al. (2003), acts to ward off the FTA. Culpeper et al. characterize this defense strategy as "the abrogation of personal responsibility for the action(s) or event that caused the interlocutor to issue a face damaging utterance in the first place" (p. 1565). One example can be seen in response (10).

(10) *It was an accident*. [NES 21]

NES 21 only employs the abrogation strategy to defensively counter the face attack and abdicate responsibility for the mishap by expressing a lack of intent. Yet, given the specific context, it seems socially advisable for the refusee to be sympathetic with the refuser who has lost something valuable. The sole employment of the abrogation strategy might, therefore, represent the impoliteness super-strategy of "withhold politeness," which is defined as "the absence of politeness work where it would be expected" (Culpeper 1996: 357).

NES 55 (see response 11), unlike NES 21, combines the abrogation strategy with two politeness strategies, namely the use of appropriate identity markers (positive) and the expression of regret (negative). The latter, boosted by an intensifier (i.e. really), serves to offer sympathy to the refuser to placate him.

(11) *Dad, it was an accident I'm really sorry.* [NES 55]
(12) *I am sorry, it was an accident! I will try to have it fixed or replaced.* [NES 28]

Similarly, NES 28, in a defensive move in response (12), first apologizes (negative politeness), then uses the abrogation strategy to express a lack of intent, disclaiming responsibility for the unfortunate incident. The respondent, by offering compensation, tries to respect the refuser's positive face.

Response 13 exemplifies the strategy of combining both offensive and defensive strategies. NES 21, in uttering the first sentence, seems to be defending her face by stating that she has already apologized and that she has a limited choice ("there's not much else I can do"). Acknowledging that their strategic groupings are not mutually exclusive, Culpeper et al. (2003) claim that offensive strategies have the secondary objective of defending the responder's face whereas defensive strategies may serve the secondary objective of attacking the instigator of the impoliteness act. In view of this, as the first three utterances in response (13) hint at the refusee's desperation, it could be claimed that it is somewhat offensive too because of the implication that the refuser is overreacting.

(13) *Look, I apologized, there's not much else I can do. It was an accident. Do you want me to pay for it? Or are you going to hold it against me forever?* [NES 21]

The utterance "it was an accident" demonstrates the use of the abrogation strategy to evade responsibility for impoliteness and defend face. The last utterance, a rhetorical question directed at the refuser, seems, given the context, to be indicating that the refusee is taking offense by challenging the refuser. The adverb of time ("forever") seems to imply that the refusee is indirectly criticizing (off-record) the refuser being excessively affronted.

4.2.3. Impoliteness response strategies in situation 8

The strategy of staying silent was never used in response to the refusal in situation 8. Accepting responsibility for the impoliteness and deploying defensive strategies, by contrast, prevailed in the native English speaker data. Responses (14) and (15) are revealing.

(14) *I'm really sorry. It was a stupid accident.* [NES 71]
(15) *I'm really sorry, but it was unintentional.* [NES 36]

NES 71's response to the refusal illustrates how some of the native English speakers rely on defensive strategies to manage the face attack and restore their lost face. In response (15), the respondent first apologizes and then opts to point out that the mishap was only an accident (lack of intent). Note that when accepting the face attack, as Culpeper et al. (2003) maintain, the recipient may acknowledge responsibility for impoliteness issued in the first place. They consider apologizing as a possible alternative open to an impoliteness recipient wishing to assume responsibility, with the caveat that such an option brings about further face damage to the responder (Culpeper et al. 2003). Thus, it can be safely claimed that, presumably to minimize the face damage inflicted by the apology, both NES 71 and NES 36 express lack of intent (defensive).

(16) *May I speak to the manager*? [NES 26]

Response (16) is another instance of an offensive strategy. NES 26 seems to be exploiting a negative impoliteness strategy, namely threaten or frighten the hearer. Given the context and the blunt refusal, the utterance, seemingly a very polite request to have a word with the manager, could also suggest an imminent complaint to the manager about the waiter's abrupt manner. On this account, this request can be viewed as indirectly threatening the refuser.

Response 17 demonstrates how some of the respondents employed positive politeness to attend to the refuser's face. NES 27 accepts responsibility for the mistake by apologizing to the refuser. She then, in what seems to be an attempt to placate the aggrieved party, attends to the waiter's positive face and offers monetary compensation to have the waiter's shirt cleaned.

(17) *I am sorry. I will pay for the cleaning.* [NES 27]

Some respondents tried to calm the aggrieved party with their promise to be more careful in future. On the other hand, none of the respondents addressed the refuser's negative face, preferring instead to attend to the refuser's positive face, i.e. his want for compensation or at least sympathy. Also, nowhere in the data were positive politeness strategies exclusively employed. They were invariably combined with one or more of the above-mentioned strategies.

5. Discussion

The first research question aimed to explore how native English speakers and native Persian speakers perceive impoliteness in the production of refusals. In none of the eight situations, the mean of the ratings exceeded the mid-point of 3.5 for the native Persian speakers, indicating that they did not consider any of the refusals impolite. However, the mean of the native English speakers' ratings for situations 2, 5, and 8 passed the midpoint. The two closely linked cultural schemas of *ta'arof* (ritual politeness) and *ru-dar-bayesti* (feeling of distance-out-of-respect) in the Persian language, seem to best explain the difference in the Persian and English speakers' perceptions of impoliteness in situations 2 and 5. As Sharifian and Tayebi (2017) hold, differences in the social and relational status of interlocutors can give rise to the schema of *ru-dar-bayesti,* imposing an obligation on interactants to show a certain degree of respect and politeness towards individuals with certain roles and positions. The greater the degree of sociocultural distance between interlocutors, the more respect should the person in a higher power position be accorded. Still, *ru-dar-bayesti*, according to Sharifian and Tayebi, can also extend to more intimate relations like that of a father and a son. Sharifian (2011) observed that when they interact with a more socially powerful interlocutor within a formal relationship, Iranians feel more *ru-dar-bayesti* and are more likely to adopt indirect refusal strategies. While practicing *ru-dar-bayesti*, the distance felt by Iranians tends to make them hesitant about performing an FTA (Babai Shishavan & Sharifian 2013). Sharifian and Tayebi (2017) characterize *ru-dar-bayesti* as a state or feeling triggering *ta'arof*, suggesting, as Babai Shishavan and Sharifian showed, a higher degree of *ru-dar-bayesti* leads to a stronger need to practice *ta'arof*.

Situation 2 was carefully designed to represent a formal relationship with a large difference in power relations. Because of the formality of the relationship and the higher position of the refuser (the employer), native Persian speakers were likely to feel more *ru-dar-bayesti*, which could explain why they generally did not consider the employer's blunt refusal highly impolite. Feeling a high degree of *ru-dar-bayesti*, an overwhelming majority of Persian participants avoided impoliteness strategies altogether and instead employed negative politeness strategies in their responses in situation 2. The fact that, rather than an abrupt 'no', the manager provided a reason for the refusal of the promotion could also explain why Persian speakers did not perceive the refusal impolite. This is because, as Sharifian (2011) and Babai Shishavan and Sharifian (2013) put it, for Persian speakers providing reasons and explanations is an effective strategy to mitigate the face-threatening effects of refusals.

In situation 5, the cultural conceptualizations of role schemas, defined as "knowledge structure that people have of specific role positions in cultural group" (Augoustinos & Walker 1995, as cited in Sharifian 2011: 9), could account for why Persian speakers generally did not find the refusal impolite. Cultural conceptualizations, according to Sharifian (2011: 5) "are developed through interactions between the members of a cultural group and enable them to think, more or less, in one mind." Knowledge about obligations and responsibilities between children and their parents is incorporated into the associated role schemas (Ibid). Nishida (1999) held that role schemas encompass "knowledge about social roles which denote sets of behavior that are expected of people in particular social positions" (Ibid: 758). In Iranian culture, parents are deeply revered, and family ties are highly respected. This is, by no means, to imply that English speakers do not respect their parents, but it could be argued that because of their cultural beliefs and religious teachings, Iranian people, compared with Westerners, tend to pay their parents more respect. In other words, because of the Persian speakers' knowledge about their social roles vis-à-vis their parents, most of them did not perceive the father's harsh refusal as impolite. This finding is also in line with Bolivar's (2008) statement that politeness and impoliteness are viewed as social behavior that can be positively or negatively evaluated based on the perceptions of roles and role relations in situations.

While many native English speakers deployed positive impoliteness strategies such as *using taboo words* or *being unsympathetic* with the father (the refuser), none of the native Persian speakers pursued such strategies. However, a small number of Persian respondents perceived the father's refusal to be highly impolite. Sharifian's (2011) argument that cultural conceptualizations are not "static knowledge that is equally shared by the members of a cultural group" (Ibid: 11) and that "members of a cultural group usually possess various degrees of knowledge/awareness of their cultural conceptualizations" (Ibid) can explain why some Persian monolinguals did not share the majority's judgment about the degree of impoliteness in situation 5.

As the findings showed, the native English speakers generally tended to combine strategies rather than employing individual ones in response to the impolite refusals. Bousfield (2008) argues that it is difficult to discuss "the realization of individual impolite output strategies without reference either to other impolite output strategies, or even of the ways of combining strategies for specific effects" (Ibid: 143). Bousfield further offers two sound reasons for this, arguing that individual strategies seldom occur discretely with merely one unequivocal meaning when the context and co-text are taken into account. Second, individual strategies frequently attack or threaten the interactants' both positive and negative face. The combination of different strategies, similar to Bousfield's study, prevailed in the native English speakers' responses. The deployment of an individual strategy in isolation rarely occurred in the data. Moreover, the two response options, i.e. offensive-offensive and offensive-defensive, identified by Culpeper et al. (2003), were observed in the responses elicited from the native English speakers. Culpeper et al. did not witness any clear examples of the offensive-offensive pair because, as their argument goes, traffic wardens "do not in their particular socio-discoursal role have the legitimate power to respond to the impoliteness of car owners with clear, unambiguous impoliteness" (Ibid: 1563). Culpeper et al., therefore, argue that the response options available to participants are limited by the social context wherein the interaction takes place. This can explain why, in the current study, the offensive-offensive option was observed only in response to the refusals perceived by participants to be highly impolite (except for situation 2). The respondents presumably felt they had legitimate higher power to counter the impoliteness of the refusers with impoliteness. Yet, in situation 2, an employee's request for promotion was rather abruptly turned down. The respondents (employees) were in a far lower position compared with their interlocutor (the manager). With the future of their job in the managers' hands, they probably deemed it unwise to counter the manager's abrupt refusal with direct, unambiguous, and clear impoliteness. Most native English speakers thus responded to impoliteness more warily, either using defensive strategies and trying to manage their own face or opting not to say anything and let the impoliteness pass. They decided, for instance, to politely ask the manager for feedback or an appointment to discuss their promotion. Some of the respondents also accepted responsibility for the impoliteness issued in the first place and apologized to the refuser which, in turn, as Culpeper (2005) points out, would result in more damage to their own face.

Mills (2003) argues that, to the participants, "allegations concerning impoliteness are generally indicative of a disparity in the judgment of status, role, or familiarity and thus perhaps a disparity in the participants' evaluation of their position in the particular Community of Practice" (Ibid: 268). Indeed, the content analyses of situations 2 and 8 pointed to an agreement with Mill's perspective. In situation 8, aside from the large social distance between the interlocutors, the refuser (a waiter) was not on an equal social footing with the respondents having a higher power position. The main reason why native English speakers considered the refusal to be highly impolite was that, as mentioned in some of the respondents' side notes, the waiter was there to serve and respect the customer and was not supposed to berate the customer. Second, working in a restaurant, the waiter should expect some occasional spills. However, despite perceiving the refusal in situation 8 as highly impolite, several native English speakers responded defensively or apologized for the incident, meaning that they accepted responsibility for the refuser's impoliteness. This choice of strategy, even when the impolite refuser was in a lower power position, could arise from the participants' perception that countering impoliteness with impoliteness would only aggravate the situation. Thus, to put an end to impoliteness and continue being cooperative in the interaction, they opted to placate the aggrieved party or defend their own face.

Many of the strategies Culpeper (1996) suggested as possible means to convey impoliteness simply did not appear in our data. For instance, only two (i.e. *Use taboo words* and *Be unsympathetic*) of the positive impoliteness strategies predicted by Culpeper were employed by participants. By comparison, negative impoliteness strategies were more widely used by participants, yet there were also some strategies that did not occur in the participants' responses. Moreover, in some cases, we adopted one variant (i.e. *Threaten*) suggested by Bousfield (2008) on the similar strategy of *Frighten* proposed by Culpeper (1996). This was because some responses involved a well-disguised, off-record threat implicating signs of a negative reaction by the respondent to the impolite person. Additionally, following Bousfield's (2008: 127) argument that "where criticism is a component part of another strategy is where the 'Challenge' impolite strategy occurs", all the instances wherein the participants employed a veiled criticism underlying their strategies were subsumed under the strategy of challenge on/off-record.

Culpeper et al. (2003) argue that the recipient of a face attack may accept the face attack by taking responsibility for the impoliteness act by, for instance, apologizing. While this was never observed in their data, in this study, quite a few of the participants opted to apologize for the original request. Further, some others chose to counter the impoliteness act defensively by acknowledging that it was their own mistake to have made the request. Such instances were labeled to acknowledge *mistakes* and regarded as countering face attacks defensively. All the instances wherein participants countered impoliteness by either apologizing or admitting their mistake in making a request were classified under a discrete defensive strategy, namely, *accept responsibility*. Interestingly, participants also used politeness strategies to counter impoliteness. Such strategies were reported neither in Culpeper (1996) nor in Culpeper et al. (2003), which could be because impolite utterances used in the WDCT were not as grave as the impoliteness encountered in Culpeper's studies. Therefore, participants may have sought to diffuse the impolite situations by politeness and attention to the refuser's positive and negative face wants. Employing positive politeness strategies would imply that respondents accept the face attack and try to ameliorate the situation by being polite to the refuser to resolve the conflict.

6. Conclusion

The current study investigated native English speakers' and native Persian speakers' perceptions of and responses to impoliteness in the speech act of refusal. In their perceptions of impoliteness, native Persian speakers displayed a higher impoliteness threshold as none of the eight refusals were evaluated to be highly impolite. Native English speakers' ratings, however, demonstrated that three of the refusals (situations 2, 5, and 8) were highly impolite. The findings show that native English speakers and native Persian speakers adopt different criteria when rating the degree of the impoliteness of a speech act. It seems that native Persian speakers are far less strict in judging the degree of impoliteness as they did not perceive the refusals containing even offensive impoliteness strategies to be highly impolite.

There is evidence to suggest that Persian respondents, in deciding on the impoliteness degree of the refusals, display some sensitivity toward the social power of the refuser. Culpeper et al. (2003) hold that the response options open to participants in an interaction are determined by the social context in which the interaction occurs. The social context includes the socio-discoursal roles the participants assume for themselves. Therefore, it could be concluded that the socio-discoursal roles of the participants in an interaction might also affect their perceptions of (im)politeness. The results also show that the (in)formality of the relationship between the interactants can also bear relevance to native Persian speakers' perceptions of impoliteness. From the findings, it can be concluded that native Persian speakers do not perceive refusals to be highly face-threatening when their relationship with the refuser is of a formal nature. The (in)formality of the relationship between the speakers in certain contexts, however, seems to be less relevant to native English speakers' perceptions of impoliteness.

The study aimed to shed light on the native English speakers' and native Persian speakers' perceptions of impoliteness in the production of refusals. Yet, the complex nature of such a phenomenon as the perception of impoliteness necessitates the careful examination of a range of underlying variables. To this end, investigating the perception of impoliteness in other speech acts and analyzing people's perceptions of the concepts of face and FTAs across other cultures and L1 backgrounds should be undertaken in future research on impoliteness. Also, we drew on WDCT as a data collection source due to the large sample size. In other studies, real-life samples of reaction to impoliteness and its relevant strategies could be investigated.

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Research article / Научная статья

The speech act of compliment in student–teacher interaction: A case study of Emirati university students' attitudes

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Abstract
For effective communication, interlocutors must be cognizant of lingua-cultural aspects in context-dependent situations. Among others, they include culturally and linguistically diverse university settings where students are tempted to complain about grades to teachers and request grade changes. To reduce the negative impact of these speech acts, students may resort to compliments whose utilization varies from culture to culture. This study investigated the attitudes of 146 undergraduate Emirati students towards complimenting an instructor from a different lingua-cultural background before negotiating a grade at a university in the United Arab Emirates that uses English as the medium of instruction. Data were collected using a survey and a discourse completion task. Results show that 49% of the respondents thought that it would be appropriate to use a compliment prior to a complaint about a grade or a request for regrading. Students primarily complimented their teacher's teaching skills and effort in teaching. The syntactic structures of their compliments mainly included You+V+NP (You+Verb+Noun Phrase). Results highlight the significance of considering interlocutors' lingua-cultural backgrounds and the potential impacts of an ulterior motive behind a compliment in deciding whether or not to produce one. If it is used, topics (i.e., what is complimented upon) to include in the compliment must be chosen delicately, considering the cross-cultural nature of the context and social status of the interlocutors.

Key words: *attitude, compliment, compliment topics, Emirati speakers of English, student-teacher interaction*

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Речевой акт «комплимент» в коммуникации между студентом и преподавателем в университетах ОАЭ

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Аннотация
Эффективная коммуникация требует осмысления лингвокультурных аспектов ситуаций, зависящих от контекста. К ним относятся культурно и лингвистически обусловленные ситуации, в которых студенты хотят высказать преподавателю недовольство оценкой и попросить ее исправить. Чтобы снизить негативное воздействие таких речевых актов, студенты могут прибегать к комплиментам, использование которых имеет культурную специфику. В данном исследовании рассматривается отношение 146 студентов бакалавриата университетов ОАЭ к использованию комплиментов перед обсуждением оценки с преподавателем из другой лингвокультуры, когда языком преподавания является английский. Данные были собраны на основе опроса и задания на завершение дискурса. Полученные результаты показывают, что 49% студентов считают полезным использование комплимента перед обсуждением оценки и просьбой о ее изменении. Студенты прежде всего высказывали похвалу умению преподавать и усилиям преподавателя. Синтаксическая структура комплимента по большей части была представлена формулой You+V+NP. Результаты подчеркивают значимость учета лингвокультурных особенностей собеседника и потенциального воздействия скрытых мотивов при принятии решения об использовании комплимента, а также выбора темы с учетом кросс-культурных особенностей ситуации и социального статуса собеседников.
Ключевые слова: отношение, комплимент, тема комплимента, англоговорящие коммуниканты в ОАЭ, взаимодействие между студентом и преподавателем

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1. Introduction

Language is perhaps *the* key tool that allows us to sustain our individual and societal well-being. Yet this vital tool appears to have become so familiar that many of us take it for granted (Bloomfield 2005). This is despite our societies having become more complex than ever, mainly due to increased global mobility, thus requiring us to use language(s) more mindfully.

Considering the English language to be "the dominant language in science" (Gordin 2015), many educational institutions across the globe adopted English as the medium of instruction (EMI). So much so that many primary and secondary schools in the Gulf, where the current study was undertaken, prepare students for EMI at the tertiary level. Over the years, the number of national and international colleges in the region where English is the medium of instruction has risen exponentially. However, there has been much discussion about 'which English' to adopt. This has caused the institutions to use 'a variety of Englishes', a move supporting the notion of 'English as an international language' prompted by arguments against the native English speaker authority as the sole norm provider (Rose & Galloway 2019).

Yet, in contexts where people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact, communication challenges can easily occur. Communication will be more effective if individuals increase their awareness of linguistic (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, phonology, discourse) and pragmatic features (i.e., functions, variations, interactional skills, cultural framework) of the language used for communication and the lingua-cultural backgrounds of the speakers. Communication competence requires speakers to be mindful of how members of their speech communities use language to accomplish their communication purposes (Hymes 1972). That is, a person's competence in a language depends on his/her "knowledge and ability in ways that are both grammatical and socially appropriate" (Bauman & Sherzer 1975: 108). Resonating with this is sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain 1980), an important feature of which is speech acts. Their effective use is essential for successful communication in intercultural contexts (Iliadi & Larina 2017) such as the UAE. Sociolinguistic competence also requires communicators to refrain from producing a speech act when it is considered to be inappropriate. One such speech act, the utilization of which varies largely across cultures and contexts, is compliment.

There is a dearth of studies about speech acts produced by Emirati speakers of English. This is particularly the case in university settings where students' effective engagement in conversations with faculty plays a crucial role in students' successful communication and overall well-being at university. The description of students' attitude towards the complimenting speech act is also important for faculty whose awareness of the students' cultural and linguistic characteristics pertaining to the use of the compliment speech act will help acquire greater tolerance for seemingly 'unconventional' and 'inappropriate' communicative exchanges. Furthermore, it will help identify areas in which students may need support to develop their skills in English as an international language used to communicate with faculty (and students) from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The findings from previous studies with an almost identical body of students also provided the impetus for this study. For example, in one study investigating students' utilization of the complaint speech act, Deveci (2015) found that students faced challenges presenting their case to their teachers for a grade they believed was too low. The students' overall interaction with faculty was evaluated as 'inappropriate.' Similarly, Deveci and Hmida (2017) found Emirati students' use of the request speech act with teachers caused intercultural tensions. Informative as the results of these studies were, further research is needed to understand better Emirati students' attitudes towards the use of speech acts. Although the compliment speech act helps speakers save face, particularly when they need to produce a complaint or a request, it may also lead interlocutors to lose face. Therefore, it is important to identify students' attitudes towards complimenting a teacher when they negotiate a grade, an act they frequently perform that may put both parties in an awkward situation. Accordingly, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. Would Emirati university students feel comfortable enough to speak to their teacher, known to be approachable, about a grade they earned which they think is too low? Why (not)?
2. Do Emirati university students using English think making a compliment to their teacher is appropriate before mentioning the reason for their visit? Why (not)?
3. What are the topics of the compliment speech act sets produced by the students?
4. What are the syntactic structures of the compliments produced by the students?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Speech acts

According to Austin (1962), when we utter a sentence, we perform an action; by saying something, we do something. One of the three kinds of 'acts' Austin identified is 'illocutionary acts'. Examples include stating, warning, requesting, criticizing, and promising. Based on Austin's writing on illocutionary acts, Searle (1965: 62) developed the notion of 'speech acts', which he defines as "the production of the sentence token under certain conditions … and the minimal unit of linguistic communication."

A study of the meaning of sentences is similar to a study of speech acts in that "every meaningful sentence in virtue of its meaning can be used to perform a particular speech act (or range of speech acts)" (Searle 1969: 18). What lies at the heart of speech acts, therefore, is *meaning*. It is the intention that carries meaning in the utterance. Context, too, plays a key role; a particular utterance has a particular meaning under certain conditions (Searle 2002).

While some argue that there are some universal pragmatic principles by which speech acts operate (Austin 1962, Brown & Levinson 1978), many studies illustrate culture-specific features (e.g., Deveci & Midraj 2021, Haugh & Chang 2019, Malyuga & McCarthy 2021, Wierzbicka 2003). Such differing views of speech acts have resulted in much research indicating that cultural aspects play a role. Scholars including Iliadi and Larina (2017) state that a speech act can be a cultural act before a linguistic one. Likewise, Gass (1996) notes that people from different cultures may realize speech acts in diverse ways, which likely causes communication challenges. Wolfson (1989: 180), too, observes, "the repertoire of speech acts for each culture is differently organized."

The foregoing analysis of language use points to the importance of pragmatic and linguistic competence. There is a close link between the two; studies on language learners indicate that pragmatic competence increases in tandem with linguistic competence (Bardovi-Harlig 2012). For example, increased language proficiency positively affects students' utilization of the request speech act by providing an explanation (Rose 2000). However, other researchers found evidence that learners with high proficiency in a university setting might still suffer from pragmatic failure when attempting to utilize certain speech acts (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011). This suggests that linguistic competence may not necessarily predict pragmatic competence. What is necessary for communication to be effective is 'pragmalinguistic competence', which is "the range of linguistic expressions by which language users perform speech acts" (Irague 1996: 53). Research conducted in different contexts has revealed that there may not be a direct link between language proficiency and pragmalinguistic competence. Therefore, learners' awareness of the latter should be enhanced (Takahashi 2005, Yuanmin & Gailin 2017).

2.1 Speech act of compliment

A compliment "explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer" (Holmes 1988a: 446). This indicates that the compliment speech act is "typically produced to make the addressee feel good by saying something nice to him/her, in this way possibly satisfying the addressee's expectations rather than expressing a position judgment for a referential or informative reason" (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989: 75). An example of an explicit (direct) compliment is, "You look great today." An example of an implicit (indirect) compliment is as follows (Holmes 1988b: 486):

> Context: *Recipient's old school friend is visiting and comments on one of the children's manners.*
> Complimenter: *What a polite child!*
> Recipient: *Thank you. We do our best.*

In this case, the compliment indirectly attributes good parenting to the addressee.

Whether a compliment is made directly or indirectly may depend on the context and cultural norms. For instance, Dilek (2020) found that Turkish learners of English tended to use a greater number of indirect compliment strategies during student-student interactions. Chinese speakers, too, have been noted to utilize indirect compliments in daily interactions (Babkina 2020), especially through comparisons that involve likening a person to someone or something the speaker expects the hearer to admire. Boyle (2000) cautions that if the hearer does not recognize the comparison or if he/she is displeased with it, the attempt to constitute a compliment may fail. This could easily occur in conversations between people from different lingua-cultural backgrounds.

While a compliment can oil the wheels of social relations, it also has the potential to threaten a) the hearer's face if he/she feels imposed upon, and b) the complimenter's face if the hearer rejects his/her attempt to establish a closer relationship (Holmes 1988a). These often occur when the compliment is produced with an ulterior motive rather than in a pure spirit of niceness. When perceived as insincere, a compliment can result in "feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, threatened, or under considerable obligation" (Turner & Edgley 1974: 25). A compliment can also threaten the hearer's face if he/she disagrees with the complimenter by violating the maxim of agreement (Taavitsainen & Jucker 2008). Similarly, denying a compliment means 'talking against oneself', which damages the hearer's positive face (self-image) (Brown & Levinson 1987). The hearer's obligation to compliment the interlocutor back can also threaten the hearer's face.

Compliments can also be used as an external modification device to support one's use of the request speech act, which is named as 'a sweetener' (Dendenne 2014). A sweetener may help save the complimenter's face; yet, the complimentee will likely be distressed by the complimenter's ulterior motive. The imposition caused by the compliment may make it harder for the complimentee to decline the request, which also threatens his/her face.

The act of compliment itself is culture and context-dependent. For example, compliments in Western cultures may not be common (Wolfson & Manes 1980). In fact, complimenting in certain situations may be considered inappropriate and, therefore, may not be positively valued. Anecdotal evidence, for example, indicates that a student compliment given to an instructor just before an examination can put the instructor in an awkward situation. On the other hand, the Islamic traditions in Saudi Arabia require politeness, increasing the likelihood of compliments (Alqarni 2020). Yet, without careful consideration of contextual and cultural factors, arbitrary use of compliments is likely to result in interlocutors' feeling of discomfort and failure of communication goals.

Similarly, regarding compliment topics (i.e., what the hearer is complimented upon), there appear to be significant differences between cultures. The Japanese, for instance, tend to avoid personal compliments; however, they may compliment one's residence on formal occasions (Mizutani & Mizutani 1987). The Japanese have also been noted to compliment abilities and achievement (Kim, n.d.). Likewise, the Chinese have been shown to generally compliment performance, whereas Westerners have been found to compliment personal appearance, ability, and possessions (Cheng 2003). In Korea, there is more tendency towards compliments on personality traits (Baek 1998). Similarly, Egyptian Arabic speakers were found to compliment on personality traits (Nelson, El Bakary & Al Batal 1996). We also observe that Emirati students sometimes pay compliments to their teachers. When and how they do this often lead teachers, who typically come from lingua-cultural backgrounds different from those of the students, to question their students' ulterior motive, the influence of their cultural orientation and the linguistic devices they choose to employ. Together, these indicate that awareness of lingua-cultural norms is essential for effective communication across cultures, especially when a person needs to decide whether the compliment speech act is appropriate and, if so, which topics to select or avoid.

The compliment speech act tends to have a restricted syntactic structure and pre-coded lexical items, making them fairly easy to identify. Knapp et al. (cited in Mustapha 2012) describe a compliment as a simple subject-object structured linguistic unit said directly to another person that assesses the person's qualities, actions, or possessions, and it typically does not occur during the final stages of an exchange.

In their study of compliments produced in American English by native speakers, Manes and Wolfson (1981: 121) identified the syntactic features presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. **Syntactic Patterns of Compliments**

	Syntactic pattern	%	Example
1	NP is/looks (really) ADJ	53.6	Your hair looks nice.
2	I (really) like/love NP	16.1	I love your hair.
3	PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP	14.9	This was really a great meal.
4	You V (a) (really) ADJ NP	3.3	You did a good job.
5	You V (NP) (really) ADV	2.7	You really handled that situation well.
6	You have (a) (really) ADJ NP	2.4	You have such beautiful hair.
7	What (a) ADJ NP!	1.6	What a great idea!
8	ADJ NP!	1.6	Nice game!
9	Isn't NP ADJ!	1	Isn't it pretty?
10	*others*	2.8	

The first three patterns accounted for most of the syntactic features. Other researchers, too, found that these syntactic patterns were the most frequent, although the second and third patterns had reverse orders (Strubel-Burgdorf 2018, Rose 2001). Manes and Wolfson (1981) also note that 96% of the compliments included positive adjectives and verbs. Some of the verbs, however, were not "inherently positive but … when used in the correct context, usually with an intensifier such as *really,* [they] function as compliments" (Manes & Wolfson 1981: 118).

Various academic correspondence manuals and guides implicitly endorse using the pattern You+V+N, which is hearer-oriented. For instance, in their recommendations on composing a thank you note, YourDictionary (2018) lists some examples of starting a note. Among the 15 examples provided, ten start with the pronouns 'you' and 'your' while others often use the object pronoun 'you' and 'your'. Similarly, Ceville (2019) recommends expressing gratitude to a professor by providing a specific example of when his/her teaching style helped. A sentence starter for this may be "Your lecture on… ," which exemplifies a hearer-oriented compliment.

2.2. Negotiation of a grade

As “a particular type of social interaction that is assumed to be the most significant for human ‘struggle for survival’ in every society” (Sugawara 2009: 94), negotiation can serve as a tool for helping the speaker perform an illocutionary act in the form of a directive – one that aims at having the hearer do an action to the benefit of the speaker (Austin 1962). The speaker can use various speech acts (e.g., request, complaint, compliment) during a negotiation. Since the speaker cannot reach his/her goal by himself/herself, he/she needs the other party, which renders a negotiation an intertwined process (Schoop 2021); therefore, choosing particular speech acts depends on multiple factors including interlocutors’ social statuses and socio-cultural norms. Also, a good negotiator should be empathic and communicate clearly, appropriately, and convincingly (Ibid), which helps the negotiator meet necessary felicity conditions (Austin 1962).

In the case of students negotiating grades with a teacher, the challenge may be more formidable, especially if the negotiation takes place between parties from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. Students in our context resort to a range of strategies including using particular speech acts. Previous research showed that a lack of socio-cultural pragmatic competence results in students’ use of improper speech acts such as complaint and criticism (Deveci 2015). They often employ speech acts that may be appropriate in their culture but *not* in the culture of their teacher, like compliments. As discussed above, compliments may threaten the teacher’s face when he/she realizes that the student is using them to achieve the desired effect. Even if the compliment were considered a positive move, the wrong choice of compliment topic might produce negative feelings in the teacher who is unaware of the student’s lingua-cultural tendencies.

3. Methods

3.1. Context and Participants

This study was conducted in the UAE, where the English language has a prominent role. Arabic is the national language of the country; however, due to the diverse profile of the population in the country (88.6% being non-nationals) (Gulfmigration.org), the English language is often utilized for general communication (with speakers with different L1s), work and educational purposes. UAE residents typically communicate with people from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, K12 schools give prominence to teaching English to prepare students for successful communication in daily life and for EMI at the tertiary level.

The EMI university where the current study was conducted hosts faculty from various nations with western, Middle Eastern, and Asian backgrounds, while the students are mainly from the UAE. The College of Arts and Sciences, where the authors teach, offers numerous undergraduate courses to provide analytical contexts to the science and engineering-oriented programs. One such course is Introduction to Linguistics, which aims to develop students' knowledge of micro-linguistics (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics), linking these to aspects of macro-linguistics. Students are also taught different ways of data collection for analyzing linguistic data.

One hundred forty-six Emirati students registered in three researchers' sections completed the pre-lesson activity as part of an instructional activity focusing on data collection and analysis. Of these students, 115 were female and 31 were male. The students' ages ranged from 19 to 25 with a mean age of 22. Eighty-five students were seniors, 36 were juniors, and 25 were sophomores.

The students were proficient speakers of English; prior to their university studies, they had attained sufficient scores in international examinations including TOEFL or IELTS. Furthermore, the various courses they took before Introduction to Linguistics is also expected to have enhanced their language skills. Also, due to their socio-economic status, many participants sometimes travelled internationally, which required them to use English for communication purposes with people from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds.

The university, as an institutional academic domain, attests to particular hierarchies that establish the norms for student-teacher interaction, which directly affect the language used during such exchanges. In required first-year English classes at the university, students are guided on how to communicate with people of different hierarchies, particularly with their teachers. Similarly, the faculty handbook provides instruction on communication norms at the university and in the region. Therefore, a reciprocal relationship is expected between students' and faculty's verbal strategies. In addition, faculty are expected to adopt an open-door policy, encouraging students to seek their support when necessary and share feelings and thoughts more easily. Students often take this as an opportunity to visit their teachers to negotiate their grades.

3.2. Data collection tool and analysis

Prior to input sessions on speech acts, students completed an instructor-designed activity comprised of two parts:

A. Demographics: This section collected demographic data such as gender, age, and academic level.

B. The compliment speech act: This section included three sub-sections.

1. To identify if the students would feel comfortable initiating a discussion about a grade disagreement with a welcoming teacher and their particular reasoning, subsection one asked the following:

Imagine you have just received a grade for an assignment you have completed for your *English* class[1]. You are disappointed with your grade and think you deserve

[1] Since the faculty teaching English were non-locals (mainly from western cultures), this suggested the students should imagine they were to talk to an instructor from a different lingua-cultural background from theirs.

a better grade. Your teacher is welcoming and easy to talk to. Would you feel comfortable enough to go and speak to your professor about your grade? Why or Why not?

2. To ascertain students' feelings about making a compliment to a teacher before stating their primary purpose of visit, subsection two asked the students to imagine they *had decided* to talk to their teacher about their grades, and they were now in his/her office. Then, students were asked if, after an initial greeting, complimenting their teacher would be a good way to continue the conversation *before* mentioning the actual reason for their visit. Also, they were asked to explain their reasons.

3. To identify the topics and the syntactic patterns of the compliment speech act produced by the students, the third subsection asked students to complete the discourse completion task (DCT): Now, imagine you have greeted your instructor, and you are speaking to him/her. Write the exact words you would use to compliment him/her.

We obtained data only using a survey and DCT as the task was an in-class pre-lesson activity for which we gained IRB approval retroactively. Although DCTs do not collect naturally occurring data that may often be the ideal, it may not be practical or possible for researchers to collect such data for empirical studies. DCTs are useful when researchers need data that might be difficult to negotiate in real-life situations (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992), as was the case in the current study. In fact, the Emirati context in which we conducted this study does not allow researchers to record people's voices without permission. Even with prior permission, such data would still *not* be considered authentic. It is also important to note that DCTs allow researchers to collect "a [relatively] large amount of data quickly, [to] create an initial classification of semantic formulas, and [to] ascertain the structure" (Beebe & Cumming cited in Cohen 1996: 394).

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and averages were used to analyze the relevant data like demographics and student tendencies (i.e., complimenting & non-complimenting). Qualitative analysis was also adopted to study the students' explanations of the reasons why they would (not) be comfortable talking to the teacher about their grade (Part B subpart 1) and why (not) they would use a compliment (Part B subpart 2). A similar approach was adopted to identify the topics of the compliments produced by the students.

In identifying the compliments, special attention was paid to the credits attributed to the teacher including possession, skills, etc. (Holmes 1988a). In doing so, no distinction was made between explicit and implicit compliments. Note that 41 students (35 females, six males) did not produce a compliment; therefore, 105 responses to the DCT were analyzed in the data set[2]. The syntactic analysis of

[2] Note that 75 students said it was not a good idea to start with a compliment, yet 105 students' DTRs had a compliment. This may be due to the social desirability bias (SDB), i.e., respondents' tendency to give socially desirable responses instead of responses that reflect their true feelings (Grimm 2010), which we consider to be a limitation of the data-collection method adopted in the

the compliment speech act was conducted using the scheme by Manes and Wolfson (1981), keeping in mind structures that might be exclusive to the data set in the current study. Qualitative data were first analyzed by the first and second authors separately to ensure inter-coder reliability. We then held a meeting where we discussed the few divergences until agreements were reached.

4. Results

The first research question asked if students would feel comfortable enough to speak to their English teacher about a grade they earned which they thought was too low. They were asked to explain their reasons. Most students (91%) stated they would feel comfortable. The most common reason was the teacher's welcoming nature (f=120, 60.3%[3]). This, the students often explained, put them at ease about engaging in a dialogue with their teacher. Convinced that they put so much effort into the assignment and deserved a better grade, many students (f=47, 23.6%) felt justified to engage in the conversation. Some (f=5, 2.5%) noted that visiting the teacher would give them the chance to explain their ideas, which the teacher may not have understood. Among the other reasons were the students' willingness to learn from their mistakes (f=15, 7.5%), the possibility of the teacher making a mistake with grading or entering the grade (f=6, 3%), and the students' worry that the grade would affect their GPAs (f=6, 3%).

However, 9% of the students indicated they would not feel comfortable speaking to their teacher about their grades. Five students stated they trusted the teacher's grading. In the words of a student, "The teacher should have a reason to give this grade." Four others said they were too shy to speak up, while others felt unable to explain the issue.

The second research question asked if students thought complimenting their teacher would be appropriate before mentioning the reason for their visit. Results showed that slightly more than half of the students (f=75, 51%) believed making a compliment would *not* be proper. Analysis of the students' responses revealed a variety of themes. Of the 82 responses, 22 (26.8%[4]) were related to the compliment being irrelevant to the task. Sample statements related to this theme include:

(1) *I'm in his office to discuss, not to compliment.*
(2) *He does not need my opinion on him.*

Fifteen of the responses (18.3%) indicated a compliment would be insincere.

(3) *[It is] similar to buttering up.*
(4) [The teacher] *might think compliment is not truthful.*

current study. Also, perhaps another likely reason is the way the question was asked in the DCT as described in Sub 3: "Write the exact words you would use to compliment him/her."

[3] Percentages were calculated from the total number of reasons (119) as some students stated more than one reason.

[4] Percentages were calculated from the total number of reasons (82) as some students stated more than one reason.

This was followed by a compliment being unprofessional, which occurred 12 times (14.6%).

(5) *Relationships with teachers should be kept professional.*

Ten responses (12.2%) indicated that another greeting would be sufficient. For instance, a student stated she would start with small talk. Themes with fewer respondents included that a compliment might be misunderstood by the teacher (f = 7, 8.5%), while inappropriacy and impoliteness were each stated five times (6.1%). Among the other reasons given were "It is not my style" (4.9%), "It shows I want something" (1.2%), and "It might make it more difficult to solve the issue" (1.2%).

On the other hand, almost half of the students (f=71, 49%) thought complimenting the teacher before making their case about their grades would be a good idea. The students often referred to a compliment's role in reducing the potential tension created by the upcoming complaint or the request for the teacher's reconsideration of the grade (88%). Sample responses include, "[The compliment] would relaxed [sic] the tension before we enter the serious conversation," and "Good starts lead to good ends." Another reason given by nine students was related to politeness. Students said things like, "It is an easy way to be kind and spread positivity," "I always start with good words not only because I want something but also I should respect for any one in front me," and "[The compliment] will put a smile on my teacher's face." For three other students, a compliment was a sign of appreciation for the teacher's willingness to see them.

The third research question concerned the topics of the students' compliment speech act sets. A total of 105 participant responses to the DCT were analyzed. Table 2 displays the topics to which students referred.

Table 2. **Topics in Student Compliments**

Topics	**Total**	
	Absolute Frequency (n)	**Relative frequency (%)***
Skills	60	33.1
Effort	47	26
Character/Attitude	28	15.5
Overall course	22	12.2
Appearance	16	8.8
Positive impact	8	4.4
Total	*181*	*100*

*Percentages are calculated from the total number of topics in compliments as some students referred to more than one topic.

Data analysis revealed the compliments focused on six distinct topics. The most prevalent was that of *skills*, which accounted for 33.1% of 181 responses. Among the skills the teacher was complimented on include his/her motivating students, considering student levels, designing creative lessons, and delivering engaging presentations. Another rather frequent topic was complimenting the instructor on his/her *effort*, which occurred 47 times (26%). Sample student responses include, “You did your best to help [us],” and “You put so much effort in teaching us and making us future scientists.”

Less frequent areas of compliment include the teacher’s *character/attitude* and the *overall course.* The former occurred 28 times (15.5%), and fairness was one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of the teacher: "You are fair in grading," and "You always treat students fairly." Among other characteristics were the teacher’s fondness of his/her subject, understanding nature, respect and kindness towards students, and patience with students. Compliments on the overall course, on the other hand, occurred 22 times (12.2%). Example student statements include, “I enjoyed this course. It was amazing” and “Your course is my favorite.”

The least prevalent compliment topics include *appearance* (8.8%) and *positive impact* (4.4%). The students complimented on the teacher’s mood (e.g., happy), clothes (e.g., tie, dress), hairstyle, and beauty in general. On the other hand, eight of the compliments were related to the *positive impact* on the students themselves. The students made statements indicating that they were inspired, their life had become easier thanks to the course, and they had learned things about life.

The final research question aimed to identify the syntactic structures of the compliments produced by the students. Results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. **Syntactic Structures in Student Compliments**

Syntactic structures		**f***	**%***	**f****	**%****
	+ V + NP	27	15.3		
	+ be +ADJ +N	19	10.7	62	35
You	+ be +ADJ	10	5.6		
	+ look + ADJ	6	3.4		
	+ enjoy/love/like + N/NP	28	15.8		
I	+ V + N/NP	20	11.3	59	33.3
	+ be + ADJ	11	6.2		
	+ be + ADJ	11	6.2		
It	+ V +N/NP	4	2.3	17	9.6
	+ V + ADJ	2	1.1		
V (Thank)	+ you +PP	13	7.3	13	7.3
Your + noun	+ be + ADJ	12	6.8	12	6.8
-	ADJ + N	3	1.7	3	1.7
PRO	+ be +ADJ +N/NP	3	1.7	3	1.7
Other		8	4.5	8	4.5
	Total	*177*	*100*	*177*	*100*

*Within the sub-category; ** Out of the total number of compliments (177)

According to Table 3, the most frequently occurring syntactic structure was S+V+ADJ (35%). Within this category, You+V+NP was the most frequent. This points to the students' tendency to be hearer-oriented with their compliments.

(6) *You've made a positive difference in my life.*
(7) *You have a unique style.*

This was followed by You+be+ADJ (+N):

(8) *You are the best.*
(9) *You are a great teacher.*

Infrequent as it was, You+look+ADJ was also used six times:

(10) *You look very beautiful today.*

There were also speaker-oriented compliments (33.3%). A large portion of these included the verbs *enjoy*, *love*, and *like*:

(11) *I enjoy your classes.*
(12) *I love how fond you are of the subject.*

The students' compliments used the verb *to be* as well (6.2%):

(13) *I am so excited in your classes.*
(14) *I am a lucky student to be a part of your class.*

Also, the I-oriented compliments included a variety of other verbs such a *feel*, *appreciate*, and *find* (11.3%):

(15) *I appreciate the way you teach.*
(16) *I've learned a lot from you.*
(17) *I find you the best professor in the university.*

Significantly less frequent were It-oriented syntactic structures (9.6%). Many of these were it+be+ADJ(+N):

(18) *It is an interesting course.*
(19) *It is a nice perfume you are wearing.*

The students also utilized the performed verb *thank* in their compliments (7.3%). The syntactic structure for it was V+you+PP:

(20) *Thank you for your efforts in teaching the course in an interesting way.*

A similar number of compliments included Your+N+be+ADJ (6.8%):

(21) *Your presentations are very engaging.*

The demonstrative pronouns *that* and *this* were used. These included the syntactic structure of PRO+be+ADJ+N/NP (1.7%).

(22) *That is a really nice tie you have on.*

A final category included other syntactical structures such as questions:

(23) *What is your secret?*
(24) *Why [don't] other teachers learn from you?*

There was also a saying:

(25) *As they say, "Great teachers don't just teach you; they change you!*

Also note the use of an Arabic phrase:

(26) *Elhamdulillah [الحمد لله] [Thank God] that you are my teacher.*

5. Discussion

Results showed that over 90% of the students reported being at ease discussing a grading issue with their teacher. This result is likely because of the commiserating nature of the teacher depicted in the task. Indeed, there is evidence from previous research indicating teachers' concern for and acceptance of students creates a positive rapport and encourages positive feelings in students (Kachur et al. cited in Becker 2012), thus supporting students' interaction with the teacher. Similarly, Sabir (2015) found that teachers' welcoming attitude and communication with students in a gentle manner helped establish a good student-teacher relationship. This naturally prevents student anxiety when interacting with the teacher. Important to note, too, is that a few students would not be comfortable in this situation, generally pointing to the trust in the teacher's grading. It is possible that the archetype instructor in the students' mind had established clear grading criteria, and while the students thought that the grading might be low, they trusted the instructor's unbiased application of the rubric. It is also possible that these students come from a more authoritarian educational background, discouraging them from questioning teacher judgment. Many Asian and Middle Eastern cultures have been noted to believe in the notion of 'teacher dignity' according to which students ought to be humble and respect their teachers' authority and conform to their rules and guidance (Li & Du 2013), including respecting their grading. Otherwise, students may come across impolite. Another concern mentioned by the students was that they did not want to risk being misjudged by the instructor. As mentioned above, these point to speech acts' potential to be a cultural act before they are a linguistic one (Iliadi & Larina 2017).

Fifty-one percent of the students believed making a compliment to their teacher would *not* be acceptable before mentioning their reason for their visit commonly stating that it was irrelevant, not sincere and unprofessional. Some students also indicated their worry that they might be misunderstood by the teacher. Taken together, these reasons indicate the students' striving to save face, which is supported by Earley's observation (1997: 62) that "we [do not] always interact for social gain, but the style of interaction is typically regulated by varying degrees of an affiliation motive and a desire for self-definition." Similarly, Larina (2015: 205) observes that "direct communication is socially acceptable and in some situations even preferred." The students in the current study, too, were likely apprehensive about paying a compliment to their teacher to avoid a false self-definition, which may have caused them to prefer direct communication.

Kuzio (2014) states that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer affects the compliment behavior significantly and that the speaker's social status determines his/her language use. Kuzio (2014: 131) also notes that "people of different social status show a discrepancy in their strategies, …and frequency of complimenting." Similarly, Sifianou (1992) notes that a higher-status interlocutor's complimenting a lower-status interlocutor is considered appropriate while the other way around is usually inappropriate. Also, the students in the current study might have abstained from paying a compliment to their teacher due to the high-power distance orientation of the Emirati culture where, according to our observations, a compliment addressed to someone of a higher-status might be face-threatening. On the other hand, in low power distance cultures like the USA, people tend to "demonstrate greater comfort with interacting across social distance," leading to "their more frequent complimenting of those of higher status" (Yue cited in Meier 2010: 84). It has also been noted that in collectivist cultures where high-power distance relationships are common, people tend *not* to use compliments as frequently as they do in individualist cultures where low-power distance is common (Berry & Triandis 2004).

On the other hand, 49% of the students felt a compliment before making a complaint or a request would be appropriate, generally explaining that this would reduce the tension associated with the subsequent complaint/request speech act. This finding may support Dendenne's (2014) observation regarding compliments serving as a sweetener to reduce the impact of a face-threatening act such as a request. Yet, the students' explanations for their responses also reveal their ulterior motive behind their compliments. Although previous research shows that insincere flattery (compliment) still works in some situations (Chan & Sengupta 2010), the teacher's recognition of insincerity (or a hidden agenda) could in fact cause embarrassment, discomfort, and suspicion (Turner & Edgley 1974). The imposition placed upon the teacher to reply to the forthcoming complaint or the request can threaten his/her face. In the case of a teacher from a western culture, for instance, the situation could cause the student to leave a negative impression on the hearer, which is quite contrary to some of the students' expectations that the compliment would leave a good impression on the teacher, which would then increase his/her chances of being listened to. This lends credence to Wolfson and Mane's (1980) argument that complimenting in certain situations may be inappropriate and therefore discouraged. It is, however, also important to note some of the students' remarks that compliments in their culture are a sign of politeness and appreciation for the teacher's willingness to listen to them. It is possible that such an orientation of the students was influenced by their Islamic background, increasing the likelihood of compliments (Alqarni 2020) even in situations involving an interlocutor from a different culture. This, once again, underscores the cultural foundations of speech acts as opposed to their linguistic ones (Iliadi & Larina 2017) and illustrates the kind of misunderstandings that can occur in compliment exchanges in cross-cultural setting (Holmes & Brown 1987).

All the compliments produced by the students were direct, and the two most common topics of the compliments were those related to skills and effort. This finding is similar to results of previous studies conducted on compliments used by 'native" speakers of English (e.g., Manes & Wolfson 1980, Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984). Wallwork (2016) suggests that university students can motivate their teachers to comply with their requests if they appreciate their skills by paying them a compliment. Important to note, however, is that past research found that appearance and/or possessions were more commonly complimented on than skills and efforts in everyday exchanges (Wolfson 1983). Although these compliments were also identified in our study, their frequency was rather low. The power-distance between the complimenter and the complimentee naturally affects the topics of the compliment speech act set. The face-threatening nature of the compliment speech act, just like any other, requires the speaker to consider factors including social distance and degree of power, which in turn affects his/her strategy choices in performing the act (Brown & Levinson 1978). Earlier research showed, for instance, that appearance-related compliments to a higher-status person were rare (Wolfson 1989). In support of this, Linnell (2009) also warns students newly admitted to universities not to compliment the outfit of a teacher who is a higher-status person.

Results revealed that the most frequent syntactic structure of the students' compliments produced You+V+NP – a clear indication of the students' tendency towards hearer-orientedness with their compliments. Manes and Wolfson (1981) also found that this syntactic feature in American English compliments was frequently used. In our study, its frequent occurrence is likely due to the power-distance between the hearer and speaker, which required placing the addressee and his/her attributes in the focus. That is, the focus was the teacher's skills and efforts in teaching. Also, the students' exposure to the types of academic correspondence manuals and guides mentioned earlier (e.g., YourDictonary 2018, Ceville 2019) and other similar types of instructional materials likely have an effect on their preference for particular syntactic structures over others. It is also possible that the students in the current study produced sentences of such syntactic structures on a subconscious level.

6. Recommendations and conclusion

Considering the argument that "as daily interaction – professional, public, mediated, or otherwise – in an ever more globalized world requires finely developed intercultural skills, pragmatic competence and cultural fluency, having a deeper insight into the intricate relationship between language, communication and (ethnic) identity is of critical importance" (Larina, Ozyumenko & Kurtes 2017: 109), this study investigated the compliment speech act in hypothetical communicative exchanges between 146 Arabic-speaking Emirati students and their university professor in an EMI educational setting.

Our findings shed light on the role culture and intercultural communication play in explaining certain types of linguistic behavior. Results clearly indicate that student-teacher communication involving participants from varying backgrounds is impacted by multiple dimensions including linguistic and cultural ones (Iliadi & Larina 2017). We found that the students had mixed attitudes towards using the compliment speech act for an ulterior motive, indicating the use of the compliment speech act in a university setting with people from different lingua-cultural background may cause strains, possibly affecting students' pragmatic and linguistic competences, which leads us to question whether increased language proficiency alone always predicts success in communication (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011). This further points to Wolfson and Mane's (1980) observation that complimenting in a certain situation, such as the one in the current study, may be not be preferable. Yet in the case of the likely uncomfortable and face-threatening situation of a teacher receiving a compliment before a complaint or request, communicators' diverse lingua-cultural characteristics in their EMI setting must be considered and tolerance should be fostered. This is particularly important when scholars' argument that speech acts are not always comparable across cultures (Gass 1996, Wolfson 1989, Wierzbicka 2003) is considered. Faculty awareness of the students' cultural and linguistic characteristics related to the use of this speech act, in particular, and others, in general, may help lead to more tolerance and preparedness for dealing with seemingly 'inappropriate' communicative interactions more effectively. Moreover, it would be beneficial for students to learn about aspects to consider when interacting with professors, especially those from differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds, to ensure acceptable, appropriate, and productive communicative exchanges. This will contribute to students' developing negotiation skills by helping them communicate appropriately and emphatically (Schoop 2021).

Our findings reemphasize the importance of understanding that cultural values are embedded in language and that it makes sense to explain speech acts in the context of specific cultural values. Recent research indeed revealed that "knowledge of cultural values, key words and cultural scripts enables us to observe the systematic interconnectedness of language, culture, cognition and communication, and to see the logic of culture-specific modes of linguistic interaction" (Larina 2020: 436). Therefore, people engaging in communitive exchanges with others from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds may need to be more open to cross-cultural differences so as not to jump to erroneous conclusions about people who behave or use speech acts differently, hence developing better intercultural communication.

While our findings provide insight into an under-investigated area, using a DCT has its limitations as it is not a natural exchange. Therefore, it would be helpful to investigate student/instructor communication in a natural setting or with different instructor qualities. This could provide deeper insights into speech acts in an academic setting. Moreover, it would be useful to investigate gender differences in the use of speech acts, including female student to female instructor, female student to male instructor, male student to female instructor, and male student to male instructor. Also, future studies could investigate the extent to which students employ indirect compliments in exchanges with teachers.

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The meaning of welcome. Positive migration discourse

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Abstract
Human e/migration across the Mediterranean increased significantly in the first part of the 21st century. At the mercy of people smugglers, migrants who succeed in crossing the seas face uncertain futures in Europe. Such immigration is at the heart of political debate in Europe, where right-wing populist parties have made significant gains because of their opposition to it. These parties tend to view human migration as a negative phenomenon, using familiar and by now even clichéd cultural and socio-political arguments against it. This study explores some of these discursive tropes. Rather than following studies that use a critical discourse paradigm, the paper's main aim is to identify positive discourse and practice that might represent models for future behaviour in this context. It focuses on a discussion on recent migration involving Italy and, by applying tools of pragmatic analysis, united to knowledge of the socio-political background, traces some underlying trends in migrant reception. The data analysed were gathered by interviewing an Italian mayor who has attracted hostility from right-wing media for his novel approach to migrants, whose needs are met by finding them a place in the local social context. Findings suggest that, in certain circumstances, the migratory phenomenon may benefit not just the subjects involved but also the places concerned. The study thus foregrounds the degree to which welcoming the cultural other counters social discourses that currently appear triumphant in mainstream media and electoral processes.
Keywords: *Migration, Mimmo Lucano, ideology, discourse pragmatics, social integration, Positive Discourse Analysis*

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Добро пожаловать. Позитивный миграционный дискурс

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Аннотация
С первой половины 21 века наблюдается существенный рост миграции в Средиземноморье. Мигрантов, нелегально попадающих в Европу, ожидает неопределенное будущее. Тема иммиграции находится в центре политических дебатов в Европе, где выступающие против нее правые популистские партии существенно укрепили свои позиции. Эти партии, как правило, трактуют миграцию как негативное явление и, выступая против нее, используют хорошо известные, уже устоявшиеся и даже клишированные культурные и социополитические аргументы. В данном исследовании рассматриваются некоторые из этих дискурсивных тропов. В отличие от исследований, которые используют критический дискурс-анализ (CDA), данная статья нацелена на выявление позитивных дискурсивных практик, которые могли бы выступить как модели для будущих обсуждений этой проблемы. В центре внимания – дискуссия по вопросу о нынешней миграции в Италии. Цель статьи – проследить некоторые новые тенденции в восприятии мигрантов, применяя инструменты прагматического анализа и принимая во внимание социополитический контекст. Проанализированные данные были собраны в ходе интервью с одним из мэров Италии, который вызвал враждебность со стороны правых СМИ из-за своего нового подхода к мигрантам, нацеленного на их вовлечение в местный социальный контекст. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что при определенных обстоятельствах миграция может принести пользу не только вовлеченным в нее субъектам, но и принимающей их стороне. Таким образом, исследование определяет, в какой степени позитивное отношение к другим культурам противостоит социальным дискурсам, доминирующим в настоящее время как в основных средствах массовой информации, так и в избирательных кампаниях.

Ключевые слова: *миграция, Миммо Лукано, идеология, дискурсивная прагматика, социальная интеграция, позитивный дискурс-анализ*

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1. Introduction

Human migration involves processes that ‘simultaneously protect ‘us’ from, and care for, mobile populations’ (Chouliaraki & Musarò 2017). It sets a positive axiological discourse of human solidarity against one which tends to reject all migrants, stigmatising them into an out-group (Oktar 2001). It is often framed in terms of distinguishing migrants from a privileged category – ‘*political refugee, asylum seeker*’ – from others who have less respectability – *‘illegal immigrant, clandestine, stowaway, economic migrant,* etc*’* (Baker et al. 2008, O’Regan & Riordan 2018). In the often chaotic scenarios played out in reception centres such distinctions can be impossible to establish, as arrivals may not have passports or other means of identification, and cultural mediation may not be adequate to the dramatic situations in which migrants arrive on land (Dines, Montagna & Ruggiero 2015). What happens in practice is that all arrivals, when apprehended, become part of variegated reception/detention programmes (Bello 2022), whose complex procedures frequently produce unreliable outcomes. From a bureaucratic perspective, moreover, migration is intrinsically viewed as a 'problem' (Benton-Cohen 2018), because it involves central and local authorities in providing food, shelter, clothing, medical care and a range of other needs, all of which stretch social services that, in the current economic climate, tend to be under-staffed and funded. These factors represent a short term drain on resources, though it has been suggested that the long-term economic effects of immigration could be generally positive (Kerr & Kerr 2011). As we will see in this paper, when migrants are successfully integrated they bring many economic and social benefits (Damelang & Haas 2012).

Critical studies of immigration discourse discuss discrimination, racism and the negative discursive construction of the cultural other. It is quite usual for such studies to view migrants and their activities from a humanist position, to critique processes that dehumanise, even demonise migrants as potential sources of social tension, terrorism and criminality (Alaazi et al. 2021, O'Regan & Riordan 2018, Sohoni & Sohoni 2014, Vollmer & Karakayali 2018); however, it is less common to encounter studies of positive, constructive discourse towards the phenomenon. In the spirit of Positive Discourse Analysis (Martin & Rose 2003, Stibbe 2017). This paper reports interviews with an Italian politician from Calabria, engaged in projects whose aim is the reception of migrants, and the consequent revitalisation of the declining local economy. Pragmatic linguistic analysis is used to identify ideologies and political programmes implicit in discourse, that may indicate alternative approaches to the phenomenon; for example, discourses of human solidarity rather than repudiation.

2. Immigration discourse and sociopolitical context

Migration has occupied a prominent place in mainstream media for many years, beginning in Anglo media after WWII with the Windrush generation from the Caribbean (Peplow 2019). The Windrush experience has remained a potent symbol in Anglo migration debate because, as Peplow (ibid: 4) says, it concerns "Britain's need to explain to itself the growing presence of people previously considered unassimilable within its perceived monoracial white national identity". The ethnic implications of this statement have a wider applicability to other contexts such as those of the USA, France and Austria, for example or, as we shall soon see, Italy.

Though arrivals from Commonwealth countries undoubtedly made a vital contribution to rebuilding Britain's economy after the war, it was not long before the impact of such culturally diverse people produced a reaction that mingled outright racism with more grounded concerns over social issues, employment possibilities, etc. (Kaufmann 2014). A milestone in discursive terms was Enoch Powell's infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech in 1967, the same year that anti-immigration party the National Front was founded. A discourse of welcome and solidarity flourished briefly in 1972, when Ugandan dictator Idi Amin expelled 80,000 Asians, many of whom found homes in Britain. In the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015, many British families welcomed fugitives to their homes (Goździak, Main & Suter 2020). However, following the attacks by Islamic terrorists in Barcelona and Paris in the same year, a counter-discourse of security rapidly emerged (Ponton & Mantello 2018, Goodman & Kirkwood 2019). Fear of migrants became a prominent note in British media discourse, a trope exploited by UKIP during the Brexit debate (Cap 2017), when it was notoriously claimed in a poster that "Europe has failed us" (by not repelling migrants effectively enough). The proposition that it was necessary to "take back control of Britain's borders" was arguably key in producing the Yes vote over Brexit (Mintchev 2021).

In Italy the picture is similar to some extent, though migration has become a site of serious social contestation only comparatively recently. While Italy's position in the central Mediterranean has long made it a magnet for clandestine migration from Africa and the Maghreb countries, numbers have only become uncontrollable in recent times, since the Arab Spring in 2010 and the Syrian crisis of 2015 (Panebianco 2022). Until the 1980's, indeed, the country was characterised by *emigration,* but rising economic trends saw it confirmed as one of the main destinations for migrants by the 2000's (Van Hooren 2010). Opposition to migration rapidly became a familiar trope in far right discourse and that of the mainstream right (Massetti 2015, Bobba & McDonnell 2016, Fernandes-Jesus, Rochira & Mannarini 2022).

Recent trends in Italian politics have seen the assertion of right-wing policies on immigration, and the restrictive policies enacted by Salvini in 2018 when the Ministry of the Interior, which criminalised certain categories of migrant, made successful integration more difficult (Bello 2022). Many first wave migrants carried out low-paid but essential work, mainly in agriculture (farm labour) and small industries, but also in social services as baby-sitters, domestic assistants and carers for the elderly (Van Hooren 2010, Fullin 2016: 392). Many came from European countries such as Albania, Poland, Romania and, in general, such migrants tended to arouse less hostility than those from Africa. As Kaufmann (ibid: 267) underlines: "ethnic change is historically associated with calls for immigration restriction and a general mood of defensive ethnic nationalism".

It appears easier for Moroccan and Egyptian migrants to achieve long-term integration in modern Italy than for those from Sub-Saharan Africa. Fokkema and de Haas (2015: 21) comment: "An obvious factor seems that sub-Saharan migrants are more often confronted with racism and discrimination than North African migrants". Ragone and Avallone (2022) document the diffuse stigmatisation of Senegalese and Moroccan street vendors, during the 80s and 90s, who were known throughout Italy as 'vu cumprà' (lit. 'do you want to buy'), and the application of discriminatory policies that confirmed their status as barely tolerated outsiders. In their words:

> the racist expression 'vu cumprà' crystallises the stereotypical image of some immigrants in a set of defining characters, which associates them with the sequence 'African-black-poor-irregular street vendor'. Historically, in Italy, the presence of foreign street vendors has been a reason not only for social and political conflict, but also for the institutional construction of a troublesome, dangerous, or even enemy figure (Ragone & Avallone ibid: 5)

Such immigrants were marginalised (Angel-Ajani 2000) and featured, from the 90s onwards, in heavily mediated narratives focusing on their status as potential or actual criminals. One flashpoint in Villa Literno saw an immigrant camp burnt down, and a memorable slogan used in a demonstration by residents: "We're not racist, but we don't want blacks here" (Angel-Ajani ibid: 348). This evidence of Italian colour prejudice is repeated by Sniderman et al (2002, in Fullin 2016: 396–397) in a study of stereotypes: "Africans are more likely to be judged by Italians as 'inferior by nature' compared with Eastern European immigrants". The point is further underlined by another citation: "Given that in Italy the native population is almost entirely white, it can be assumed that in Italy the divide that matters is between white and non-white" (Sniderman 2002).

The foregoing discourse-historical socio-political picture (Wodak & Meyer 2001) is necessary background not only to understanding Lucano's story (Lucano & Rizzo 2020, Rinaldis 2016, Lucano & Rizzo 2020, Ranci 2020) but also to explicating meanings in the discourse studied below.

Mimmo Lucano was a left-of-centre mayor in the early 2000s in Riaci, a coastal town in Calabria, Italy's poorest region and in the front line of cross-Mediterranean immigration. His interest in migration began in 1998 as an ordinary citizen, when he assisted in the reception of a wave of Kurdish migrants; successively as mayor, beginning in 2004, he involved diverse groups of African arrivals in government-funded projects, resolving both the migrants' problems and those of Riace itself. The town, like many of its kind in Calabria, was losing its young people to the more prosperous and industrial North, its economic activity in severe decline, social services depleted by lack of manpower and resources, essential structures like schools and hospitals threatened with closure (Felice 2018). By the gradual integration of migrant families these issues were partially resolved, and a spirit of hope brought back to the town (Sasso 2012). Media attention was attracted to the story, and Lucano became famous, coming second in the 2010 global award for "Mayor of the Year" and receiving other marks of national and global recognition.

Plainly, however, these progressive, left-of-centre policies ran counter to the anti-immigration spirit animating Italy's dominant political classes, and funding for the migrant projects was withdrawn. He was accused, in 2017 of a series of offences, including *'favoreggiamento dell'immigrazione clandestina'* (favouring unlawful immigration), and in 2018 was removed from office. His activities were also criticised in Riace and, though re-elected in 2009 and 2015, he suffered harassment from local criminal bands that included an attempted assassination.

The rights and wrongs of Lucano's legal story are beyond the scope of the paper. However, they are relevant to the paper in two senses; firstly, it is necessary for the explication of his discourse to have some understanding of this complex picture. Secondly, in terms of the overall 'positive' social orientation of this paper, we need to understand that what is at stake in the Riace experiment involves not just a discourse of human solidarity and welcome, but also one of individual courage and resistance to political pressure and social opposition.

3. Methodology

Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) may be seen in relation to its better known cousin, Critical Discourse Analysis which, in Van Dijk's words studies how "social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the political context" (van Dijk 2005: 352). As one of PDA's main proponents, James Martin says:

> The approach exemplifies a positive style of discourse analysis that focuses on hope and change, by way of complementing the destructive exposé associated with Critical Discourse Analysis (Martin 1999: abstract)

From this perspective, PDA may be viewed as a complement to CDA, as another form of CDA, another way for the analyst to focus on the relation between society and language, and on the familiar themes of social ills and abuses of power. According to Martin, the starting point is the same for both, since 'hope and change' strongly imply that the discourse involved in PDA will relate to the resolution of some perceived social ill – in the specific case, he is analysing Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. While the study inevitably concerns racism and oppression, it mainly focuses on the protagonist's positive qualities of resilience, determination, moral courage, etc. Inescapably, the analyst's own preferences and ideological positions seem involved in such studies, raising the question of the loss of scientific objectivity:"if critical discourse analysis is an exercise in interpretation, it is invalid as analysis" (Widdowson 1995). There seems no good way around such criticisms, but PDA does suggest a crucial difference in emphasis. As Martin says,

> The lack of positive discourse analysis [...] cripples our understanding of how change happens, for the better, across a range of sites – how feminists re-make gender relations in our world, how indigenous people overcome their colonial heritage, how migrants renovate their new environs and so on. And this hampers design and perhaps even discourages it since analysts would rather tell us how the struggle was undone than how freedom was won (Martin 2004: 182)

By focusing on what from the analyst's perspective are positive social trends, highlighting the role of language in shaping positive social discourses, the analyst may become part of the processes of change they wish to bring about and this, like activism itself, may be empowering. Moreover, a focus on positive attitudes rather than negative may be psychologically more beneficial for the analyst, who may also benefit in a holistic sense from focusing on harmonious, ethically sound or inspiring texts from sources that may not deal with toxic social contexts but may, for example, concern nature or indigenous poetry, traditional values, holistic narratives and the like (Martin 1999: 51–52, Stibbe 2017, Leontovich 2015).

The discourse analysed below comes from an interview conducted with Mimmo Lucano in Riace in August 2022; his words have been transcribed and translated for the paper from Italian into English. Interviews are an ideal situation for gaining insight into the "experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking and acting of the other" (Schostak 2006: 10). In an unstructured, open-ended interview such as this, it is possible to follow up "interesting developments and to let the interviewee elaborate on various issues" (Dörnyei 2007: 136). In such an interview the interviewer "encourages the informant to lead the conversation" (Berg 2006: 68). The interview with Lucano was a rare opportunity to hear the views of a figure whose ideas and ideologies are frequently the subject of obfuscation, parody and mis-interpretation in Italian media. One limitation of this format is that the occasion for second or third interviews, highly desirable for this type of research (Dörnyei, ibid) to follow up areas raised in the first, to clear up confusions and so on, may not arise.

Analysis draws on the methodologies of interactive pragmatics (Levinson 1983, Kecskes 2016, Wilson & Sperber 2015), focusing on the identification of implicit or context-bound meanings, and underlying or implicit ideologies / systems of value (Blommaert & Verschueren 2022). Lucano's communicative style, it will be seen, leaves much to the interlocutor's ability to fill in the gaps; or better, assumes that they will be able to draw on shared knowledge of the context to interpret meanings correctly. For example, consider the points that are potentially unclear in the following fragment (numbered and underlined):

> one of the main objectives (i) was to increase (ii), which was my goal as mayor, the most serious (iii) in the town is the lack of jobs. The reason why they (iv) all leave. Or why everyone left

(uno dei primi obiettivi è stato quello di incrementare, che poi era una aspettativa per me come sindaco, la più forte in città è la mancanza del lavoro. La ragione per la quale tutti vanno via. O erano andate via.)

The preceding co-text (see appendix) in this case does not clarify key meanings. In (i) the main objectives of *what* is unclear (the speaker's mayoral programme/a certain project?, etc.). At (ii) instead of telling us precisely *what* he aimed to increase, he goes off at a tangent. In (iii) he leaves the intended substantive implicit (the most serious problem/issue/task?, etc.). In (iv) the intended referent in the pronoun 'they' is implicit, and in (v) there is no clue to who is meant by 'everyone'. By applying context knowledge of the situation of Riace, a meaning emerges which could be paraphrased as follows:

> *As mayor it was my objective to resolve the most pressing problem in the town, i.e. the lack of jobs. That's the reason why all the young people leave today, and why they left in the past.*

Fragmentary discourse with elision of subjects, changes of tack, apparent digressions or obscurity, repetitions and the taking for granted of shared knowledge, is found in spoken discourse rather than written (Sidnell & Stivers 2013), and it will be seen that Lucano's oral style is rather demanding in this respect. Pragmatic analysis can also attempt to explicate the ideological foundations that underly such speech, yielding results that might appear more or less convincing.[1] The methodology adopted coincides with the approach of Blommaert and Verschueren (2022: 357), who explain that it assumes:

> (i) that the authors, just like any other language user in any other communicative context, are unable to express what they want to communicate in a fully explicit way, (ii) that therefore their texts leave implicit most of the assumptions they expect their readers to share with them, and (iii) that a careful analysis of those implicit assumptions will reveal a common frame of reference or 'ideology'

For example, to consider the same fragment from the angle of problem / solution (Winter 1977), which is a relevant discourse pattern for a politician, and one that certain textual cues in the discourse of Lucano himself suggest:

Table 1. **Lucano: Problem-Solution**

Problem	Solution
There are too few jobs in Riace	Increase the number of jobs
People left Riace in the past, and are still leaving	If jobs are found people will stay

From the axiological perspective, this is arguably suggestive of the speaker's latent sense of *care* and *social responsibility*: it is implied that a mayor, as the 'first citizen' of a town, has a duty of care towards it. If people do not want to live there because of lack of jobs, it becomes his 'responsibility' to attempt to create new jobs. Critically, as we shall see, this trope is a recurrent one, and it features strongly in Lucano's story as a whole, since the crux of the accusations levelled at him relate to his over-enthusiastic policies of social integration, thus to emphasise Riace's human depletion is a defence against this attack.

[1] It should be stressed that it is not possible to invest any findings in this area with anything like scientific certainty. As with other enquiries in discursive pragmatics, what emerges are results that depend on rhetorical rather than absolute processes, since alternatives that account for what one analyst takes to be the speaker's likely meanings are always possible to find, and in this case we are making hypotheses about what attitudes (ideologies) could underlie these so-called likely meanings (Bach 2005).

4. Interview data

This section presents transcripts of three extracts from the interview, with conjectures of the possible conversational implicatures indicated below the text, as in extract one:

Table 2. **Extract One**

TEXT	1	Lucano: There was *this coincidence*, a political vision. You start like that and then the fact
	2	that we are border territories, in the sense that there aren't...the post-project,
	3	there *isn't a post-project* there aren't *opportunities*, in any case we're a land of migration.
	4	And that means that *there's a reason if we leave* because there are no jobs, you
	5	understand?...
IMPLIES	1	'this coincidence' (between migratory phenomenon and human depletion) 'a political vision' (to solve the problem of depletion by integrating migrants)
	3	'there isn't a post-project' (it is not clear long-term what happens to the migrants)
	3	'opportunities' (for long-term work) 'in any case' (justifies the lack of long-term settlement in Riace of migrants, i.e. they leave the area when project funding runs out)
	4	'there's a reason if we leave' (there are no jobs; an implicature immediately disambiguated)

In the immediately preceding co-text, before (1), Lucano had said: "I did three successive mandates and during my time in office immigration in Italy rose significantly."[2] This supports the interpretation that one term in 'this co-incidence' (1) refers to migration. The other term could be suggested by 'the project' (referred to in 2,3). The connection between them could be what Lucano means by the phrase 'a political vision' (1). Given what we know about Lucano's activities, these surmises seem reasonable. In other words, the 'vision' consists in a policy of welcoming migrants to Riace where they will make a contribution to the economy, as well as justify spending on schools, hospitals, social services, etc. His mayorship comes at a time when, in Italy generally, migration is increasing, and Calabria is well-known to be in the front line of this phenomenon. Again, since we also know that Calabria is among the poorest regions of Italy, a region affected by labour shortages and consequent emigration, we have no difficulty in following these inferences. It is less clear why he talks about the 'post-project'. From his use of 'in any case', which functions in conversation to provide justification of why an expected outcome did not materialise, we can infer that long-term integration of the migrants in Riace has not taken place. When 'the project', i.e. centrally funded systems of support for the migrants, finishes, we can infer that the migrants move on since, as Lucano says 'in any case we're a land of migration'. The fact is, there are no permanent jobs to be had in Riace, and this is 'the reason we leave' (4). Thus,

[2] Poi ho fatto 3 legislature consecutive e il percorso durante le mie legislature, l'immigrazione è diventato in Italia molto più consistente

though migrants can be temporarily integrated thanks to the financial support of the project they, like native Italian residents of the town, will have to leave when this ends.

Table 3. **Extract Two**

TEXT	1	Lucano: this not with forethought, with a strategy, but I was noticing that, I was noticing
	2	that in my commitment as mayor, because you know I was dealing with the territory, our
	3	territory and with a bit... and with immigrants coming in. So it was like...like the building
	4	of a little of...*a little global community,* you know?
	5	Interviewer: Yes
	6	Lucano: With all its *related problems*. But I was realizing that.... and that I immediately
	7	had the conviction that from the perspective not of a cooperative or an association
	8	where I'm interested that they square the accounts as they are… as it's also correct that
	9	fiscal subjects do. But I had a *rather collective understanding* of our territory... I had
	10	understood that reception cannot be one-sided, it has to be an *opportunity* for the
	11	people who arrive, but *also for the local people*, because otherwise there is a *disconnect*
	12	*in the social fabric*
IMPLICATURE	4	a little global community (Italians and Africans living and working together)
	6	With all its related problems (these are unspecified)
	8-10	Compares the project communities to co-ops or associations in which it is fundamental that the books balance. The fiscal perspective is not relevant here, rather L. proposes a ‘collective understanding’ of the territory.
	11	An opportunity (from the migrants’ perspective, the possible meanings here are numerous – a new life, escape from persecution, political freedom, prosperity, etc.)
	11	Also for the local people (they also need ‘opportunities’, but how they benefit from migration is not specified)
	12	A disconnect in the social fabric (a united community means one where all groups benefit. The African arrivals are a part of the social fabric).

In the second extract Lucano gives more details of the projects, emphasising that his activities are dictated by his ‘commitment as a mayor’ (2) and the ‘needs of the territory’ (3). By a ‘global community’, we infer that he means one in which Italians and Africans mingle, but it is impossible to do more than speculate on what ‘all its related problems’ might mean, and this example serves to highlight some difficulties in a pragmatic approach to discourse. For example, the problems could be that the Italian citizens are racist and resent the arrivals. Or, it could be that because the arrivals do not speak Italian there are multiple everyday problems of communication. This example is truly ambiguous; it relies on the hearer to supply the likely meaning, but there seems no way of arriving at a certain interpretation without a further question. The analogy advanced in the second part of the extract is also problematic. He makes a comparison between a cooperative or association where books must be balanced (7–8) and the ‘collective understanding’ of the territory (9). That this is intended to be a contrast is evident from the contrastive conjunction ‘but’ (9). We might infer, here, that the contrast is between, for example, a fiscal logic and a looser way of doing things – perhaps a local barter economy, or a more primitive kind of social organisation. Again, given the relative inequality, in material terms, between the Italian citizens and the African migrants, we might take Lucano’s meaning as a recognition that, in such situations, the question of book balancing is an irrelevancy. However, he makes it clear that there must be a balance, of ‘opportunity’, which must be for both arrivals and citizens (11–12). Again, the reference to ‘the social fabric’ (12) makes it clear that the African arrivals are viewed as part of this – in other words, their social integration is given implicit discursive recognition.

Table 3. Extract 3

TEXT	1	Lucano: It loses, politics, when it becomes selective, *it loses its mission*. I can't say this
	2	one deserves to stay that one to go and so instinctively, I was saying “okay”, and why?
	3	We were filling *empty containers*. My municipality didn’t... I as mayor didn’t issue any
	4	building permits on the beaches, because we brought the axis of reference back to
	5	Marina. We said, we have to fill empty containers, not *favour people with*
	6	*cementification*. You have to look at dominance because in the cycle of cement, in the
	7	chain, at the top at the top of the chain is the Mafia, so by bringing back welcoming,
	8	ethics, solidarity...these are interests this is nothing to do with the Mafia. We have a
	9	window of opportunity, a purpose, it becomes collective reasoning that concerns the
	10	community, so we suffer, we suffer the conditioning of the *Mafias*. This
	11	was...welcoming too was a signal, to say that it’s *the cultural value of opposing the*
	12	*Mafias*, the political value, choices in favour of the periphery, bringing the axis back to
	13	the old town centre. For me it was this.
IMPLICATURE	1	it loses its mission (Politics has a mission)
	1-2	I can’t say...etc. (Impossible to discriminate between the cases of individual migrants)
	3	Empty containers (Houses?)
	6	favour people with cementification (Builders often enjoy political favouritism)
	7-9	Migration is a way of combating the Mafia
	11	Mafias (there are more than one Mafia)
	12	the cultural value of opposing the Mafias (Suggests a strategic reason for favouring migration)

In this fragment, the discourse centres more directly on reception and the question of housing. Here more context information is required, to appreciate the treatment of ‘cementification’ and ‘favouring people’. Lucano traces a clear picture of criminality at work in the building sector, placing ‘the Mafia’ at the top (7). The allusion to ‘favouring people’ (6) is probably to the social practise, sadly still current across much of Italy, of corruption where politicians, in return for bribes or other favours, award public construction contracts, concede planning permission, and so on. This social reality is so well-known that it figures as shared information between the speaker and his interlocutor, and in this single reference (6), Lucano treats it as such. He does, however, go into some detail concerning the link between the Mafia/s and the construction industry (5–12). It would appear that, from this extract, the migration projects, by situating migrants in empty town centre houses (12–13), rather than issuing building permits to allow criminals to build new houses, for example on the beaches (4), follow a specific political design (12).

Thus, from these extracts, Lucano's project appears more complex than at first sight appeared. It is not simply a question of helping migrants and in so doing bringing about a measure of social re-generation. Rather, analysis highlights the multi-faceted nature of this political and humanitarian gesture, which engages many levels of local social realities, as well as wider socio-political currents within Italy.

5. Discussion

The level of ideology is proposed in pragmatics as a sub-stratum to discourse, suggestive of a cognitive dimension that underlies verbal communication and consists of habitual ways of thinking and feeling, more or less conscious attitudes to phenomena that may represent deeply-held convictions, and may emerge as transient stances to topics suggested by the ongoing dialogue (Verschueren 2012, Van Dijk 2015). As Harring, Jagers, and Matti (2017) point out, there is considerable overlap between ideology in its political sense and the more general understandings associated with the notion of 'personal values', and it is in this latter sense that the term is used in this paper. For example, in extract 3 line 1 (3.1), Lucano says: "It loses, politics, when it becomes selective, it loses its mission". From this we may infer that, for him, *it is natural and correct for politics to have a mission.*[3] This is not necessarily a given, as in western representative democracies it may be argued that a politician has a role rather than a mission, the latter term referring to the kind of activism found in the case of politicians like Mandela or Thatcher, for example. Moreover, from Lucano's objection to selectivity, we can infer that, for him, the mission of politics relates to the advancement of a *socially inclusive* strategy that does not distinguish between individual cases but treats all alike.

From the third extract, it is plain that an important element of Lucano's system of values relates to the *need to combat criminality*. In the Italian context this means to recognise that the Mafia, which once operated in an underworld of drugs, prostitution, gambling, etc., are currently entwined within Italian political life, investing heavily in key sectors such as the construction industry (Scognamiglio 2018). For a politician to refuse to collaborate with these processes is an act of courage, and in this instance we would tend to view Lucano's ideology in the light of a conviction, a belief in the value of honesty, an idea of *service to the state* as a

[3] The presence of possible ideologies is indicated by italics.

greater entity than its individual members, which forms part of a traditional political ideology that crosses party lines.

Lucano's approach to race shows a humanistic orientation. The migrants are referred to with non-racial language as 'immigrants' (2.3), 'people who arrive' (2.11); significantly, they are represented as part of a 'little community' (2.4) and the 'social fabric' (2.12), which suggests an *inclusive, non-discriminatory attitude* towards them.

Interestingly, Lucano's main priorities in these extracts which, however, the rest of the interview tends to confirm, appear to centre on the socio-economic needs of Riace rather than any wider, global goal such as resolving the refugee crisis, relieving suffering, rescuing African families in need, and so on. Indeed, it would almost seem that his interest in migrants is secondary to his determination to resolve the traditional issues of local joblessness, criminality, corruption and so on that have led to humans leaking away to Northern Italy and destinations abroad. This is shown in extract 1, with its discussion of the reason people leave Riace and have left in the past; in 2. 10–12 where he says that migrant reception needs to be as beneficial for the host community as it is for the arrivals. This is a novel perspective, as it is more usual to consider the benefits from the point of view of the migrants alone – they receive safety from dangerous situations, new economic possibilities, protection from persecution, shelter, health care, and so on, all provided by the host community. Thus, Lucano's emphasis on the benefits to Riace of immigration show him as applying a strategic concept, making use of the phenomenon of migration to stimulate the funding of social services that will serve the Italian community as well. This would align with Lucano's ideology of *service to the community*, his mayoral responsibilities to resolve the problems of Riace that he inherited at the beginning of his mandate, which have been amply discussed, above.

6. Conclusion

From this necessarily brief discussion of a single interview with Mimmo Lucano, it is plain that no overarching ideology or scheme of values can be traced that underlies or unifies these random fragments. As mentioned above, this was not the aim of the paper. What arguably emerges is the sense of a politician who has carried forward a specific policy towards migrants, that of meeting their immediate needs, welcoming them, making them feel part of a community, enabling them to make important contributions to the local context. This last factor is key since it upsets traditional views of migration in which the host country is doing all the giving, to needy Africans who turn up on their doorsteps, draining resources and, in short, constituting a 'problem'. By challenging this dominant narrative, Lucano proposes a new view of migration. This does not make him the figurehead of an idealistic revolution, though neither does it justify the extraordinary opposition to his policies, his demonisation by right-wing politicians and media. What he has done is suggested that, in numerous ways, the arrival of migrants may be of enormous benefit to communities damaged by the processes of capitalism, and this gives his local story a wider, potentially global relevance.

From the perspective of Positive Discourse Analysis, Lucano's story fits the description of Martin (1999: 51–52): 'discourse that inspires, encourages, heartens, discourse we like, that cheers us along'. The usual targets present in CDA studies of migration discourse such as racism, discrimination, marginalisation, etc., do not occur to anything like the same extent in Lucano's discourse, and this presents us, in the end, with different questions. We are left pondering, for example, the internal political factors that lead western governments to oppose such initiatives from local administrations, on the front line of the migratory phenomenon. We might also raise questions about the destruction of peripheral communities by the processes of capitalism, and wonder how credible or sustainable solutions like those of Lucano might be. The question of how far the solutions of Riace to the migration crisis represent possible models of successful integration is also an open one.

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Appendix

Italian transcripts

Extract 1

Lucano: C'è stata questa coincidenza, una visione politica. Si inizia così e poi il fatto che siamo territori limiti, nel senso che non ci sono…il dopo progetto non c'è il dopo progetto non ci sono opportunità tra l'altro siamo terre di migrazione. E vuol dire che c'e un motivo se noi si vanno via per mancanza di lavoro, capito?...

Extract 2

Lucano: E questo io non non con una premeditazione, una strategia, ma mi accorgevo che, mi accorgevo che nel mio impegno da sindaco, perché poi avevo da fare con il territorio, il nostro territorio e con un poco e con gli immigrati che arrivano. Quindi è stato come... Come la costruzione di una piccola di...una piccola comunità globale, capito?

Interviewer: Sì

Lucano: Con tutti i problemi annessi e connessi. Ma però mi accorgevo che... e al cui io ho avuto subito la convinzione che con lo sguardo non di una cooperativa o di un'associazione dove mi interessano, che quadrono i conti come sono, come è giusto anche che fanno i soggetti fiscali. Ma avevo uno sguardo un po collettivo, sul territorio avevo capito che l'accoglienza non può essere unilaterale, deve essere una occasione per le persone che arrivano, ma anche per le persone del luogo, perché sennò c'è una disconnessione tra il tessuto sociale...

Extract 3

Perde, la politica, quando diviene selettiva, perde la sua mission. Non posso dire questo merita di restare, quello merita di andare e quindi istintivamente, dicevo, va bene, perché? Riempivamo i contenitori vuoti il mio comune non ha, io come sindaco non ho rilasciato nessuna concessione edilizia sulle spiagge perché abbiamo ribaltato a Marina l'asse di riferimento, abbiamo detto, dobbiamo riempire i contenitori vuoti, non favorire con le colate di cemento. Ci affianchiamo anche al dominio, perché nel ciclo delle cementificazione, la catena, la parte più alta al vertice della catena c'è la mafia, quindi recuperare l'accoglienza, l'etica, la solidarietà sono degli interessi che non riguardano la mafia. Abbiamo un margine, un ambito, diventa un ragionamento collettivo che riguarda la Comunità, così noi subiamo, noi subiamo come le il condizionamento delle Mafie. Questo è stato anche l'accoglienza è stato un'indicazione per dire che è il valore culturale di opporsi alle mafie, il valore politico, le scelte a favore del del delle periferie, di riportare l'asse nel centro storico. Per me è stato questo.

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A corpus-based approach to corporate communication research

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Abstract
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a decisive reputation tool for companies and as such, a key concept in corporate communication as a phenomenon of intercultural and global significance. This has warranted a comprehensive examination of the language of CSR reports reflecting the principles of the corporate culture. Studies exploring the narratives of CSR reporting currently lack insights into the distribution of meaningful priorities evidenced in language use. This study sets out to explore the linguistic environment of the most frequently occurring language tokens to identify recurrent language patterns used to ensure efficient CSR reporting, and to further establish priority directions in CSR narrative composition evidenced in language use. A corpus-based approach and contextual analysis were adopted to examine CSR reports issued by Microsoft over the last seven years and recognised as an example of best practices in the corporate field. The corpus was compiled using the Prime Machine corpus concordancer tool and comprised 99,176 tokens. Following the study results, the study makes a number of inferences regarding the use of pronouns, "Microsoft + a verb denoting positive action", "more + than," "more + adjective", "Corporate" as part of compound terminological units, as well as a set of key tokens encountered within a descriptive linguistic environment with positive connotation. This, in turn, proved helpful in identifying the hierarchy of priorities distribution revealed in the course of material analysis. The results contribute to a systemic appreciation of corporate language policies facilitating efficient stakeholder communication and can be used in further research investigating related matters of scientific interest.

Keywords: *corporate social responsibility, corporate communication, corporate culture, linguistic environment, contextual analysis, corpus*

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Корпусный подход к исследованию корпоративной коммуникации

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Аннотация
Корпоративная социальная ответственность (КСО) стала действенным инструментом поддержания репутации компаний и одной из из ключевых концепций корпоративной коммуникации. Это привело к необходимости всестороннего изучения языка отчетов КСО, отражающего принципы корпоративной культуры как феномена межкультурной и глобальной значимости. Существующие исследования, рассматривающие тексты отчетов КСО, не дают представления о распределении смысловых приоритетов, проявляющихся в особенностях языкового оформления. В данном исследовании проводится анализ лингвистического окружения наиболее частотных языковых единиц с целью установления повторяющихся языковых моделей, используемых при составлении эффективных отчетов КСО, а также с целью определения приоритетных направлений их текстовой композиции, отражаемых в языке. Корпусный подход и контекстуальный анализ применяются в исследовании отчетов КСО, опубликованных компанией Microsoft за последние семь лет и признанных стандартом качества в корпоративной сфере. Корпус был создан с использованием конкордансера Prime Machine и инкорпорировал 99176 единиц анализа. На основе результатов исследования в работе предлагаются выводы в отношении использования местоимений, конструкций «Microsoft + глагол, обозначающий положительное действие», «more + than», «more + прилагательное», «Corporate» в составе составных терминологических единиц, а также набора ключевых единиц, встречающихся в рамках лингвистического окружения с положительной коннотацией. Это, в свою очередь, позволило идентифицировать иерархию распределения приоритетов, обнаруженную в ходе анализа материала. Полученные результаты способствуют системному осмыслению корпоративной языковой политики, позволяющей поддерживать эффективное коммуникативное взаимодействие с заинтересованными сторонами, и могут быть использованы в дальнейших исследованиях, рассматривающих смежные вопросы как объекты научного интереса.
Ключевые слова: *корпоративная социальная ответственность, корпоративная коммуникация, корпоративная культура, языковое окружение, контекстуальный анализ, корпус*

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1. Introduction

Businesses today must deal with numerous requirements designed to ensure their adequate accountability. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports have recently grown into one of the key instruments of accountability relying on the premise that the focus on profits and sales cannot outshine the companies' crucially essential commitment to comprehend and regulate their impact on the society for the benefit of the latter. While companies may interpret "impact on the society" with a varying degree of substantive appreciation and consistent with their line of activity which may carry specific traits, broadly speaking it all comes down to acknowledging and managing any applicable impact on the environment, health, local communities, employees, and general public welfare. Simply put, the idea behind CSR reporting suggests that businesses are required to make sure and subsequently prove that the negative socially relevant impact is being reduced, while the positive impact is being scaled up.

This study sets out to analyse the language of CSR reports using a corpus-based approach to single out the most efficient language patterns catering for efficient CSR reporting narratives. By looking into the linguistic environment of the most frequently occurring tokens within the compiled corpus, the study intends to address two essential research questions:

1. What predominant language tokens and patterns are used to ensure efficient CSR reporting?
2. Which priority directions in CSR narrative composition are evidenced in language use?

To offer substantiated answers, the study suggests theoretical observations to define the scope of inquiry, as well as empirical evidence, which is explored to set forward a number of relevant conclusions. The findings of this research will hopefully suggest valuable takeaways regarding the linguistic composition of efficient CSR reports which reflect the underlying principles guiding the linguistic manifestation of modern corporate communication and culture.

2. Theoretical background

The fundamental idea behind CSR as a rather recently established corporate practice is inherently rooted in sustainable development as a globally evolved construct. The very notion of sustainable development emerged on the bedrock of three key frameworks of reference – economic, social, and environmental.

The economic frame of reference making up the conceptual substance of sustainable development relies on the theory of sustainable income essentially alluding to the idea of the maximum flow of benefits possible from a given set of assets. The theory envisages the best possible utilisation of limited resources along with the environmentally sensitive technology catering for eco-friendly extraction and processing of raw materials, delivering environmentally sound commodities, waste reduction and management, etc.

The social frame of reference is human-centric and builds on the preservation of enduring social and cultural systems that entails dialling down toxic conflicts for the benefit of the society (Petrosyan & Grishechko 2019). A major plank under this framework is fair division of goods, preservation of cultural capital and diversity, as well as consistent commitment to employ the best practices for sustainable development. Seeing that a human's right to choose from multiple options is being increasingly recognised as a key value, the very concept of sustainable development assumes human participation in the matters that shape up their livelihood, which in turn implies their direct involvement in the processes of decision making, implementation and enforcement (Tamimy et al. 2022).

The environmental frame of reference promotes maintenance of sound and intact natural systems, where the survivability of ecosystems as a basic premise for global biosphere stability is put to the forefront.

The three frames of reference have translated into the concept of the so-called Triple Bottom Line Reporting calling for an all-inclusive and accurate disclosure of financial, social, and environmental information, which has grown to be accepted as the best practice by both public and state agencies worldwide. Finding ways to accommodate these three perspectives within the bounds of specific corporate cultures and specific corporate communication practices adopted at individual companies can pose a challenge, for the three bedrocks of sustainable development making up the core of CSR reporting need to be handled in a balanced manner (Malyuga & McCarthy 2021). Whatever mechanisms are engaged in making the three perspectives interplay with one another is of chief concern for those involved in report compilation. Thus, disclosing the nature of the reciprocity of economic and social strands may be linked to attaining intergenerational justice (as in, in relation to allocation of earnings) or offering targeted support to the poor. The mechanisms behind the co-dependent economic and environmental outcomes will certainly have to do with the fair assessment of external environmental impacts and a due account of their budgetary implications. Finally, the interplay of social and environmental perspectives may call for a thorough disclosure of a myriad of issues having to do with respecting the rights of future generations and citizens' entitlement to weigh in on the decisions made (Popova 2018).

Fairly obviously, a company opting to disclose social responsibility information alongside their standard annual performance reports – and managing to do it right – will most probably manage to harvest additional support from stakeholders and the general public, which is understandably the ultimate goal for corporations engaged in any and all kinds of operations. Research suggests that the merits of CSR reporting are three-fold. First, this is a highly effective way to mould a holistic and consolidated image of a company. Second, disclosing this kind of data contributes to better market performance. And third, by offering non-financial reporting companies can manage the growing public demand for corporate transparency (Romanova & Smirnova 2019).

Thus, a CSR report can be defined as an instrument for informing stakeholders, workforce, affiliates, and communities about the manner and pace of delivering on the company objectives and plans related to economic resilience, social welfare and environmental stability. Interestingly, an older definition interpreted CSR as applying across "the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time" Carroll (1979: 500), thus leaving out – or at least not stressing specifically – any references to the environmental dimension of CSR, which has by now taken on a much more prominent role.

The structural-thematic composition of a CSR report, the procedures for its preparation and circulation, as well as the modalities for target audience feedback appraisal may vary depending on the specifics of company activity and the social communication strategies put in place. The overreaching goal, however, always presumes providing well-consolidated data on social initiatives and communicating these data to all stakeholders involved, including the general public, to uphold the company's image.

In a sense, a CSR report mirrors the functional potential of a promotional tool, as it raises the company's profile as far as the public image is concerned and, even better, has the power to drive the demand for its produce without actually "force feeding" it to the consumer, if handled correctly. Besides, regular social reporting can be useful for the purposes of holding and attracting investors who are much more likely to collaborate and stick around with a corporate partner that values social, economic, and environmental transparency.

Considering the apparent merits associated with CSR reporting, what comes to the fore is the need for an accurate and favourable data presentation, which of course requires certain language strategies to be put in place (Grishechko et al. 2015). Fostering efficient dialogue with the stakeholders and the general public to attain and maintain competitive advantage will require a circumspect approach to the wording of relevant facts, and the various issues associated with the language of CSR reports have naturally been brought up in multidisciplinary research offering a variety of perspectives on the topic.

While available research on the language and narratives of CSR reports is scarcer than that concerned with the more global spheres of marketing, business ethics or sustainability, it has been gaining traction to offer a number of valuable insights. Over the past two decades, some studies have looked into the composition of CSR reports to consider the use of narratives to communicate the firm's financial position (Yuthas et al. 2002, Boginskaya 2022), outline the specific characteristics of CEO-authored sections of CSR reports influencing their ultimate narrative outcome (Nickerson & de Groot 2005), or single out the genres related to CSR reports as a standalone type of corporate documentation bearing its unique narrative traits (Kolk 2008, Yu & Bondi 2019). Generally, the related research tends to go by a textual analysis of CSR reports investigating, for example, metaphors used in communicating with investors to validate their needs (Livesey & Kearins 2002), or the specific language units helping bring certain arguments home to the stakeholders (Ellerup Nielsen & Thomsen 2007, Ivanova & Larina 2022).

Importantly, literature review rather apparently highlights the tendency to pay heed to the national and cultural context, bringing into the focus the discourse, language and structural composition of CSR reports delivered by Indian (Planken et al. 2010), British and Spanish (Breeze & Fernández-Vallejo 2020), Malaysian (Rajandran 2016), Chinese (Yang et al. 2015), Nigerian (Nwagbara & Belal 2019), Korean (Lee & Parpart 2018), Romanian (Danilet & Mihai 2013), Ghanian (Andrews 2019) and other corporate entities manifesting culture-specific traits of social responsibility reporting.

An industry-specific outlook on CSR discourse is also a popular subject of research with studies offering insights into the language and communication strategies adopted in CSR reports within the oil (Jaworska 2018), gas (O'Connor & Gronewold 2013), mining (Talbot & Barbat 2020), energy (Dahl & Fløttum 2019) and other sectors.

What appears to be lacking in the research agenda with respect to the narratives of CSR reporting is the distribution of priorities evidenced in language use. By looking into the most consistently used patterns within the linguistic environment of the frequently occurring tokens, this study shall further on consider the priority directions in narrative composition evidenced in language use.

3. Material and methods

This study considers the case of Microsoft's CSR reports obtained from the company's publicly accessible Reports Hub (Microsoft 2022). The choice of Microsoft as the source of the material is due to its consistent high ranking for CSR reporting recognised as an example of best practices in the corporate field. Being one of the world's top companies, Microsoft has been very proactive in their commitment to pursue the most efficient social responsibility approaches and release their CSR reports following the guidelines put forward by the Global Reporting Initiative. Microsoft has also been placed at the top of the list of Corporate Responsibility Magazine's Best Corporate Citizens (Sehgal et al. 2020). This, coupled with the company's far-reaching stakeholder pool that motivates the executives to keep up with the ever-increasing reporting demands, makes Microsoft one of the most suitable corporate entities in terms of CSR language analysis.

Since Microsoft's official CSR reports record covers the period from 2016 to 2022, a total of the corresponding seven documents spanning the seven-year timespan has been included as research material subject to evaluation. The customised corpus was compiled using the Prime Machine corpus concordancer tool (Jeaco 2017) and comprised 99,176 aggregate tokens. The auxiliary parts of speech were not considered as analysable tokens and were thus disregarded (Figure 1).

All remaining notional parts of speech grouped as per frequency of their occurrence were further contextually analysed using the cluster instrument that displays the content both to the left and to the right of the node in question. The length of both left and right context included in the examples in the Study and Results section is curtailed or extended on an as-needed basis to provide essentially required contextual information in any individual case that displays enough context to grasp the idea behind the narrative. The linguistic environment along with the keyword frequency of occurrence information were assessed to infer the most efficient "go-to" language patterns of Microsoft's CSR reports that contributed to having them recognised as exemplary within the communities of corporate culture. This, in turn, proved helpful in deconstructing the hierarchy of priority topics in the analysed texts.

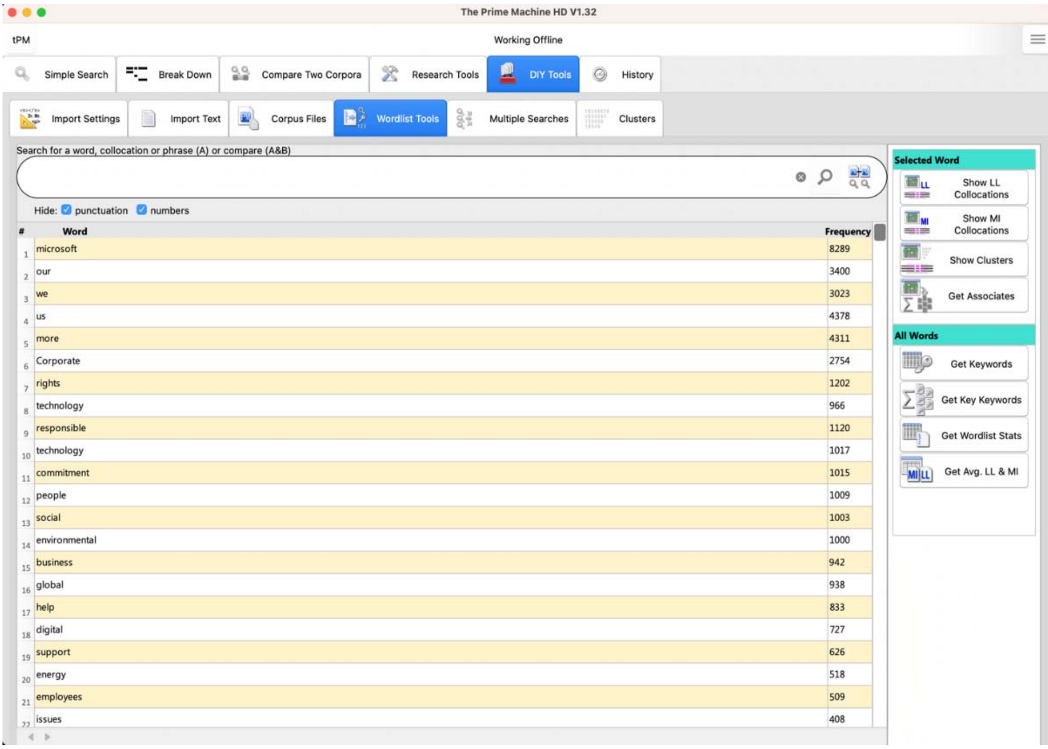

Figure 1. Customised corpus word list

4. Study and results

While the inferences made in this section are grounded on the frequency analysis later on supplemented with the contextual cluster analysis, the immediate results obtained upon corpus compilation called for some pre-emptive clarifications regarding possible groupings of analysable tokens that could be put in place. As shown in Figure 1, the most frequently occurring token encountered in the sample is *Microsoft* tallying at 8,289 total occurrences across the 99,176-token corpus. Although this would logically prompt its priority handling in the analysis as the most commonly occurring unit in the CSR reports considered in this research, proper allowance must be made for the following three tokens rated no. 2, 3 and 4 in the frequency ranking, since they constitute interlinked pronounal elements (*we* personal pronoun plural, *us* personal pronoun plural objective case, *our* possessive pronoun plural). Considering that for the purposes of this analysis these can be contemplated as a unified aggregate, the total occurrences of *Microsoft* amount to a whopping 10,801 instances placing it at the top of the list and making it an incontestable leader.

The following tables incorporate selective examples of the encountered linguistic environment for *our, we* and *us* found in the sample (Tables 1–3).

Table 1. **Examples of linguistic environment for "our" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
empower	*our*	employees
to help stakeholders evaluate how we're meeting	*our*	commitments
to improving the world and building on	*our*	progress
to effect change through	*our*	ecosystem
as part of pursuing	*our*	mission and our commitments
one way to do this is via	*our*	supplier awards program
commitment to sustainable development through	*our*	products and solutions
is grounded in	*our*	philanthropic work
by installing sensors across	*our*	datacenters, we've been able to track water use in real time
protecting the data of both Microsoft and	*our*	customers
our 190,000 employees are the driving force behind	*our*	mission and purpose
employee giving is part of	*our*	culture and how we live our mission
leveraging	*our*	supplier relations to promote greater access to education
through	*our*	inclusive hiring programs
how we determine and understand	*our*	salient and supplemental human rights issues

Table 2. **Examples of linguistic environment for "we" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
to help stakeholders evaluate how	*we*	're meeting our commitments
because	*we*	strive to make the world a better place
which is why	*we*	're evolving our design system to operate in a complex world
get the bigger picture about how	*we*	're equipping individuals for success in an increasingly digital world
here are some examples of how	*we*	're addressing this challenge
that's why	*we*	're empowering governments and partners on a global scale
to explain how	*we*	're expending access and eligibility
to show you how	*we*	have infused a focus on environmental sustainability across our business
To follow through with this,	*we*	have set ourselves ambitious climate goals that we are fully committed to achieving
At Microsoft,	*we*	are accelerating our investments in programs and partnerships that build foundational digital skills
to ensure a level of integrity of which	*we*	are all proud
because	*we*	are also collaborating on joint projects
and	*we*	are helping others to set and achieve their own climate goals
to achieve this	*we*	're donating hotspots and wireless connectivity equipment
At Microsoft,	*we*	're optimistic about the benefits of technology

Table 3. **Examples of linguistic environment for "us" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
protect the data users entrust to	*us*	through strong security and encryption
accessibility-focused innovations allow	*us*	to deliver richer user experiences
it requires	*us*	to be thoughtful about the impact of our own business practices
our cloud growth puts	*us*	squarely on track to reach the goal we set a little over two years ago
our standards of business help	*us*	live our values
there is much more to do and that it will require all of	*us*	working together
The International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) has recognized	*us*	for having the 'second largest number of certified privacy professionals (CIPP) of any company'
which puts	*us*	on a path to meet our carbon goal in 2022
In addition, these groups offer	*us*	the diverse points of view that test and up-level our thinking
principles that guide us over the long term while inspiring	*us*	to take action today
data plays a critical role in helping	*us*	understand and address major social and business challenges
it has enabled	*us*	to track progress, understand year-over-year growth
water is a growing focus for	*us*	, both internally and externally
our tools enable creativity in all of	*us*	and help drive public-sector efficiency and productivity
our purchase of green energy through this program has earned	*us*	recognition from the U.S.

Following on, *Microsoft* has been found to be a runner-up in terms of the frequency of occurrence throughout the sample with one rather visible pattern of use standing out as predominant – namely, *Microsoft + a verb denoting positive action*. While multiple other patterns are also present, they are spread thinly in the sample and are not exactly repetitive. Table 4 below has been compiled to include some illustrative examples of the most recurring pattern incorporating the *Microsoft* token.

The next item in the top-to-bottom frequency list is the token *more* (4,311 occurrences) that was registered as consistently occurring as part of two repeated patterns, namely, *more + than* and *more + adjective*. Having mapped these two recurrent patterns as the most representative for the token in question, the study brought them into the focus with some of the examples of the linguistic environment for *more* provided in Tables 5 and 6 below.

Table 4. **Examples of linguistic environment for "Microsoft" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
to that end,	*Microsoft*	has adopted five principles that will guide our contributions and commitment to trusted data collaborations
To promote transparency,	*Microsoft*	provides a number of disclosures to help stakeholders evaluate our progress
related to anti-corruption, privacy, and security.	*Microsoft*	sparked the creation of the Committee on Supplier Ratings, a new/ collaborative effort designed to help purchasers engage indirect suppliers
to minimize the impact.	*Microsoft*	delivers these solutions for urban sustainability through buildings, infrastructure, and planning
and to adhere to the principles outlined in the Partner Code of Conduct	*Microsoft*	provides all partners with a free, online anti-corruption training course, in multiple languages
let by our departments around the world.	*Microsoft*	has invested in programs that reduce environmental impact across its worldwide business operations
to control their personal data and exercise GDPR privacy rights, which	*Microsoft*	has extended to all of our consumer customers worldwide
continue to ensure strong privacy protections are in place.	*Microsoft*	has advocated for federal privacy legislation in the US since 2005 and continues to push for action
shareholder engagement.	*Microsoft*	strives to create a respectful, rewarding, diverse, and inclusive work
Over the last two years,	*Microsoft*	has increased its indirect supplier response to the CDP Supplier questionnaire nine-fold
Following the program's launch,	*Microsoft*	has screened nearly 100,000 representatives and suppliers to enable Microsoft to monitor the risk profile and drive risk mitigation efforts accordingly
standing up for users' rights.	*Microsoft*	has helped lead our industry in pushing for government surveillance reforms
As part of pursuing our mission and our commitments,	*Microsoft*	has contributed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2015
Through CityNext,	*Microsoft*	and empowers cities and citizens to unlock their potential by delivering innovative digital services that can help them lead safer and healthier lives
Also,	*Microsoft*	earned a cross-company, corporate-level ISO 14001 certification

Table 5. **Examples of linguistic environment for "more + than" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
contracted to protect	*more than*	17,000 acres of land, putting us on a path to exceed our commitment to protect more land than we use by more than 5,000 acres
including a partnership with Grab to help	*more than*	500,000 of its drivers in Indonesia/ and Vietnam complete digital skills training
That's in addition to the	*more than*	$1 billion in technology donations Microsoft provided to NGOs around the world

Table 5, ending

Left context	Token	Right context
will deploy a variety of broadband technologies to cover	*more than*	four million people in the region, including 815,000 people in rural areas currently without access to broadband
Reduced company-wide emissions by	*more than*	9 million metric tons of car-bon-dioxide equivalent
To date,	*more than*	75 countries, 700+ companies, and 400 civil society organizations have signed on to commitments
representing the most extensive machine-readable coronavirus literature collection available for data and text mining to date, with	*more than*	130,000 scholarly articles.
Since 2017, our AI for Earth program has provided	*more than*	than 850 grants to organizations working in 110 countries
In FY17, Microsoft spent	*more than*	$2.6 billion with minority-, disabled-, veteran-, and woman-owned businesses
As part of our 2021 Microsoft Digital Civility Index, we surveyed	*more than*	11,000 teens and adults in 22 countries to increase awareness of online risks and encourage respectful online practices
We're well on our way toward achieving that goal and thus far have provided access to broadband to	*more than*	16.7 million people outside the US, 15.1 million of which live in rural areas
To date,	*more than*	than 43 million people have visited our privacy tools
The number of identified partners in our Black Partner Growth Initiative, designed to support Black tech companies and entrepreneurs, has increased by	*more than*	150%
Microsoft Philanthropies donated	*more than*	$1.2 billion in software and services in fiscal 2017, helping nonprofits around the world get the technology and skills they need for today's digital economy
In fiscal year 2020, Microsoft employees donated $221 million to nonprofits worldwide and volunteered	*more than*	750,000 hours in the US alone

Table 6. **Examples of linguistic environment for "more + adjective" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
As part of our commitment to a	*more*	*sustainable* future, we operate an industry-leading Responsible Sourcing Program
Finally, we continue to build	*more*	*inclusive* and *productive* supply chains beyond Microsoft
to enable	*more*	*secure* and *verifiable* elections with our ElectionGuard software

Table 6, ending

Left context	Token	Right context
Microsoft wants to enable nonprofit, humanitarian organizations and social entrepreneurs to be	*more*	*productive* and *innovative*, and ultimately, to drive greater societal impact
Building on our commitment to create a	*more*	*diverse* Microsoft, we announced our dedication of resources against a range of priorities and initiatives focused on retention, culture, and pipeline expansion pivots
The underlining goal of this research is to encourage people to adopt	*more*	*respectful* online habits and practices
empowering scientists to create	*more*	*effective* strategies to protect and restore ecosystems
working to make clean energy	*more*	*accessible* and *affordable*
enabling a	*more*	*resource-efficient* and *productive* economy
to advance a	*more*	*equitable* world where the benefits of technology are accessible to everyone
build the intelligent cloud platform, and create	*more*	*personal* computing
In 2016, we rebuilt our company-wide accessibility program with a	*more*	*systematic* way to measure progress and set targets. This led to the
As a result, we are	*more*	*agile*, and our customers are better served
Microsoft recently partnered with Agder Energi on a pilot project using technology to make energy distribution	*more*	*responsive*, and manage both end uses and renewable sources more effectively
many of our accessibility-focused innovations and features allow us to deliver	*more*	*flexible* experiences for a wider range of users—not just those with disabilities

With a noticeable drop to 2,754 occurrences, *Corporate* was the next on the list with the results returned showing the token's clearly evidenced predominant use as part of compound terminological units related to company's legal, social, administrative and financial activity. Some of the most representative examples are offered in Table 7 below, displaying *Corporate* capitalised as part of terms and often supplemented with acronyms showcasing the terms' abridged usages as formal references mostly associated with formalistic technical documentation language.

The next table incorporates examples of *rights, responsible, technology, commitment, people, social* represented with a close-to-equal frequency of occurrence in the sample (1,202; 1,120; 1,017; 1,015; 1,009; 1,003; 1,000 occurrences for each of the seven tokens respectively) (see Table 8).

Table 7. **Examples of linguistic environment for "corporate" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
As of October 2016, the content throughout our Microsoft	*Corporate*	Social Responsibility web site contains Standard Disclosures from the GRI's G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines
were used to guide our reporting on	*Corporate*	Social Responsibility efforts
to provide information on our Shareholder Outreach and	*Corporate*	Governance Cycle (CGC)
and freely disclose our	*Corporate*	Governance Fact Sheet (CGFS)
Microsoft's Committee on	*Corporate*	Governance and Ethics (CG&E)
including data related to	*Corporate*	Political Accountability and Disclosure (CPAD)
The Business and	*Corporate*	Responsibility Team (BCR) houses our policy efforts towards meeting our accessibility commitments and privacy
Microsoft Technology and	*Corporate*	Responsibility (TCR) team drives companywide approaches to key social responsibility issues
The committee—composed of senior managers in	*Corporate*	and Legal Affairs (CLA) at Microsoft—then decides which candidates and campaigns MSPAC will support
The Microsoft Philanthropies team and our business ethics and anti-corruption work sit within the	*Corporate*	, External and Legal Affairs (CELA) group
The	*Corporate*	Customer Service and Support (CCSS) group is integrating impact sourcing
The	*Corporate*	Vice-President of Business and Corporate Responsibility reports directly to Microsoft's President and Chief Legal Officer
by deepening our practice of evaluating each	*Corporate*	General Manager on their progress on diversity and inclusion

Table 8. **Examples of linguistic environment for "rights", "responsible", "technology", "commitment", "people", "social" and "environmental" registered in the sample**

Left context	Token	Right context
Microsoft aspires to leadership in business and human	*rights*	, and to serve as a/ catalyst for action by others—in the technology sector and beyond
The Global Compact is the most widely recognized CSR framework for businesses to respect labor	*rights*	, and to ensure environmental protection and combat corruption
We unequivocally support the fundamental	*rights*	of people, from defending democracy to addressing racial injustice and inequity
Microsoft is dedicated to achieving extended,	*responsible*	sourcing strategies
through our products and solutions, our	*responsible*	business practices, our programs, our policy and advocacy work and our philanthropic investments

Table 8, ending

Left context	Token	Right context
Our book, The Future Computed, outlines the future of	*responsible*	AI technology
We must ensure every person has access to the	*technology*	, skills, and opportunity to pursue in-demand jobs in the changing economy
to support change makers through grants, investments of	*technology*	, and expertise to amplify the capabilities of people with disabilities
It's our job to advance	*technology*	, and we believe it should respect and help protect the world's timeless values
This is one of the many ways we demonstrate our	*commitment*	to customer security and privacy
to uphold our	*commitment*	to the transparency of our political spending and/ contributions
gain a more comprehensive understanding of our	*commitment*	to diversity and inclusion
and universal commitment to deliver on ambitious global goals for	*people*	and the planet
which offers great feedback from the community as well as the opportunity to support	*people*	with disabilities in working with technology in this remote set up
to rebuild and reuse devices to help	*people*	and communities around the world embrace sustainable technology
by enabling a broad range of	*social*	opportunities worldwide
We believe technology can be a powerful force for	*social*	good, but we know tech advancement alone won't solve the world's challenges
focused on improving the daily lives, employability, and	*social*	connection of people
to an embrace of a culture that fosters	*environmental*	accountability
Given this complexity, we are focusing our efforts to influence	*environmental*	improvements in the/ extractive industries
in support of human rights, labor, health and safety,	*environmental*	protection, and business ethics

5. Discussion

Following from the results obtained for the linguistic environment of registered tokens of relevance, this study was equipped to make a number of inferences relying on both the frequency and contextual data analysis. The ten tokens of relevance for this research in the order of the frequency of their occurrence in the sample are (1) *our/we/us,* (2) *Microsoft,* (3) *more,* (4) *Corporate,* (5) *rights,* (6) *responsible,* (7) *technology,* (8) *commitment,* (9) *people,* (10) *social*, and (11) *environmental.* To suggest credible implications for the purposes of this research, the linguistic environment was considered with the following key conclusions drawn.

If any language pattern can be characterised as the most evident and clearly discernible in Microsoft's CSR reporting narratives, it is the pattern that aims towards displaying the personal approach, which rather apparently stands out in the overwhelming usage of *our, we* and *us* as references to the company and its representative bodies, agencies, departments, affiliates, and partners involved in the company's business operations at different levels and dimensions of activity. This trend towards personalising corporate entities via consistent deployment of personal/possessive pronouns has been explored in scientific literature and has been proven to serve as a powerful tool of corporate self-representation (see Casan-Pitarch 2016, Puschmann 2010, Wei 2020). This study views the consistent use of personal/possessive pronouns in Microsoft's CSR reporting narratives as a consolidated and very much intended strategy towards reducing the distance between the corporation and the general public, which works towards instilling the general sense of togetherness and creating the 'we-the-people' sensation for the target audience. On a deeper level, in a large number of instances the retrieved examples can be argued to appeal to the reader's sense of empathy, whereby the *us*-related reality is the one that the audience also appears to be a part of.

(1) *"This places* ***us*** *at a historic intersection of opportunity and responsibility to the world around us";*
(2) *"If* ***we*** *continue to live our mission, there is no limit to what* ***we*** *can achieve together";*
(3) *"****We*** *understand that meeting* ***our*** *responsibility to address these challenges and drive opportunity requires a principled approach, principles that guide* ***us*** *over the long term while inspiring* ***us*** *to take action today".*

The *Microsoft* token used overwhelmingly in the *Microsoft + verb denoting positive action* pattern can be argued to testify to a well-calibrated approach to language choice in the company's CSR reporting. The positively connoted linguistic environment clearly works towards creating positively charged perception, where no wrongdoing whatsoever could possibly be associated with the company name. The varied examples of text fragments compiled this way largely engage verbs in Present Simple, Present Continuous and Present Perfect to refer to actions and activities presented as facts, processes or completed performative measures. At that, the Present Continuous form appears to stand out as it is used abundantly to underline the consistently undertaken efforts to do something, thus conveying the idea of a purposeful and longstanding commitment to push towards completing the required goals. This is in line with Koller's (2009) theory suggesting that the focus on continuance has become one of the core policies in brand and corporate communications empowering self-representation grounded in the persistence of invested effort. Below are some of the examples registered in the sample testifying to the above argumentation:

(4) *"Microsoft* ***is investing*** *to help customers manage resources more effectively using big data".*

(5) *“Microsoft* **is working** *to create a trusted, responsible, and inclusive cloud”.*
(6) *“Microsoft* **is** *now* **offering** *its employees family caregiver leave, a new global benefit that will allow workers to take up to four weeks of fully paid leave to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition”.*
(7) *“Microsoft* **is** *always* **looking** *for the best and brightest talent”.*

The list of some of the most frequently encountered verbs denoting positive action registered in the linguistic environment of the *Microsoft* token includes *spark, believe, strive, invest, empower, advocate, support, help, contribute, leverage, uphold, enhance, ensure, encourage, launch, aspire, work, enable, collaborate, fund, engage,* etc.

The next observation somehow derives from the focus on positive perception, as it is rooted in reinforcing the company’s assertive image with the targeted emphasising of its accomplishments that can be both calculated (quantitative assessment) and descriptively ascertained (qualitative assessment). This is implied by the extensive and sustained exploitation of *more* as a token of interest in the sample, most repeatedly used in the patterns *more + than* and *more + adjective*. As has been noticed in the analysis, in many instances the two patterns and their linguistic environment point not just to an accomplishment, but rather an overaccomplishment. This transfers the idea of an exaggerated progress, especially when encountered repeatedly with an insistent accentuation of doing more than expected or even conceivable. This particular pattern adds a sense of triumphalism to Microsoft’s CSR reports, and yet may not come across as too self-aggrandising to the general public because of the copious amount of figures mentioned to substantiate the covert claim for praise. For example:

(8) *“The number of Black-owned businesses added to our supplier pipeline has grown* **more than** *30%”.*
(9) *“Windows 10 is active on* **more than** *500 million devices around the world”.*
(10) *“Microsoft grantees have trained* **more than** *180,000 teachers who will go on to teach computer science around the world”.*

The list of descriptive adjectives accompanying *more* in the sample is quite extensive and bears witness to the committed appreciation of using consistent persuasive language within the corporate language and communication policies adopted for CSR reporting. The list includes but is in no way limited to adjectives such as *equitable, sustainable, inclusive, secure, variable, productive, innovative, trusted, diverse, respectful, accessible, affordable, accurate, resource-efficient, informed, effective, informed, systemic, agile, responsive, secure, flexible,* etc.

The abundant use of the *more + than* and *more + adjective* patterns can be argued to be reflective of one of the principles of CSR reporting mentioned in Zsóka and Vajkai (2018), which is the principle of comparability that requires CSR reports to offer verified information on the previous and current state of affairs – obviously, in terms of the growth perspective. The principle implies that social and ethical account, overhaul and accountability serve as the fundamental measuring points to assess and compare the activity of different corporations and look into the dynamics of their development in the sphere of corporate social responsibility.

As mentioned in Study and Results, *Corporate* was the next token to make the list, and it was this token that posed a particularly interesting case in the framework of this research. *Corporate* is met widely across the sample as evidenced in the data on the frequency of its occurrence, yet it is chiefly registered to be part of a compound term, rather than a descriptive adjective with a linguistic environment that warrants contextual evaluation. This led us to suggest that the high frequency of its occurrence in the sample testifies to the intentional attempts to, in a way, "blur" its actual semantics and dissociate its "loaded" meaning from the company's image painted in the CSR reports. In other words, by using *corporate* in an almost exclusively formulaic context, the texts build a narrative that distances the brand from its corporate background. Not to be repetitive, the study lists some of the most representative examples supporting this argument in Table 7 above.

As Table 8 above has illustrated with a number of examples, the rest of the most frequently used tokens found in the sample correlate with the topics of importance for CSR reports and are used as part of linguistic environment that helps shape effective CSR reporting narratives. Thus, the following intended meanings were correlated with the corresponding tokens:

rights – used to place into focus social entitlement as one of the key prerogatives governing corporate activity and goal setting (e.g., *human rights, fundamental rights, basic rights, cultural rights, privacy rights, users' rights, legal rights, people's rights,* etc.);

responsible – used to lay emphasis on duties and roles both stemming from corporate operations and seemingly outside of corporate activity (e.g., *responsible sourcing, responsible governance, responsible practices, responsible supply chain standards, responsible innovation, responsible decision making,* etc.);

technology – used to showcase core activity as a virtue (e.g., *the power of technology, to advance technology, access to technology, accessibility in technology, benefits of technology, affordable technology, the role of technology, building trust in technology,* etc.);

commitment – used as a promise of dedication and investment of consistent efforts stemming from genuine concern (e.g., *commitment to customer security and privacy, commitment to ethical business practices, carbon neutrality commitment, commitment to respect human rights, commitment to address social injustice, deepening the commitment to diversity and inclusion, remain resolute in our commitment to make a positive impact around the globe,* etc.);

people – used as a recurrent reference to key stakeholders (e.g., *to empower people across the planet, protecting people from digital threats, to improve people's quality of life, talented/young/creative people, to support people, bringing people and organizations together,* etc.);

social – used a recurrent reference to the welfare beneficial to the society (e.g., *social impact, social benefits, social opportunities, to advance social goals, social matters, social psychology, social capital,* etc.).

environmental – used to place into focus the efforts correlated with maintaining sustainable green practices (e.g., *environmental sustainability, environmental impact, environmental accountability, environmental innovation initiatives, environmental protection, environmental data, environmental regulations, environmental challenges, environmental science, environmental footprint,* etc.).

6. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the language of CSR reports using a self-made corpus of Microsoft's social responsibility documentation to ultimately answer two research questions: what predominant language patterns are used to ensure efficient CSR reporting, and which priority directions in CSR narrative composition are evidenced in language use.

The findings relying on the frequency of occurrence of the most recurrent tokens were used to establish and analyse the "go-to" language patterns that included personal/possessive pronouns *us, we, our* referring to the company; *Microsoft + a verb denoting positive action; more + than*; *more + adjective*; *Corporate* as part of compound terminological units, as well as a set of key thematic tokens – *rights, responsible, technology, commitment, people, social, environmental* – carrying descriptive linguistic environment with positive connotation.

The corresponding priority directions in CSR narrative composition evidenced in language use were deduced from contextual analysis and can be summarised as follows: (1) displaying the personal approach, (2) creating positively charged perception of the company, (3) emphasising accomplishments through quantitative and qualitative assessment, (4) distancing the brand from its "loaded" corporate background, (5) placing into focus social entitlement as one of the key prerogatives governing corporate activity and goal setting, (6) laying emphasis on duties and roles both stemming from corporate operations and seemingly outside of corporate activity, (7) showcasing core activity as a virtue, (8) offering a promise of dedication and investment of consistent efforts stemming from genuine concern, (9) maintaining consistent reference to key stakeholders, (10) maintaining recurrent reference to the welfare beneficial to the society, and (11) placing into focus the efforts correlated with maintaining sustainable green practices.

The findings have thus suggested some comprehensive takeaways shedding light on the linguistic composition of efficient CSR reports which reflect the essential principles guiding the linguistic manifestation of the modern corporate culture. Some further research into the issue may include studies on the incremental change in CSR reporting practices, where a year-by-year evaluation of priority shifts might be deduced from the changing focus on different linguistic strategies applied in corporate reporting. Another possible direction of research could involve exploring the issue of precedence (Malyuga & Akopova 2021) to characterise the linguistic strategies and patterns of CSR reports that appeal to familiar notions to attract the audience's attention.

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Research article / Научная статья

Transgressive Russianness: Claiming authenticity in the Russian woman assemblage

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Abstract
The question of sociolinguistic authenticity has been widely researched with reference to authentic linguistic production and authentic language users. Globalization and intense language contacts have brought increased attention to the question of authenticity as it applies to what linguistic and cultural production is considered authentic and what facets of linguistic and cultural production are most salient to authenticity. The study examines the notion of authenticity in relation to the linguistic presentation of Russian womanhood by the Tajik-Russian singer Manizha in her song *Russian woman*. We aim to show how linguistic and cultural transgression underlying her performance prompted contestable interpretations and opened up the evaluative divide among the audience. Using Pennycook's semiotics of transignification (Pennycook 2007), we analyze the performance at different levels (pretextual history, contextual relations, subtextual and intertextual meanings, and post-textual interpretations). We juxtapose the song, the singer's post-performance interviews, and the viewers' online comments in order to reveal the authenticating and deauthenticating discourses of gender and ethnicity. We have identified the opposing conceptions of Russian womanhood in the performance, both of which can be deemed authentic or inauthentic. We argue that authentication and deauthentication of this textual assemblage are driven by different ideologies and often depend on a single textual level or element. Moreover, authenticity may be recontextualized and renegotiated through discourse. The study highlights the co-existence of multiple and competing authenticities within a single multimodal performance and demonstrates how semiotics of transignification may be used to un-cover these competing ideological orientations.

Key words: Russian woman, transgression, gender, ethnicity, authenticity, discourse analysis

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Трансгрессивная русская женственность: дискурсы аутентификации и деаутентификации

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Аннотация
Вопрос социолингвистической аутентичности широко исследовался с точки зрения аутентичности текста и аутентичности говорящего. Глобализация и интенсивные языковые контакты привлекли повышенное внимание к вопросу аутентичности в аспекте того, насколько текст и социокультурный перформанс можно считать аутентичными и какие аспекты перформанса наиболее важны для установления его аутентичности. В статье рассматривается социолингвистическая категория аутентичности применительно к понятию русской женственности. На материале онлайн дебатов вокруг исполнения российско-таджикской певицей Манижей песни Russian woman («Русская женщина») на конкурсе «Евровидение – 2021» раскрываются противоположные концепции русской женственности. Цель работы – продемонстрировать, как языковая и культурная трансгрессия, лежащая в основе выступления, вызвала противоречивую реакцию и раскол в оценках среди зрителей. На основе сопоставления текста песни и интервью певицы, в которых она дает свою интерпретацию конкурсной композиции, а также комментариев зрителей, поддерживающих и критикующих ее, выявляются и описываются аутентифицирующие и деаутентифицирующие дискурсы гендера и этничности применительно к песне, исполнительнице и созданному ею образу. В качестве методологической основы исследования используется семиотика транссигнификации А. Пенникука (Pennycook 2007), в соответствии с которой текст песни и ее исполнение анализируются на разных уровнях: дотекстовая история, контекстуальные отношения, подтекстовые и интертекстуальные значения и посттекстовые интерпретации. Проведенный анализ показал, что аутентификация и деаутентификация текста песни, ее исполнения, визуальной и музыкальной составляющих созданного образа определяются разными идеологиями, при этом определяющую роль может играть отдельный уровень или один текстовый элемент. Более того, аутентичность может быть реконтекстуализирована и обоснована в посттекстовой дискурсивной практике. Исследование выявило сосуществование нескольких конкурирующих аутентичностей в одном мультимодальном представлении и продемонстрировало, как семиотика транссигнификации может использоваться для раскрытия этих конкурирующих идеологических ориентаций.

Ключевые слова: *русская женщина, трансгрессия, гендер, этничность, аутентичность, дискурс анализ*

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1. Introduction

The question of sociolinguistic authenticity has been widely researched with reference to authentic linguistic production and authentic language users (Boucholz 2003, Coupland 2003, Coupland 2014, Johnstone 2014, Heller 2014, Lacoste et al.

2014). Globalization and intense language contacts have brought increased interest to the question of authenticity as it applies to what linguistic and cultural production is considered authentic and what facets of linguistic and cultural production are most salient to authenticity (Terkourafi 2010, Dovchin 2015). This study examines the notion of authenticity in relation to the linguistic presentation of Russian womanhood by the Tajik-Russian singer Manizha in her song *Russian woman* at the 2021 Eurovision song contest.

The national selection for the contest in Russia was marked by highly contestatory interpretations and overall mixed reception. The song *Russian woman* performed by Manizha polarized the viewers and sparked heated social debate over the globalized musical aesthetics, transgressive language and lyrics, but, most importantly, the controversial representation of Russian womanhood. Some socially active groups filed a legal claim that the song is "grossly insulting, humiliates the dignity of Russian women, and violates national harmony in Russia" (Tass 2021). Yet, the song had a considerable number of enthusiastic supporters within and outside of Russia and was nominated for the Eurostory best lyrics award as it "doesn't just describe the strength and march of the Russian woman, but also deals with (subconscious) sexist stereotypes all over the world" (Koning & Soes 2021).

Validation and acceptance of this performance were largely determined by whether it aligned with what the audience perceived as an authentic representation of Russianness and Russian womanhood. The debate illustrated the complexity of ethnic and gender beliefs in present day Russia and proved that the concept of Russian woman may have different interpretations. In this paper, we examine how Manizha presented her *Russian woman* assemblage and negotiated its authenticity in post-performace interviews. We juxtapose it with viewers' comments as they accept or reject her representation and, to an extent, the lyrics and the musicality of the song. Our analysis suggests that authenticity is multifaceted and authentication goes along multiple vectors simultaneously. As a result, authenticity may be granted or denied based on a single level of signification or a single textual element. The paper contributes to the discussion of how authenticity is situationally determined and discursively constructed.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. The sociolinguistic context of the study

Linguistic and cultural landscape in present-day Russia has a combination of discourses inherited from the Soviet times and global discourses[1] introduced into the country after the USSR breakup. Although Western feminist ideas came to

[1] We use the term 'discourse' here in the same sense as N. Fairclough does in his book Language and Globalization: "particular ways of representing aspects of the world (e.g. different political discourses – Liberal, Social-Democratic, Marxist, etc)". (Fairclough 2006:10) This understanding of discourse is widespread (Bila & Ivanova 2020: 223) and refers to different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice.

Russia in the early 1990s and contributed to shaping gender studies as an interdisciplinary academic field, they did not develop into a widespread public debate over women's rights largely due to the Soviet egalitarian policies which explicitly proclaimed and advanced gender equality (Kirilina 2021). By contrast, the traditionalist trend, the "patriarchal renaissance", grew stronger in the 1990s "as a backlash against Soviet models of androgynous worker-women and the blurring of sex roles" (Rand Lyons 2007: 25). Three decades later globalist and traditional concepts of gender coexist in Russia, with globalist trends oftentimes being openly opposed (Kirillina 2021).

Nationality and ethnic identification have also undergone a shift in social perceptions. Nationality has been ousted from the national passport. Post-Soviet censuses in Russia allow for self-reported ethnic identification, with over 190 ethnic groups reported on the 2010 Russian census (Federal State Statistics Service, n.d). The notion of Russianness acquired new nuances. The term *rossiyskiy* replaced the panethnic category of *Soviet* to make a distinction from the word *russkiy*, although both terms are translated into English as *Russian. Russkiy* refers to ethnicity, language, food (as in Russian cuisine), culture (Russian ballet), and traditions (Russian hospitality), while *rossiyskiy* (from Rossiya – Russia) denotes the relationship to the nation-state as in the Russian Federation, Russian citizenship, Russian flag, Russian hymn, Russian sports (education, healthcare), etc. Based on linguistic associative experiments, in layman perceptions *russkiy* and *rossiyskiy* belong to different categories: socio-economic problems, education, science, sports and mass-media are linked to the concept of *rossiyskiy*, whereas culture and arts are perceived as *russkiy* (Alekseeva 2017). Nouns *rossiyanin* (male), *rossiyanka* (female), *rossiyane* (plural) were introduced in the early 1990s as encompassing terms for all ethnic groups living in Russia. Outside Russia, for example in diaspora, the distinction is non-existent and the word *russkiy* denotes all manifestations of Russianness (Zhdanova 2008).

Based on the definition of independent nation-state, ethnicities of the former Soviet Republics are now perceived as foreign, or Other. Since 2014, foreign citizens seeking residence or work permits in Russia have been legally required to demonstrate the knowledge of the Russian language, history and civics (Dolzhikova 2015). The socio-political context of the law relates to the influx of labor migrants from Central Asia with little, if any, knowledge of Russian. Studies of the linguistic landscape of Russian cities highlight the prominent role of English in urban space (Rivlina 2015) and the absence of migrant languages (Baranova & Fedorova 2019).

Russian and English are the dominant languages in the music industry (Aleshinskaya & Gritsenko 2017). Many Russian artists choose English or use Roman script for their stage names and perform in English, Russian, or English-Russian translanguaging. Other ethnic languages, for instance, Georgian and Tatar, are also popular. Since 1994, Russia's entrants at the Eurovision song contest have represented different ethnicities (Bulgarian-born, Ukrainian, Karachay-Cherkessya, Udmurt, Tatar) and sang in different languages, including Russian, English, Ukrainian, Udmurt, and Spanish. However, in neither prior case there was so much social contention over the language of the song, its performance, and the singer's ethnicity. This study describes semiotic resources shaping Manizha's representation of Russian womanhood and attempts to reveal how authentication or rejection of the song is connected to the above discourses of identity (national/ethnic, gendered) and authenticity.

2.2. Theoretical considerations

We ground our analysis of the pop music performance in the following three theoretical concepts: translingual, or transgressive practices, cultural assemblages, and sociolinguistic authenticity as a discursive construct. In the context of increased global population mobility and the global spread of English, popular music artists have embraced translingual practices in their lyrics and performances (Alim et al. 2009, Terkourafi 2010). Linguistic transgression became "a means to convey a cultural message, a means for meaning-making, and a means of gaining fame" (Lumbau Batu & Sukamoto 2020: 308). Defined as the "conduct which breaks the rules or exceeds boundaries" (Jenks 2003: 3), transgression involves "hybridization, the mixing of categories, and the questioning of the boundaries that separate categories" (Jervis 1999: 4). Our analysis will show how linguistic and cultural transgression underlies Manizha's performance and manifests itself at different levels, both linguistic and non-linguistic. This transgression prompted contestable interpretations and opened up the evaluative divide among the audience.

In addition to linguistic features, music performances encompass other heterogeneous elements (tone, costume, staging, etc.) and call for a more integrated semiotic analysis. The idea of semiotic assemblages brings up "the dynamic relations among objects, places and linguistic resources" (Pennycook 2017: 12). Pennycook suggests that language plays a mediation role in the vitality of many assemblages, however, the goal of the analysis is not to identify the linguistic patterns or name these assemblages but to understand which material and semiotic resources intersect at a given place and time and what type of interactions they create (Pennycook 2017). Manizha presented her song twice at two different venues and times (the national selection round and the final Eurovision contest). Momentary practices at those particular times and spaces and discursive practices in-between the performances created distinctive patterns of semiotic possibilities around her Russian woman assemblage and its authentication.

From the sociolinguistics perspective, authenticity is "a relational concept which accounts for the many ways in which a speaker or agent can be authentic in a given situation in relation to a particular aspect of his or her environment" (Lacoste et al. 2014: 1) and serves as an indexical meaning of validation that is always at stake in interaction and emerges in clusters of attributes (Coupland 2014). Although authenticity may be elusive, its key aspects may be successfully manipulated to reach political or economic goals (Heller 2014). Authenticity is "commonly contested" because being rendered authentic implies inauthenticity of competing targets (Coupland 2014). Following Coupland (2014), we focus our analysis on both, the meanings of linguistic forms used in the song lyrics that "index group belonging in more or less consolidated and authenticity conferring ways" (p. 36) and the discourses authenticating and deauthenticating the performance and the performer.

3. Methodology

In this paper, we analyze Manizha's first performance of her song *Russian woman* in March 2021 during the national televised selection (Eurosong contest 2021(a)) and the second performance at the final Eurovision contest in Rotterdam in May (Eurosong contest 2021(b)). Other data sources include the singer's interviews on national television (Urgant 2021) and Youtube channels (Gordeeva 2021; Super 2021) and social media comments in her Instagram account under her posts related to these performances (Manizha 2021(a), 2021(b)). Overall 4191 comments were collected for the first post and 8390 comments for the second post. We searched for all comments containing the word root *руск (russk*)* or *росс (rossi*)* to create a pool for in-depth analysis. We also thematically coded and analyzed the first 100 hundred comments under each post with the following categories in mind: evaluation (positive/negative), medium of expression (text/ emoji/ text & emoji), and language of the textual comment. Excerpts from Manizha's interviews, totalling 120 minutes, were transcribed and coded for recurring themes.

We used a "transtextual analytic framework" (Pennycook 2007, Dovchin, Sultana & Pennycook 2015) to analyze the data. Within this framework texts "have meaning not in themselves but only when used; they need to be understood productively, contextually and discursively; because they have histories, they are contextually influenced, and they occur within larger frameworks of meaning" (Pennycook 2007: 53). The data were analyzed through a set of interpretive and discursive tools involving pretextual history, contextual relations in which the use of the text occurs (where, who, referring to what), subtextual patterns of meaning linked to the discourses and ideologies within which it operates, intertextual "echoes" (associations with other texts), and post-textual interpretation (Pennycook 2007: 53–54).

Analysis of pretextual history and the context of the event uncovered the varied linguistic and cultural resources integrated within the performance and meanings ascribed to the Eurovision contest in Russia. Unpacking of subtextual meanings and intertextual links enhanced the understanding of the wider socio-cultural and historical implications, backgrounds, and factors guiding various interpretations. The post-textual analysis based on Manizha's post-performance interviews and the audience's comments revealed how her claims for authenticity are connected to what it means to be a Russian woman and viewers' interpretations of the concept.

4. Findings: Multilayered transgressiveness and authenticity

4.1. Russian woman, Manizha, and Eurovision: pre-text and context

The title of the song *Russian woman* set up specific expectations of the audience because the concept is both an important one in Russian mentality and worldview and intriguing for people both in Russia and abroad. In Russia, the Russian woman is a collective and largely idealized image rooted in folk ideologies, literary and art canon. Paremiology, or the study of proverbs, literary works, lexicography, and associative experiments provide the data on how the Russian woman has been defined historically and is perceived nowadays.

A distinctive feature of Russian folk ideology is the inclusion of the female voice (Kirilina 1999). Proverbs attribute the following qualities to Russian women: sharp mind, strong will, physical and moral strength, independence, warmth, care, and responsibility, with inner beauty being more important than physical beauty (Kirilina 1999).

Russian literary works which are mandatory in the national school curriculum include female characters prototypically associated with the concept of Russian woman and her attributes: strong character and high moral standards of Tatyana Larina from Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin"; humility, selflessness, and commitment of Sonya Marmeladova from Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment", and the strength and beauty of Russian peasant women from Nekrasov's poems. Instagram comments evaluating Manizha's performance serve as evidence that this literary canon is well familiar to the audience as commenters repeatedly cite Nekrasov's lines about Russian women.

Recent associative experiments indicate that the qualities associated with femininity in Russia include the characteristics of the traditional image as well as the features related to everyday women's experiences and behavior, such as compliance, emotionality, whimsicality, responsibility, strength, intellect, and strong will (Tochilina 2014). Another associative experiment indicated that the Russian woman is an idealized concept as participants did not mention any negative features. Regardless of their gender identification, respondents associated Russian women with intelligence, patience, kindness, hard work, beauty, maternal love, and dedication (Kirilina 1999).

Unlike the concept of the Russian woman that is deeply rooted in the mentality of the Russian people, Manizha is a newly emerged personality on the Russian cultural scene. Prior to winning the national selection for Eurovision 2021, she was largely unfamiliar to the broad audience in Russia. She performed in local festivals and appeared on a national TV channel a few times but her songs had never been charted or nominated for national music awards. Yet, she had a loyal audience on Instagram. She had also participated in several social activist campaigns opposing family violence, focusing on body positivity, LGBTQ rights, and migrant workers' rights. Although she positions herself as a Tajik-born singer, she performs in Russian and English, and her stage name is always written in Latin script. In her songs she mixes both languages and merges various musical genres, such as hip-hop, ethno-pop, soul, and gospel. The audience were expecting Manizha's performance to recreate a highly elevated image of the Russian woman, especially given the timeframe of the show which was aired on a national holiday – International Women's Day.

International Women's Day has been an official national holiday in Russia since March 8th, 1965. The holiday has outgrown its political underpinnings and is regarded as an affirmation of femininity and motherhood. The Eurovision national selection contest was aired on March 8th since the audience would be more likely to watch prime-time shows on their day-off. The broadcaster, Channel One Russia, is freely available on the territory of Russia in HD quality and has a diverse audience of more than 250 million viewers worldwide (Channel One Russia, n.d.).

Another relevant component of pretextual history and context is a highly sensitive attitude to international contests in Russia. Although the Eurovision started as a music festival TV broadcast in 1956, for some people in Russia the contest affirms countries' worth in a political and cultural arena, similar to sports competitions. Those who disliked the show assesed it through the prism of the nation's loss using inclusive "we": "*That's a shame! We won't make it to the finals!; ... we have lost already."*[2]

Viewers who liked the song appealed to Eurovision history where unusual and daring performances were more likely to win: "*Folk elements have always been loved at Eurovision; In my opinion, Manizha is the best match because she is daring and extraordinary"*.

Thus, the attitudes of the viewers are shaped by the immediate context of the performance, which is evaluated through this normative matrix of what is perceived to be a winning shot for the first prize and how accurately the song represents the concept of the Russian woman.

4.2. Ideological propositions: subtext

The song and the performance represent a spectrum of different ideological commitments and underscore a long-lasting ideological struggle between the traditional and the modern, the Russian and the Western. Language, gender, and ethnicity became the primary domains of this ideological divide.

4.2.1. Language Choice

The audience were divided in evaluating the language of the song lyrics. Some viewers received the Russian lyrics favorably as an attempt to overthrow the hegemony of English in Eurovision: *"Great song and performance! Finally, in Russian"; "What's the difference if someone understands it or not? Why should we sing in English at all."*

[2] For reasons of brevity, we have translated all comments and interview excerpts into English.

For others, Russian lyrics limited the chances of being understood and/or appreciated by multilingual audiences and, therefore, restricted the opportunity to win: *"Better in English!!! With Russian you may not get into the final".* Thus, the long-standing debate over the cultural orientations Russia should be taking – orienting to the West or following its own path – turned into discussions over the language choice, local cultural distinctiveness, and authenticity.

When asked in an interview if she would consider changing the lyrics of the song and perform in English, Manizha answered "no", stressing the freedom to make artistic choices: *"To sing in English? What for? To bend? To fit into the frame as it's a custom there?".* In another interview, she emotionally defended her right to identify as Russian: "*I have the right to feel this way. I have lived in this country for thirty years, I know the culture, and I think and feel in Russian!"*. Yet, in her songs she routinely mixes Russian and English claiming that it helps her to better convey her message to the audience: "*Previously, when I was mixing languages in songs, I thought 'People won't understand me', now I am confident in what I am doing. I stopped seeing the boundaries between languages"* (Gordeeva 2021). Her chosen stage name, which is written in Latin script, also manifests this transgressive mindset. Another form of trangressivity is choosing her grandmother's surname (Sangin) and using it as morphologically unchangeable (normally, Russian surnames have gender and case distinctions).

In the Eurovision performance, linguistic transgression was emphasized by printing the English title of the song *Russian woman* on the back of Manizha's costume in a mix of Latin and Cyrillic letters (Figure 1). This dual script indexes Russlish (a humorous/ludic way English is spoken in Russia) and signals orientation to the English-speaking audience at the same time.

In everyday life (TV comedies, ads) such instances of "russification of English" are common but in the context of the international show and with reference to an iconic cultural concept, it was rejected by the audience: *"I respect the Russian language and I don't understand why it [the word "Russian"] is written as "рашн" (rushn). It mocks Russian culture and offends me as a culture bearer".*

Fig. 1. Translingual representation of the song title on the back of Manizha's stage constume

4.2.2. Russian: russkii or rossiyskii?

The English title of the song is intentionally ambiguous because it combines the terms "*russkii*" (related to ethnic, cultural, and historical associations) and "*rossiyski*" (indexical of the nation state). Thus, the concept of Russianness as presented in the performance becomes another transgressive element with multiple open interpretations. In her interviews, speaking about herself, Manizha consistently uses the adjective *russkiy* and omits the word *rossiiskii*. Some of her supporters also use the word "*russkii*" to refer to people of different ethnic origins living in Russia: *"Russia is a multinational country and it is unfair to call Manizha an immigrant. She speaks Russian, lives in Russia, and most likely has Russian citizenship. Of course, she is Russian ("russkaya")!"* Although most such comments are in Russian, given the nature of social media, it is unclear whether the commenters live in Russia or belong to Russian diaspora abroad where the word russkii tends to be used "in reference to all manifestations of the Russian presence in the world: political, linguistic, national and religious" (Zhdanova 2008: 243). For Manizha's opponents, the distinction between the concepts *russkii* and *rossiiskii* remains relevant: *"You should be singing about Russia's women, not about Russian women. You can be rossiyanka, but not russkaya!"*. Likewise, mainstream media, both Russian and international, tend to preserve categorial boundaries and refer to Manizha using the word "*rossiyskaya*" as in "Russia's Eurovision entrant" (Roth 2021), "Russian singer of Tajik origin" (Inform Buro 2021).

Strong resentment of the audience was caused by Manizha's appeal to Russian women from the position of the ethnic 'Other' during the national selection round. Her request *"Hey, russkii zheshin, davay golosui za menya!" ("Hey, Russian woman, come on, vote for me")* was pronounced in a highly accented and morphologically ungrammatical way, imitating the accent of migrants from Central Asia. It reminded the audience of an obtrusive and ostentatious attitude Russian women may encounter on farmers' markets where many sellers are male migrants from Caucasian and Central Asian countries. Apparently intended as self-irony, this statement insulted many female viewers. Manizha removed the phrase from the final performance in Rotterdam and replaced it with a different appeal ("*Hey, Russian woman! Don't be afraid, girl")* and a series of English slogans projected on the background screen, which matched up with the Western feminist discourse of female empowerment ("*Be strong", "Rise up", "Be honest", "Be creative", "Be yourself", "Break the wall", "Be the change"*).

Though ethnicity is at the core of all discussions, some experts believe that the Russian woman in the song is "not an ethnic category" but rather a category that "reflects the life experience of the singer, the experience of her lyrical heroine whom she empathizes with and whose image she constructs" (Kashapov 2021).

4.2.3. Woman's life experiences

Women's life experiences presented in the song include beauty standards, intimate and maternal relations. The text contains several propositions linked to these spheres. The song starts with the first person narrative of a young female waiting for help to cross the field. The speaker uses the feminine adjective "*mala*" ("*small*"), an affectionate appellative "*devochki*" ("*girls*"), and deictic shifts between indefinite personal "you" ("*How to cross the field if you are alone*?") and plural "we" ("*We've been waiting for the ship*") to build women's solidarity and stress familiarity of this experience. The transition to refrain is a daring statement. The vernacular phrase "*A cho zhdat'? Vstala i poshla!*" ("*But why to wait? Stand up and go ahead!*"), pronounced by the performer with a defiant intonation as she sheds a stylized Russian outfit from her shoulders, represents a transposition of verbal forms. Worded as a past tense, the statement may literally be interpreted as the narrator's past experience. However, in everyday moralizing conversations it rhetorically functions as an imperative. The ambiguity of this verbal form gave rise to contestable interpretations: some viewers perceived the phrase as a sign of empowerment and overthrowing patriarchal stereotypes, while others heard it as a rude and patronizing remark associated with vulgar verbal behavior ("*Dirty banter. Vulgarity*").

The second part of the song shifts from first personal narrative to a dialogic interaction with a set of questions and imperatives addressed to the narrator:

(1) What's the showing off for?	*Chto tam khorokhorit'sya?*
Oh, what a beauty you are!	*Oi, krasavitsa*
Are you waiting for your young fella?	*Zhdesh' svoego yuntsa?*
You're over 30 already!	*Oi, krasavitsa*
Hallo? Where are your kids?	*Tebe uzh za 30, allo, gde zhe deti?*
You are quite fine overall	*Ty v tselom krasiva,*
But losing weight would do you good	*No vot pokhudet' by*

All the statements represent traditional assumptions around female appearance and motherhood. The use of second person singular *("Tebe")* indexes familiarity and disrespect, rather than intimacy and partnership; the overall tone is blunt, and inconsiderate ("*Hallo, where are your kids?").* The response is equally abrupt and offensive:

(2) Listen up, really!	*Poslushaite, pravda,*
We ain't a herd	*My s vami – ne stado*
Hey, crows, shoo!	*Vorony, pyshch-pyshch, proshu,*
Leave me alone ('fuck off')	*Otvalite-e-e*
Now get it straight	*Teper' zarubite sebe na nosu*
I don't blame you	*Ya vas ne vinyu,*
But damn do I love myself	*A sebya ya chertovski lyublyu*

Negating "herd" mentality references women's rights to make independent decisions. Inclusive "we", which corresponds to the first part of the song (us-girls), affirms the power to make decisions for all women.

The affirmation "*I damn love myself*" echoes a popular coaching technique of building self-confidence and dismisses the idea of selflessness traditionally attributed to Russian women. Moreover, the phrase contains a substandard intensifier "*chertovski*" ('*damn'*), derived from the noun "*chort*" ('*devil'*), which is a profanity when it does not refer to the mythological creature. While there has been an increase in the use of profane, obscene and criminal slang in everyday Russian communication (Karasik & Slyshkin 2021), it goes counter an elevated image of womanhood and maternity. Manizha transgresses the unspoken expectations to uphold language standard and routinely uses substandard vocabulary in her song and interviews (Super 2021, Gordeeva 2021).

The English language refrain, which is stylistic repetition (3), follows the same self-affirmation discourse reminding female listeners of their strength. Yet, the modal verbs expressing necessity position Russian women as disempowered, indecisive, and weak, which conveys a patronizing attitude: "*Every Russian woman needs to know …. Don't be afraid!... You must be strong!"*

(3) *Every Russian woman needs to know*
You're strong enough, you're gonna break the wall
Every Russian woman needs to know
You're strong enough, you're gonna break the wall
Hey, Russian woman,
Don't be afraid, girl
You're strong enough
You're strong enough
Don't be afraid

The song references women's experiences as a tension between social expectations and women's agency, metaphorically worded as the wall ("*strong enough to break the wall"*). While these perspectives have been extensively represented in Russian paremia (Kirilina 1999) and beauty and motherhood themes are reminiscent of traditional patriarchal views of femininity, self-affirmation discourse combined with substandard language choices transgress traditional ideals of moral strength, grace and inner beauty. Thus, the debate over the song and authenticity of the Russian woman representation is rooted in oppositional discourses of tradition and modernity defying the tradition.

4.3. Intertextual connections

Intertextually, representation of Russian womanhood taps into historically local ideas of femininity (through such cultural concepts as "field", "(waiting for) a ship", and "strength") and also asserts global gendered discourses. The concept of "field" in Russian culture belongs to the domain of life and death. In poems, proverbs, and lyrics, it symbolizes a life path. Working in the field was the primary activity for Russian peasants growing crops and making hay supply for the cattle. Women performed multiple types of fieldwork. However, unlike the character in the song, who found herself alone in the field, fieldwork was never performed by individual workers but self-organized groups of community members. Multiple proverbial statements emphasize collectivity and community, for instance, "One warrior in the field will not win the battle". Thus, the metaphor of the field as a dangerous path in the song lyrics ("*how to get across the field of fire*?") makes only a partial connection to Russian mindset and culture – it confused the listeners: "*Why is the field on fire?*"

Waiting for a ship is another contestable intertextual connection. In the first part of the song the performer uses inclusive first person "we" to state that all women, including her, are "*waiting for a ship*". In the second part, the stance shifts to the second person ("you"*)* asking if the woman is waiting for her young man. The image of a woman waiting for a ship symbolizes the patriarchal idea that woman's life is not complete without a man, which is well established and represented in traditional fairy tales and Disney movies, such as Cinderella. While this idea is true for most patriarchal societies, including Russian, these allusions miss out on the culturally specific aspects of the concept and thus are only partially authentic for the Russian audience. Many were likely to link the ship metaphor to Alexander Grin's book "Scarlet Sails", in which the main female character Assol was awaiting a ship with scarlet sails. However, this romantic illusion was a coping mechanism for Assol who was a social outcast in the village and along with her father experienced perpetual bullying. A ship with bright red sails symbolizes chasing a dream and pursuit of happiness – it has become an emblem of the biggest Russian festival for high school graduates in Saint Petersburg.

In Russian culture waiting for a ship also symbolizes marital commitment as suggested by a popular song of the "Lyube" group which presents two voices – navy crew in distant seas and their families ashore – and emphasizes that familial support helps crew members get through the storms and return safely to their homes. Women's self-sacrifice and commitment to their spouses is a value deeply ingrained in collective memory as it was embodied in Decemberists' wives. In December 1825 a group of noble revolutionists made an unsuccessful attempt to change the political structure in Russia. Their wives followed them into thirty years of Siberian exile and became Russian ideals of spousal commitment.

Thus, the song invites the listener to think back to traditional concepts representing women's experiences, such as working in the field along other women, having a dream and following it, honoring their husbands and supporting them. Allusions to these experiences represent the strength of Russian women, as conceived in proverbial sayings and lay people's associations, and found support with the audience ("*Foreigners won't get the idea. It's us who know that 'There are women in Russian villages…").* Yet, the subtextual affirmations defying these concepts result in an ideological clash. Assertion that a woman should not wait (for the ship) but rather start acting independently reaffirms woman's agency but also implies that ideals of marital commitment should be cast aside, which is not the discourse some viewers support.

4.4. Authenticity: post-textual commentary

Post-textual comments fall under two categories: supporting and cheering on, or condemning and criticizing the performance, the performer, and her representation of the Russian woman. We have discussed the controversy over the issues of language and ethnicity in prior sections and would like to pay more attention to the discussion of authenticity in viewers' comments and Manizha's post-performance commentaries.

After the national round of the contest, the dispute over the song fell along the lines of Russianness. Denial of authenticity was grounded in visual and acoustic performance and the concept of the Russian woman presented in the song. Viewers indicated that Manizha's outfit had little, if any, resemblance to traditional Russian dress or the contemporary version thereof. The red jumpsuit invoked images of "*American prisoners*" and "*factory workers*", and the colorful headband resembled "*a towel*" or "*African women's headwear*": "*Where do they wear stuff like that? Not in Russia!*". Some comments pointed to her inappropriate moves on the stage and overall "cocky" performance: *"I've never seen a Russian woman with such inmates-like manners"; "You showed a monster, not a Russian woman"; "Trashy show with poor vocal of a whorish matron"*. Manizha's vibe was defined as unfeminine*: "... running around the stage with bulging eyes and screams"*. Commenters tried to disassociate themselves from the image presented in the song ("*Who voted for this weird song? It's terrible. I am a Russian woman and this awful song is not about me")*, renouncing Manizha's version of its message ("*Your song is not about the strength and beauty of the Russian women. Your song is about yourself"*) and questioning her sincerity *("It's clear that you did it for promotion"*) and authenticity (*"You are fake, not real ... You have nothing to do with Russian aesthetics"*). In several instances even supporters acknowledged that Manizha's presentation was in sharp dissonance with ideas prevailing in local communities: "*The song is cool, but does not match the character of a Russian woman*". Some angry viewers even claimed Manizha should not represent Russia at an international contest.

Those who found Manizha's performance authentic followed her in transgressing linguistic and ethnic boundaries by mixing English and Russian (*"Za tebya! za russkikh vumen"* / "*To you! to Russian women")* and using the word *"russkaya"* in an expansive and evaluative meaning as a symbol of strength and daring *("Vpered, russkaya! Go ahead, Russian woman!"; "You are the coolest Russian woman! Thank you!")*. Oftentimes, her supporters spelled the words "Russian woman" in English or in transliteration: "*Ty nastoyashaya Russian Woman!" (You are authentic! A real Russian Woman!!!); "Ty vs'o smogla, ty nastayashaya rashn vuman!" (You could do anything, you are a real Russian woman)*. This creates yet another opportunity of a twofold interpretation blurring the boundaries between *Russia's* ("rossiyskaya") and *Russian* ("russkaya") and suggesting a new type of authenticity that transgresses historic and cultural canon: "*Manizha, it was a crazy performance! Thanks to you we saw a new Russian ('russkaya') woman"*.

Having polarized society around her song, Manizha gave interviews on TV and YouTube to explain herself and claim her authenticity as a Russian woman. She grounded her argument in her life story as a child whose family had to flee from the civil war in Tajikistan. Having lived in Russia most of her life and speaking Russian as her primary language, Manizha asserted her right to represent Russia: *"It is unfair to say that if you are of a different nationality, you have no right to represent the country"* (Gordeeva 2021). Explaining the message of her song, which Guardian called "a feminist ballad", she shifted the focus from gender stereotypes to the strength of Russian women.

Her understanding of Russianness transcends ethnic categorization because she uses the word metaphorically, with Russian meaning strong, brave, and daring. As part of one of her interviews, she invited a group of women to join her at a tea party conversation (Gordeeva 2021). Her guests live in Russia and identify as Russian, although none of them claims to be ethnically Russian. They take part in some activist social work primarily around women's life experiences. When asked about the qualities of a Russian woman, Manizha and her guests describe the Russian woman as *"strong", "brave", "resolute", "with extensive energy and generous spirit", "upright and resistant", "whose love is strong enough to fight injustice", "heroic", "straightforward", "a peaceful atom".*

Viewers' comments after the final performance align with this interpretation*: "You showed that the Russian woman is a STRONG woman"; "Russian women are the strongest in spirit! Your strength in the song showed it. We are not giving up*". Some commenters use the word *"nastoyashaya"* ("real", "authentic") and identify Manizha as a Russian *("russkaya")* woman based on her strong character and daring performance: "*You are a real, strong Russian woman!!! An example for many. Yes, you got up and went, and they heard you!!"; "Like a real Russian woman, you withstood everything!"*. Yet, others point to the discrepancy between the traditional understanding of strength as a salient feature of Russian womanhood and Manizha's representation of strength through a call for women's empowerment: "*Russian women are beautiful. And they don't lament about anything. They are strong in themselves and do not need someone to tell them to 'get up and go'".*

In interviews before the final performance, Manizha repeatedly mentioned that her costume would be made "*from scraps of fabrics of the peoples of Russia*", thus highlighting Russia's cultural diversity and ethnic inclusivity. During the final performance, collages of the paintings by avant-garde Russian female artists were projected on the background screen alternating with images of women of different ages, views, and ethnic backgrounds singing along with the performer. This video sequence also underscored the diversity of Russian women and emphasized Russian women artists' contribution to the world cultural heritage. These recontextualizations achieved their purpose and after the final there were very few, if any, negative comments openly attacking Manizha's ethnicity and her right to represent Russia in the contest.

Overall, Manizha's post-textual commentaries after her initial performance, which caused public controversy, focused on clarifying the message of her song as a way to defy stereotypes and assert her reading of the concept of the Russian woman as a strong, resilient and daring femininity. Her multiple interviews legitimized this view and, to an extent, shaped her performance in the Eurovision final.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Drawing on the two performances of the same song at different stages of the Eurovision song contest, we sought to analyze how authenticity was claimed by the performer and was granted or denied by the audience. Overall, the transtextual analytic framework illustrated the layers of linguistic and cultural authenticity and different paths for semiotic interpretation along the lines of acceptance and rejection. Our analysis demonstrated that interpretation of both performances is largely guided by the pretextual and contextual aspects. In the first performance, Manizha was seeking to address a broad national audience for the first time in her career and positioned herself as a singer with distinct Central Asian roots. In the final contest, she represented the country and addressed the international Eurovision audience. Her second performance was preceded by a series of extensive interviews and media appearances addressing the performance, its meaning, and the performer's life story and worldview. Although the song components (music and lyrics) have been left intact, or unchanged since the first performance in March, other semiotic aspects were strikingly different and meshed into a distinct assemblage guiding the audience's interpretation, with the second performance being more positively received.

The common theme for both performances is the rejection of gender stereotypes and advancement of a modern, down-to-earth, true-to-life womanhood as an alternative to the traditional cultural ideal. As a symbolic act, Manizha sheds off the heavy coat and Russian shawl in the first performance and gets out of a giant cage-like Russian-style dress in the second, remaining in a red jumpsuit and headband, which some viewers interpreted as an allusion to a WWII-time US poster "We can do it!". Her overall performance was a statement of transgressive identity of a contemporary Russian (not necessarily a Slavic) woman living in a global world and accepting its values and linguistic practices. As Coupland (2014) noted, "being inauthentic in relation to an attributed or assumed identity can have many attractions" (p.19). Manizha may have deliberately constructed her Russian woman assemblage to disassociate from the traditional understanding of Russian womanhood and push for rethinking of familiar concepts and attitudes in rapidly changing society. The viewers who share these values and ideologies authenticated her image while a more traditional part of the audience rejected it.

The contestable interpretations stem from the transgressive character of the performance where Manizha brings together local and global associations of womanhood and Russianness, mixes languages, speaking styles, and musical genres. Taken together, her two performances represent what Pennycook labeled as "exploration of the boundaries of thought" (2007: 43). Certain elements of the first show (such as accented remarks suggesting ethnic Otherness) were revised and replaced in the subsequent performance by catchy English slogans to mitigate references to interethnic relations in Russia and strengthen the globalized discourses of womanhood. Following the principles of authenticity in performative arts ("keep it real"), Manizha was singing and performing her hybrid identity. In and between the performances she was seeking to legitimize her representation of the Russian woman and affirm her authenticity as a Russian female performer although she never negated her Tajik origin.

There are several potential explanations as to why despite all efforts the audience remained divided. One explanation would be that Manizha's supporters and opponents proceeded from conflicting understandings of authenticity. Some were evaluating the song through the lens of authenticity as a static (intrinsic) feature and, as a result, rejected the performance as inauthentic on one or more textual levels. Others seemed to approach authenticity from a more dynamic perspective – as a partially "constructed" and "negotiable" entity (Lacoste et.al 2014: 2). For this part of the audience, Manizha's post-textual commentaries as a response to initial criticisms legitimized her representation of the Russian woman.

Another explanation would address the grounds for authentication. As shown by Blommaert and Varis (2013), a wide range of features reflected in various semiotic representations can be used to display a certain authenticity, yet not all features of a given identity are needed to pass as authentic. Sometimes a "homeopathic dose of resources" would suffice for authentication; the main thing is that it should be "enough to produce a recognizable identity as an authentic someone" (Blommaert & Varis 2013: 6–8). Most Manizha's supporters authenticated her performance based on a salient feature of the Russian womanhood – strength and perseverance. But for a locally oriented audience, it was not enough to identify her representation of the Russian woman as authentic. Denial of authenticity has occurred at a single or multiple levels (language, costume, stage manners, ideological and cultural mismatches with the traditional conceptions).

Finally, the lack of uniformity in the reception of her performance may point to what Coupland (2014) labeled "heightened social reflexivity". With globalization "detraditionalizing" social life, social identities are less stable as they are less rooted in social structures while society becomes less confident in what these identities would mean and less trusting of their representations (Coupland 2003). Current discourses of identity in Russia as far as ethnicity and nationality are concerned reflect that there are multiple dimensions along which identity is negotiated: traditional vs. modern, Russian vs. Western, Russian vs. Other (from the former USSR). Coupled with gender identity and performer's identity, they create a collection of ideological propositions which serve as authenticating and deauthenticating criteria.

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Kinship terms variation among speakers of Bahmaie dialect in Khuzestan Province of Iran

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Abstract
Language indicates the social and cultural identity of the nations, and literature is of great value in reflecting ideas, beliefs and visions in language. Considering the fact that the local dialects that lack written literature are more subject to convergence and death, extensive research is required for further documentation and investigating the factors leading to their infrequency of use. Bahmaie, a variant of Luri dialect spoken in the southwest of Iran, is an example in which the stylistic variation of kinship terms represents dialect endangerment and necessitates in-depth analysis of the factors affecting this variation. The present study aims at examining the variation of Bahmaie kinship terms and their Persian equivalents across different contexts, with respect to age, gender, educational level, and third person presence. To this aim, a 32- item questionnaire was designed and distributed among 275 Bahmaie speakers divided into four age groups: 15–19, 20–29, 30–39, and 40 – above. The findings of the study indicated that the 15–19 age group speakers favored the Persian terms while those aged 40 – above were more likely to use Bahmaie terms. They also showed the impact of other contextual characteristics on variation of kinship terms (interlocutors' status, gender, educational level, and third person presence). Results further demonstrated that Bahmaie speakers have a tendency towards being persified, and this trend is more pronounced among young speakers. This tendency is attributed to the dominance of Persian as the only high-status language, language contact, and migration causing a generation gap. The implication of the research is that documenting Bahmaie dialect, encouraging educated speakers to use it and fostering intra-cultural communication, are the strategies that can be helpful in keeping this dialect alive.
Keywords: *language variation, identity, kinship terms, Bahmaie dialect, language change, Persian language*

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Вариации терминов родства среди носителей диалекта бахмайе в иранской провинции Хузестан

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Аннотация
Язык определяет социальную и культурную идентичность нации, при этом большой ценностью обладает литература как средство отражения идей, верований и языковой картины мира. Местные диалекты, не имеющие письменных литературных источников, в большей степени подвержены опасности слияния и исчезновения, в связи с чем необходимо их дальнейшее исследование для фиксации их особенностей и изучения факторов снижения их популярности. В диалекте бахмайе, варианте лурского диалекта, на котором говорят на юго-западе Ирана, проявляются стилистические вариации использования терминов родства, угрожающие существованию этого диалекта, что обусловливает необходимость их углубленного анализа. Цель настоящего исследования – рассмотреть вариативность терминов родства в диалекте бахмайе и их персидских эквивалентов в различных контекстах, с учетом возраста, гендера, образовательного уровня и присутствия третьих лиц. С этой целью был разработан опросный лист, включающий 32 пункта, который был роздан 275 носителям диалекта бахрайе, поделенным на четыре возрастных группы: от 15 до 19 лет, от 20 до 29 лет, от 30 до 39 лет, от 40 лет и старше. Полученные результаты показали, что представители возрастной группы от 15 до 19 лет отдают предпочтение персидским терминам, в то время как респонденты в возрасте 40 и старше – терминам бахмайе. Также был сделан вывод о воздействии на вариации использования терминов родства других факторов (статус собеседника, гендер, образовательный уровень и присутствие третьего лица). Исследование продемонстрировало влияние персидского языка на диалект бахмайе, особенно заметное среди молодежи. Эта тенденция обусловлена высоким статусом персидского языка, языковыми контактами и миграцией как источником межпоколенных различий. Сделан вывод о том, что для сохранения диалекта бахмайе необходимо фиксировать его особенности, поощрять его использование среди образованных носителей и продвигать интракультурную коммуникацию.
Ключевые слова: *языковые вариации, идентичность, термины родства, диалект бахмайе, языковые изменения, персидский язык*

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1. Introduction

According to Yarmohammadi (1995), the language of each nation constitutes its identity. Language indicates the social and cultural characteristics of each nation, and the culture and literature of each nation are of great value in reflecting ideas, beliefs and visions. Considering that some local dialects lack written literature, they are subject to convergence and death. Working on understudied languages and linguistic regions contributes to understanding the "ways in which processes of language change are sensitive to social, cultural, and/ or typological variables" (Epps et al. 2022: 4). Kinship terms frequently used in addressing relatives and in daily communication are rich areas for identifying these changes. Parkin (1998) notes that kinship changes are associated with the changes in social organization. These terms vary across languages and their varieties. In the Persian language, kinship systems include distinct terms to address people of various ages and statuses. Iranian dialects like Luri, Kalhori, and Gilaki have their own kinship terms. Luri dialect, among all, has different dialectal variants, while Bahmaie as a variant of Luri has its own kinship terms. For instance, the paternal uncle is addressed as *Amu* in Persian and as *Tate* in Bahmaie. In this study, we attempt to specify the factors affecting the speakers' choices among these pairs of terms. Identifying such factors and delineating the circumstances under which these changes happen can add to our understanding of regional changes in favor of the dominant culture and language. These findings can add valuable information to the existing body of knowledge on kinship terms, socio-cultural studies, language change, language imperilment, and intra-cultural communication.

Kinship terms, with linguistic and sociological significance (Parkin 1989), have been in the focus of many studies. In a recent study, Wierzbicka (2017) worked on the meanings of kinship terms in English and European countries, noting that they should be approved by ordinary native speakers and posited in line with the whole picture of kin term uses. To reach this developmental and cross-linguistic knowledge, semantic components are helpful. Acknowledging the value of semantics, Morozova (2019) focused on language contact as a viable tool for construction and reconstruction of kinship terms (borrowing), which might happen in the structure or the whole word. Sagdieva et al. (2019) moved further and stated that the use of kinship terms are indicators of genetic relationships. They investigated the use of kin terms in some languages such as Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkish, Uzbek and Uyghur, showing that each language has its own peculiarities, although they are included under the main Turkic class.

In Iran, a considerable number of studies have been done on the Persian dialects and their current status. For instance, Bistoon et al. (2020) worked on the semantic and pragmatic aspects of Hawrami (a Kurdish dialect spoken in the west of Iran) kinship terms. They considered age and education as two main factors affecting kin choice among Hawrami speakers. The results of the study also showed that older generations were constantly using Hawrami kin terms while younger speakers preferred Persian terms. Likewise, Saeidfar and Tohidian (2012) noted that the younger speakers demonstrated less knowledge about the old Isfahani dialect. Hasanvand Amozade (2014) confirmed that younger generations preferred Persian kinship terms at the mercy of Laki kin terms. Amini (2020), in another study, conducted a descriptive-analytical research on the Nænæji dialect spoken in Malayer County, Hamedan province, Iran. The findings of his study indicated that the use of kinship terms in this dialect is confined to the middle-up age groups. Additionally, migration, language contact, and urbanization were regarded as the reasons for the change of kin terms among Nænæji speakers. The frequent use of Persian equivalents for Nænæji kin terms confirmed the dominance and acceptance of Persian norms. For this reason, Nænæji was considered an endangered dialect in

Iran. Jamali Nesar and Gowhari (2020) conducted a survey on the use of Kalhori Kurdish and Persian kinship terms regarding age, education, and gender factors. Results of their study indicated that Kurdish terms were more frequently used by the participants. The findings also showed that variations of use were significant regarding education and age. The researchers ignored the context of use in their questionnaire.

The younger generation's tendency towards Persian is significant in the above-mentioned studies. Therefore, age is regarded as an important factor in studying kinship terms among Iranian speakers. Another important factor is the speakers' educational level. It is reported that dialectal terms are less frequent among higher educational levels. Gender is also considered to be a determinant factor in using kinship terms. Accordingly, all these factors were considered in this study focusing on the Bahmaie dialect.

Luri, rooted in the Indo-European languages, is a widely spoken dialect with diverse varieties used among different groups living in the South and Southwest of Iran (From Lorestan Province to Khouzestan and Kohgeloye-and-Boyerahmad provinces). The dialect of Bahmaie is one of the varieties of Luri dialect spoken in these provinces, especially in territories like Baghmalek, Ramhormoz, and the cities located in their proximity (Behbahan, Bahmaie, and Dehdasht). Among these cities, considerable linguistic variations have been observed in Ramhormoz, wherein more Persian native speakers are living. As Khan (2022) emphasized that the processes of linguistic change can be greatly understood by studying the context in which language contact is observed, territory, among others, was selected for in-depth study. Use of language at work, home, street, etc. regarding the interlocutor's language and social status as well as the presence of a third person determines the context in which we extract the data.

1.1. Ramhormoz city

Ramhormoz, a city in the Eastern part of Khuzestan province, is divided into urban and rural parts. The urban area is the populated region wherein almost two-thirds of the permanent population lives. The rural area is the region of villages, farms, rivers, and a large area of uninhabited mountains and hills. Figure 1 shows the general outlines of Ramhormoz city, and Table 1 includes the population of the city reported from the National Census Center.

As the table indicates, most of the Ramhormoz population lives in the urban areas. Giving frequency of residents based on their age range illuminates the dominance of females over males. It also shows that age groups can be ranked in terms of frequency from 40 – above, 20–29, 30–39, to 15–19.

The 105,418 Ramhormozians are Muslims and fall into two linguistic groups: Persian and Bahmaie. Most of the Persian native speakers live in the urban regions and Bahmaie speakers mostly reside in rural areas. Since the majority of governmental organizations, private and public companies, hospitals, gas stations, institutions and universities are located in the main area of the city, people from the rural areas frequently commute to the urban areas. This accounts for frequent interactions between people across various contexts which may cause variation in their language use. This variation is more observed in the use of lexical items rather than structures or speech sounds. Among various plausible classifications of vocabularies, the researchers decided to pay close attention to the factors of inconsistency and alternations of kinship terms among Ramhormozian speakers.

Table 1. **Frequency and percentages of males and females across rural and urban areas of Ramhormoz regarding their age (N=77082)**

Age group	Urban areas		Rural areas		Total	
	Female F(%)	**Male** F(%)	**Female** F(%)	**Male** F(%)	**Female** F(100%)	**Male** F(100%)
15-19	3489 (63.92)	3832 (66.71)	1969(36.08)	1912 (33.29)	5458	5744
20-29	8262 (67.52)	7829 (65.63)	3975(32.48)	4099 (34.37)	12237	11928
30-39	5591 (67.72)	6057 (70.49)	266 (32.28)	2535 (29.51)	8256	8592
40-above	7971(63.64)	8325 (67.45)	4554(36.36)	4017 (32.55)	12525	12342

Note: The total population of Ramhormoz is 195,418. The population of people below 15 was not included in the table.

Bahmaie
Persian

Figure 1. Locations in which Bahmaie dialect and Persian language are spoken

1.2. Theoretical Background

Following Feagin (2003), a quantitative sociolinguistic study of linguistic variation begins with the selection of linguistic variables depending on age, sex, social class, and ethnicity, or stylistic parameters such as causal, careful, or formal speech. Among different linguistic variables, it seems that kinship terms have the potential of demonstrating such features. Indeed, kinship terms, as a universal feature of language, behold the cultural load of a community. People in their daily activities exhaustively refer to various kinds of kin (Wardhaugh 2006). Most societies make use of factors such as age, gender, generation, blood, and marriage in their kinship systems. Perhaps, the major reason that kinship systems are attractive for investigators is that one can "relate them with considerable confidence to the actual words that people use to describe a particular kin relationship" (Wardhaugh 2006: 229). Therefore, any change or variation in their use could possibly imply the speakers' movement towards change in their social behaviors and language.

Kinship terms are socio-cognitive categories used to address our relatives (Racz et al. 2020). The use of these terms, as Suryanaryan and Khalil (2021) noted, depends on their roles in a specific society. These categories and roles are somehow culture-specific (Malone 2004). However, generally, they are designed for addressing and speaking about relatives (Suryanaryan & Khalil 2021). Holmes (2013) goes further and maintains that the use of kinship terms mirrors our cultural values and relationships. Similarly, Gaby (2017), points to the role of cultural context in understanding kinship term uses and Wierzbicka (2016) refers to kinship terms as the indicators of social realities, thoughts, and relationships. Therefore, it is implied that kinship terms can foreground social values, relations, and any differences in their uses can be attributed to the social changes.

Kinship terms vary across and within varieties of languages. They provide valuable information about the social structures and norms of a speech community (Khalil & Larina 2022). Picking up specific kinship terms in different contexts depends on different factors such as age, gender, solidarity, degree of intimacy, degree of distance, and social status (Keshavarz 2001). Khalil and Larina (2022) assert that kinship terms are "cultural messages and contain information about the norms, values, and social practices of a given society" (P 29). Cultural context is considered as the main indicator of kinship term uses. Age is also important in this regard (Suryanarayan & Khalil 2021, Geng 2015). For Manjulakshi (2004), the use of kinship terms is associated with the age, status, and gender. Likewise, Wardhaugh (2006) considered status, age, gender, intimacy, and race as the effective factors governing choices of kin terms.

In Persian and Bahmaie, distinct kinship terms are used to address relatives. For instance, *Amme* and *Mame* are the terms used to address the paternal aunt in Persian and Bahmaie, respectively. When the speaker is in a situation to choose one of these two terms, different factors can be influential. For instance, a speaker wanting to say *'I visited my aunt'* might use *'Man **amme** ro didam'* (in Persian) or *Mo **mame** ro didom* (in Bahmaie), under certain circumstances. In this study, we were looking for the factors affecting this choice.

To reach this aim, the answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. To what extent are nonlinguistic factors of age, gender, educational status, and context influential in stylistic variation of Bahmaie kinship terms?

2. What are the main reasons for stylistic variation of kinship terms among Bahmaie dialect speakers?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

All the participants selected for this study were born and raised in the common-geographical area of Ramhormoz city. The profession, gender, age, and status of the subjects were considered as effective and separate social variables. The subjects were randomly selected based on the age-range predefined cells. The cells included the age-range of 15–19, 20–29, 30–39 and 40–above. Though the age cell of the subjects was predetermined, their educational level, gender, and context of language use were not identified in advance. However, according to Feagin's (2003) suggestion, the two genders were kept numerically fair in each age group in order to confound its effects and differences with the other distinctions. Therefore, 320 questionnaires, which were distributed among each age group, were fairly handed out among two genders. Though it was attempted to survey an equal number of males and females, the number of questionnaires turned back to the researchers violated this presupposition. 45 questionnaires were incomplete or never received. From the 275 received questionnaires, social variables such as educational level and gender were identified as posteriori and correlated to the chosen linguistic variable.

The sampling procedure for this study was a stratified judgment sample. The reason for this selection was that the study only focused on Bahmaie speakers and overlooked Persian and other spoken languages. Other criteria were gender, educational level, age, and place of living, i.e. it was attempted to select equal speakers from both rural and urban areas.

It is worth noting that though the respondents' level of education and status has been considered as two separate social variables, their social class and ethnicity have been disregarded in the analysis. These important and influential variables in the language variation processes could be investigated in another study.

Feagin (2003) contends that except for studies that draw special attention to the language of children, "it is better to avoid speakers younger than adolescents, since there is the possibility of confounding phonological or grammatical development with local variation" (27). Following this suggestion, age 15 was set as the lowest age for filling out the questionnaires. It needs to be noted that age-grouping procedure was done according to the psychological, employment, marital status and cultural norms. Each age group reveals similarities in these factors.

2.2. Instrumentation

Questionnaire is the best form for eliciting data in large-scale studies. Wardhaugh (2006) commented that questionnaires designed for the purpose of determining language variation must contain items which elicit data in a variety of contexts and circumstances. For this study, a questionnaire was used and the speakers of both rural and urban areas were required to pick the Bahmaie or Persian kinship terms they would use in the determined contexts and circumstances. The questions were used to elicit what external linguistic variables were related to the selection and use of the kinship terms. The questionnaire, firstly, required the speakers to answer the bio-data items about their gender, educational level, marital and occupational status, and also the first language they acquired, their proficiency in Bahmaie dialect and Persian language, their preference in selecting Bahmaie or Persian for communicating with their spouses, relatives, and parents. Secondly, 32 items were provided which asked the speakers to pick variants of kinship terms they might use across contexts such as home, office, hospital, ceremony, etc. Also, variables such as third person presence regarding gender, language, and relational status of the interlocutors were taken into account in relation to the choice of kinship terms. The instrument was a researcher made scale which was designed based on the open ended items and piloted to a similar sample, the reliability and validity of which was reached through pilot study and expert judgment.

2.3. Determining kinship terms and contexts

Since there are many kinship terms in Bahmaie, it was not possible to manage all in one study. So, observation was made in many predetermined and casual situations: in the valleys, cars, cabs, villages, hospitals, and many places where kinship terms were frequently used. The results of this kind of pilot study indicated that 13 types of kinship terms were used more than others (see Appendix A). So, it was decided to include these terms and disregard others. Similarly, to find the most plausible contexts wherein variation occurs, in addition to observation, the researchers conducted a pilot study asking the given respondents "when and where do you think stylistic variation may happen?" Answers led us to include 10 contexts and made use of different social variables in contextualizing the questions.

3. Results

To begin with, frequency of females and males, educational level, occupational status, accommodation, and marital status of four determined age groups were given in Table 2.

As given in Table 2, there were more males assigned to different age groups than females (54.89% vs. 45.07%). Regarding educational level, most of the 15–19 age group speakers were students in schools or universities (100%). 39.63% of the participants did not have a high school diploma, including 12.73% from the 40–above age group. Most of the participants with high school diplomas were in the 20–29 age group. Likewise, BA and MA degrees were more seen in the 20–29 group. Interestingly, most of the students at university or pre-university were in the 15–19 age group. About 37.08% of the subjects were unemployed, 27.27% were students, and 17.82% of them were employees or self-employed. 46.54% of them lived in rural areas and 53.46% live in urban areas. About 55.46% of the subjects were married and 44.36% were single. Table 3, as discussed in the instrumentation section, depicts the subjects' answers indicating the first language they learned, their proficiency in Bahmaie dialect and Persian language compared to their parents, and their preference for Bahmaie or Persian while communicating with their spouses, relatives, and parents. According to the table, 80% of the subjects acquired Bahmaie as the first dialect and 20%, mostly belonging to the 15–19 age group, replied that they first acquired the Persian language. In terms of proficiency in Bahmaie, about 75.3% of the subjects believed that they are weaker than their parents. In contrast, 84.4% of them answered that they are better than their parents at speaking Persian.

Table 2. **Frequency and percentages of speakers' gender, educational level, occupational status, accommodation, and marital status based on their age groups (N= 275)**

	Age group				Total
	15-19	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-above**	
	F (%)	**F (%)**	**F (%)**	**F (%)**	**F (%)**
Gender					
Male	36(13.09)	45(16.36)	40(14.55)	30(10.90)	151 (54.89)
Female	34(12.37)	40(14.55)	30(10.90)	20(7.28)	124(45.07)
					275 (100)
Educational level					
Under diploma	28(10.18)	13(4.72)	33(12)	35(12.73)	109(39.63)
Diploma	12(4.37)	38(13.81)	13(4.72)	0	63(22. 9)
Pre- or university students	30(10.91)	0	0	0	30(10.91)
Associate degree	0	6(2.18)	8(2.90)	5(1.82)	19(6. 91)
BA	0	22(8)	11(4)	10(3.64)	43(15.64)
MA	0	6(2.19)	5(1.82)	0	11(4.01)
					275 (100)
Occupational status					
unemployed	12(4.37)	40(14.55)	27(9.82)	23(8.34)	102(37.08)
Student	58(21.09)	17(6.18)	0	0	75(27.27)
Employee	0	11(4.01)	23(8.36)	15(5.45)	49(17.82)
Self-employment	0	17(6.18)	20(7.27)	12(4.37)	49(17.82)
					275 (100)
Accommodation					
Rural	30(10.91)	45(16.36)	30(10.91)	23(8.36)	133(46.54)
Urban	40(14.55)	40(14.55)	40(14.55)	27(9.81)	142(53.46)
					275 (100)
Marital status					
Married	4(1.45)	34(12.37)	65(23.64)	50(18.18)	153(55.64)
Single	66(24)	51(18.54)	5(1.82)	0	122(44.36)
					275 (100)

Note: F: frequency of distribution, %: of use by speakers.

Table 3. **Frequency and percentages of subjects' answers to the preference questions**

	Age group				Total
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-above	
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
First language					
Bahmaie	15(5.45)	85(30.91)	70(25.45)	50(18.18)	220(80)
Persian	55(20)	0	0	0	55(20)
Proficiency in Luri compared to parents					
Better	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Equal	12(27.15%)	25(29.5%)	16(23%)	15(30%)	68(24.7%)
Weaker		60(70.5%)	54(77%)	35(70%)	207(75.3%)
58(82.85%)**Proficiency in Persian compared to parents**					
Better	50(71.4%)	75(88.2%)	64(91.5%)	43(86%)	232(84.4%)
Equal	6(8.6%)	8(9.4%)	6(8.5%)	7(14%)	27(9.8%)
Weaker	14(20%)	2(2.4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	16(5.8%)
Language used to speak with spouse					
Persian	4(100%)	4(11.8%)	3(4.6%)	4(8%)	15(9.8%)
Bahmaie	0(0%)	30(88.2%)	62(95.4%)	46(92%)	138(90.2%)
Language used to speak with parents					
Persian	25(35.7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	25(9.1%)
Bahmaie	45(64.3%)	85(100%)	70(100%)	50(100%)	250(90.9%)
Language used to speak with old relatives					
Persian	6(8.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	6(2.2%)
Bahmaie	64(91.4%)	85(100%)	70(100%)	50(100%)	269(97.8%)
Which language do you encourage your children to speak?					
Bahmaie	0(0%)	12(35.3%)	5(7.7%)	7(14%	24 (15.7%)
Persian	4(100%)	22(64.7%)	60(92.3%)	43(86%)	129(84.3%)

About 90.9% of married participants preferred to speak Bahmaie with their spouses. Except for 9.1% of the subjects belonging to the 15–19 age group, 97.8% picked Bahmaie to speak with their parents, about 97.8% used Bahmaie to speak with their old relatives. Among those married people with children, 84% tended to encourage their children to speak and use Persian.

Following these questions, subjects were asked to answer which form of kinship terms they use across different contexts. Table 4 and 5 respectively show the general frequency and distribution of kinship terms regarding the females' and males' age groups.

Results in Table 4 indicate that most of the females in the 15–19 age group used Persian form of kinship terms. They only preferred to call their grandfathers and grandmothers in Bahmaie more than other kinship terms – 39.16% for bɑ:vɑ: (grandfather) and 48.35% for nænə (grandmother). Four Bahmaie kinship terms hɑ:lu: (uncle), tɑ:tə (uncle), mɑ:mə (aunt), and xɑ:læ (aunt) were most significantly replaced by Persian equivalents dɑ:ji: (96.5%), æmu: (95.4%), æmə (97.42%), and xɑ:lə (95.95%).

Table 4. **Frequency of distribution and percentages of kinship terms among females of four age groups**

Kinship terms	Age group (females)							
	15–19		20–29		30–39		40-above	
	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)
bɑ:bɑ: / bəʊ	912(83.82) / 176(16.18)	1088	800(62.5) /480(37.50)	1280	390(40.62) 570(59.38)	960	270(42.18) 370(57.81)	640
mɑ:mɑ:n / dɑ:	914(84.0) / 174(16.0)	1088	784(61.25)/ 496(38.75)	1280	405(42.19) 555(57.81	960	280(43.75) 360(56.25)	640
bɑ:bɑ: bɔ:zɔ:rg / bɑ:vɑ:	662(60.84) / 426(39.16)	1088	610(47.65)/ 670(52.35)	1280	390(40.62) 570(59.38	960	130(20.31) 510(79.69)	640
mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg / nænə	562(51.65) / 526(48.35)	1088	524(40.93) / 756(59.07)	1280	45(4.69) 915(95.31)	960	90(14.06) 550(85.94)	640
dɑ:dɑ:ʃ / gəʊ	968(88.97) / 120(11.03)	1088	782(61.09)/ 498(38.91)	1280	368(38.33) 592(61.67	960	275(42.97) 365(57.03)	640
ɑ:dʒi: / dædə	1004(92.28) / 84(7.72)	1088	938(73.28)/ 342(26.72)	1280	577(60.1) 383(39.9)	960	410(64.06) 230(25.94)	640
æmu: / tɑ:tə	1038(95.4) / 50(4.6)	1088	1185(92.57)/ 95(7.43)	1280	690(71.87) 270(28.13	960	440(67.75) 200(32.25)	640
dɑ:ji: / hɑ:lu:	1050(96.5) / 38(3.5)	1088	1195(93.35)/ 85(6.65)	1280	720(75) 240(25)	960	430(67.19) 210(32.81)	640
æmə / mɑ:mə	1060(97.42) / 28(2.58)	1088	1188(92.81)/ 92(7.19)	1280	720(75) 240(25)	960	430(67.19) 210(32.81)	640
xɑ:lə **/** xɑ:læ	1044(95.95) / 44(4.05)	1088	1195(93.35) / 85(6.65)	1280	728(75.83) 232(25.17	960	445(69.53) 195(30.47)	640
pəsær / kɔr	990(90.99) / 98(9.01)	1088	1050(82.03) / 230(17.97)	1280	668(69.58) 292(30.42	960	255(39.84) 385(60.16)	640
dɔxtær / dɔwær	988(90.8) / 100(9.2)	1088	1054(82.34) / 226(17.66)	1280	675(70.31) 285(29.69	960	265(41.40) 375(58.60)	640
pəsær xɑ:lə / xɔrzu	956(87.86) / 132(12.14)	1088	1123(87.73)/ 157(12.27)	1280	728(75.83) 232(25.17	960	420(65.62) 220(34.38)	640

Likewise, in 20–29 age group, speakers exhaustively tended to use Persian forms of hɑ:lu: (uncle), tɑ:tə (uncle), mɑ:mə (aunt), and xɑ:læ (aunt). However, they used Bahmaie forms of bɑ:vɑ: (grandfather) and nænə (grandmother) more than their Persian equivalents (52.35% and 59.07% vs. 47.65% and 40.93%, respectively). Stated otherewise, Persian equivalents were favored more.

Among 30–39 age group, five Bahmaie forms of kinship terms were used more than their Persian equivalents: bɑ:bɑ: 40.62% vs. bəʊ 59.38 (father), mɑ:mɑ:n 42.19% vs. dɑ: 57.81% (mother), bɑ:bɑ: bɔ:zɔ:rg 40.62 vs. bɑ:vɑ: 59.38 (grandfather), mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg 4.69 vs. nænə 95.31 (grandmother), dɑ:dɑ:ʃ 38.33 vs. gəʊ 61.67 (brother). Other kinship terms were more used in Persian forms. Similarly, 40-above age group reported to use these Bahmaie forms in addition to kɔr and dɔwær instead of dɔxtær (girl) and pəsær (boy).

In Table 5, the frequency and distribution of kinship terms used by male speakers were shown. Males in 15–19 age group, in contrast with females who outstandingly favored Persian words for kinship terms, preferred to use nænə (52.41) more than mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg (47.59). Other kinship terms, except for bɑ:vɑ: (46.95), were mostly used in Persian form. In 20–29 age group, male speakers made use of Bahmaie words for bəʊ (54.79), dɑ: (54.13), bɑ:vɑ: (56.86), and nænə

(61.99). However, for other terms they tended to use Persian equivalents. This tendency is also observed among members of 30–39 age group, though they just used Bahmaie words of bɑ:vɑ: (51.09), and nænə (59.22) more than Persian ones. Among 40–above speakers, the same as 20–29 group, bəʊ (65.16), dɑ: (69.47), bɑ:vɑ: (68.25), and nænə (75.76) were used more than their Persian equivalents

Table 5. **Frequency of distribution and percentages of kinship terms among males of four age groups**

Kinship terms	Age group (males)							
	15–19		20–29		30–39		40-above	
	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)	F(%)	F (100%)
bɑ:bɑ:/bəʊ	946(80.99) / 222(19.01)	1168	651(45.21) / 789(54.79)	1440	674(52.65) 606(47.25)	1280	332(34.84) 621(65.16)	953
mɑ:mɑ:n / dɑ:	992(81.18) / 230(18.82)	1222	678(45.87)/ 800(54.13)	1478	656(51.25) 624(48.75)	1280	291(30.53) 662(69.47)	953
bɑ:bɑ: bɔ:zɔ:rg / bɑ:vɑ:	748(53.05) / 662(46.95)	1410	620(43.14)/ 817(56.86)	1437	632(48.91) 660(51.09)	1292	302(31.75) 649(68.25)	951
mɑ:mɑ:n bɔ:zɔ:rg / nænə	572(47.59) / 630(52.41)	1202	547(38.01) / 892(61.99)	1439	522(40.78) 758(59.22)	1280	231(24.24) 722(75.76)	953
dɑ:dɑ:ʃ / gəʊ	994(82.69) / 208(17.31)	1202	909(63.16)/ 530(36.84)	1439	802(62.56) 478(37.44)	1280	504(52.99) 447(47.01)	951
ɑ:dʒi: / dædə	1076(88.05) /146(11.95)	1222	984(66.53)/ 495(33.47)	1479	908(72.99) 336(27.01)	1244	630(66.25) 321(35.75)	951
æmu: / tɑ:tə	1038(95.4) / 50(4.6)	1088	1232(85.61) 207(14.39)	1439	1154(89.87) 130(10.13)	1284	774(81.13) 180(18.87)	954
dɑ:ji: / hɑ:lu:	1154(89.32) / 138(10.68)	1292	1238(86.03) 201(13.97)	1439	1140(89.06) 140(10.94)	1280	769(80.86) 182(19.14)	951
æmə / mɑ:mə	1116(94.25) / 68(5.75)	1184	1224(85.06) 215(14.94)	1439	1098(85.78) 182(14.22)	1280	739(77.46) 215(22.54)	954
xɑ:lə **/** xɑ:læ	1142(85.35) / 196(14.65)	1338	1191(82.08) 260(17.92)	1451	1134(88.59) 146(11.41)	1280	774(81.13) 177(18.87)	951
pəsær / kɔr	1066(87.23) / 156(12.77)	1222	1089(75.68) 350(14.32)	1439	1066(83.41) 212(16.59)	1278	632(66.46) 319(35.54)	951
dɔxtær / dɔwær	1070(87.56) / 152(12.44)	1222	1066(74.08) 373(25.92)	1439	1076(84.19) 202(15.81)	1278	616(64.77) 335(35.23)	951
pəsær xɑ:lə / xɔrzu	1146(94.4) / 68(5.6)	1214	1031(71.4) 413(28.6)	1444	904(70.73) 374(29.27)	1278	605(63.42) 349(36.58)	954

After presenting the frequency and distribution of kinship terms among females and males of different age groups, it was found that the movement towards Persian forms of kinship terms was common among all speakers. This variation, as discussed by language analysts, happens for some factors. The first factor can be the context of use. Table 6 presents the speakers' tendency towards using Persian or Bahmaie forms of kinship terms.

Based on the results depicted in Table 6, age group 15–19, regardless of the context, used Persian terms more than Bahmaie ones. 20–29 age group members used Bahmaie terms in contexts such as home, shopping center, educational setting, hospital, park, and ceremony, but used Persian in other contexts such as work, party, and phone talk. Speakers in the 30–39 age group used Persian terms in contexts such as party, educational setting, and office while they reported using Bahmaie terms across home, shopping center, hospital, park, work, ceremony, and phone talk. 40–above age group speakers reported to use more Bahmaie terms than Persian ones in all contexts except party.

Table 6. **Frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms across different contexts**

Contexts	Age group				
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-above	Total
	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (100%) Persian Bahmaie
Home	652(35.4) 258(17.6)	514(27.9) 590(40.35)	445(24.18) 488(33.4)	229(12.45) 426(29.14)	1840 1462
Work*	802(28.8) 108(14.08)	873(31.34) 214(27.9)	678(24.35) 229(29.86)	432(15.52) 216(28.17)	2785 767
Shopping center	766(31.9) 144(13.8)	760(31.66) 344(33.1)	541(22.55) 235(22.62)	333(13.88) 316(30.42)	2400 1039
Party	770(74.1) 140(14.15)	701(67.46) 403(40.7)	736(70.84) 171(17.28)	406(39.07) 276(27.88)	1039 990
Educational setting	742(31.5) 168(13.8)	654(27.75) 450(37.06)	614(26.07) 293(24.14)	346(14.69) 303(24.96)	2356 1214
Hospital	702(30.6) 39(3.5)	667(29.07) 437(39.61)	599(26.12) 314(28.47)	326(14.22) 313(28.38)	2294 1103
Park	716(33.02) 194(13.85)	650(30) 454(32.4)	506(23.34) 401(28.63)	296(13.66) 352(25.13)	2168 1401
Ceremony	684(31.03) 146(11.32)	650(29.5) 454(35.22)	547(24.82) 363(28.17)	323(14.66) 326(25.3)	2204 1289
Office**	822(27.63) 82(13.31)	913(31) 191(31)	776(26.34) 130(21.11)	436(14.8) 213(34.58)	2947 616
Phone talk	676(30.03) 234(18)	743(33) 342(26.3)	509(22.62) 398(30.62)	323(14.35) 326(25.07)	2251 1300

*when the speaker is working in an office
**when one of the speakers' relatives work there

Another factor reported to be effective in language variation is the educational level of the interlocutors. Table 7 shows the results of different age groups' use of kinship terms in relation to their interlocutors' educational status. According to the table, the speakers of four age groups tended to use Persian terms in talking with interlocutors with higher and same-level educational status. For interlocutors with lower educational levels, though it is shown that Persian terms were more preferable, differences were not outstandingly significant. In Table 8, the effects of the interlocutor's dialect on the choices of kinship terms are shown.

Based on the results given in the table, females in 15–19 and 20–29 age groups used more Persian forms of kinship terms when the interlocutor spoke Bahmaie. However, in 30–39 and 40–above groups, speakers selected Bahmaie terms. In the same situation, except for the 40–above group, male speakers of the other groups used Persian terms more than Bahmaie terms. In situations where the interlocutor speaks Persian, both females and males in all age groups, replied that they would pick Persian kinship terms more than their Bahmaie equivalents. And finally, in situations where both Persian and Bahmaie are used, females in all groups, except 40–above, used Persian terms more preferably.

Table 7. **frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms regarding educational status**

Educational Status	Age group				
	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-above	Total
	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (%) Persian Bahmaie	F (100%) Persian Bahmaie
Higher Educational level	802(28.9) 108(13.6)	839(30.23) 265(33.38)	692(24.94) 215(27.08)	442(15.93) 206(25.95)	2775 794
Lower Educational level	742(31.55) 740(38.38)	650(29.39) 452(23.45)	474(21.43) 433(22.46)	346(15.65) 303(15.72)	2212 1928
Equal Educational level	744(32.4) 166(18)	694(30.23) 410(32.29)	506(22.04) 398(31.34)	352(15.34) 296(23.31)	2296 1270

Table 8. **frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms regarding interlocutor's language**

Age group	Interlocutor speaks Bahmaie		Interlocutor speaks Persian		Interlocutors Speak both Bahmaie and Persian	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
15-19						
Persian F (%)	962 (76.35)	992(69.37)	1240(93.51)	1338 (95.3)	788(87.95)	820(90.7)
Bahmaie F (%)	298 (23.65)	438(30.63)	86(6.49)	66 (4.7)	108(12.05)	84(9.3)
Total F (100%)	1260	1430	1326	1404	896	904
20-29						
Persian F (%)	957(62.22)	755 (42.6)	1421(91.26)	1575(89.69)	837(80.4)	737(63.15)
Bahmaie F (%)	581(37.78)	1017(57.4)	136(8.74)	181(10.31)	204(19.6)	430(36.85)
Total F (100%)	1538	1772	1557	1756	1041	1167
30-39						
Persian F (%)	510 (46.57)	864(54.06)	765(68.49)	1372(87.55)	510(66.66)	850(81.42)
Bahmaie F (%)	585 (53.43)	734(45.94)	352(31.51)	195(12.45)	255(33.34)	194(18.58)
Total F (100%)	1095	1598	1117	1567	765	1044
40-above						
Persian F (%)	275(38.46)	564 (46.84)	490(62.82)	799 (68.47)	220(42.3)	490(62.9)
Bahmaie F (%)	440 (61.54)	640(53.16)	290(37.18)	368 (31.43)	300(57.7)	289(37.1)
Total F (100%)	715	1204	780	1167	520	779

The last factor considered as effective in language variation among Bahmaie speakers was third person presence. Speakers of all age groups were asked to answer what form of kinship terms they selected in a situation where a third person, male or female, was present nearby. Results are presented in Table 9. As the results showed, speakers in all age groups reported that they used Persian kinship terms whenever a third person was present during their conversation with an interlocutor.

Table 9. **frequency and percentages of Persian and Bahmaie kinship terms regarding third person presence**

Age group	Third person is a female		Third person is a male	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
15-19				
Persian F (%)	1518 (76.35)	1764 (69.37)	1442(93.51)	1861(95.3)
Bahmaie F (%)	158 (23.65)	186 (30.63)	148(6.49)	186 (4.7)
Total F (100%)	1676	1950	1590	2047
20-29				
Persian F (%)	1731(62.22)	1822 (42.6)	1708(91.26)	1796(89.69)
Bahmaie F (%)	362(37.78)	503(57.4)	364(8.74)	547(10.31)
Total F (100%)	2093	2325	2072	2343
30-39				
Persian F (%)	1092 (46.57)	1165 (54.06)	949(68.49)	1662(87.55)
Bahmaie F (%)	510 (53.43)	303(45.94)	615(31.51)	416(12.45)
Total F (100%)	2412	1468	1564	2078
40-above				
Persian F (%)	600(38.46)	998 (46.84)	605(62.82)	935 (68.47)
Bahmaie F (%)	550 (61.54)	487 (53.16)	445(37.18)	619 (31.43)
Total F (100%)	1150	1485	1050	1554

4. Discussion

This study attempted to examine language variation among Bahmaie (a variant of Luri dialect) speakers living in Ramhormoz city, Khuzestan Province, Iran. The main objective of the study was to find out what factors, mainly nonlinguistic ones, might affect language variation in that specific part of Iran. To pursue this aim, a questionnaire with 32 questions related to the use of kinship terms across different contexts was designed and handed out among Bahmaie speakers. The findings and their related discussions are presented below.

4.1. *Speakers' judgments of their proficiency in Bahmaie and Persian*

To begin with, the speakers were required to answer how they judge their proficiency in Bahmaie and Persian compared to their parents. Most of them believed that their proficiency in Bahmaie is weaker than their parents' (75.3%); however, they know Persian better than their parents (84.4%). This judgment means that the expansion of relationships, developments in technology especially in mass media, migration, studying at high academic levels which are more ostensibly observable among new generations, blurred the demarcation lines of Bahmaie dialect and Persian language. Through these changes and developments, Bahmaie dialect with its vocabularies and structures are to be weakened and forgotten. Instead, Persian language is expanding its dominance.

Though most married speakers reported that they used Bahmaie for communicating with their spouses, parents, and old relatives, they encouraged their children to learn and use Persian more extensively (84.3%). The reason for using Bahmaie dialect to talk with their spouses, parents, and old relatives is 'ease of communication'. Most parents and old people, particularly in rural areas, do not know Persian well and this inability forced others to talk with them in Bahmaie dialect. When the subjects were asked to write their reasons for using Bahmaie or Persian, different reasons were given. The main ones are given in Table 10. As the table shows, the main reasons for using Bahmaie were preserving it as a mother tongue and making communication easier with others. Ease of communication in society, making progress, higher applicability of Persian, future needs, and even keeping prestige were considered as some reasons for learning and using Persian by children.

Table 10. **Speakers' reasons for encouraging their children to speak Bahmaie or Persian**

	Age group			
	15–19	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–above**
Bahmaie	-	– this is our mother tongue – to understand our culture – to retain our nobility	– keeping this dialect alive – this is our common language – this is our mother tongue	– its use is easy – common language among relatives – this is our mother tongue – for keeping sincerity – some relatives do not know Persian well
Persian	– common language in society – for the future needs – For the ease of communication – more prestigious	– to make progress – learning our formal language – to learn social customs – Persian is more applicable	– for the ease of communication – better future – understanding our society – learning our formal language – to make progress – for success in schools	– it is necessary for communication – young boys cannot understand Bahmaie

The main implication is that Bahmaie speakers believed that learning Persian provides more opportunities for their children in the future and somehow, they see success connected to the proficient use of Persian in academic and non-academic situations.

4.2. *Use of kinship terms by Bahmaie speakers across age groups*

The results of using kinship terms among different age groups of Bahmaie speakers indicated that some of the terms are about to be changed and replaced by their Persian equivalent. The main evidence for this claim is that 15–19 age group with more than 90% preferred to use Persian forms for hɑ:lu: (uncle), tɑ:tə (uncle), mɑ:mə (aunt), and xɑ:læ (aunt). This trend with a little difference was observed among other age groups. This unity of preference regardless of age, gender, and even contexts means that use of these kinship terms is about to be forgotten. Wolfram (2006) proposed that simultaneous use of the same term across different situations can be regarded as the sign of linguistic change. Speakers' use of Persian kinship terms for hɑ:lu:, tɑ:tə, mɑ:mə, and xɑ:læ, regardless of the contextual and environmental factors, indicates that they are accelerating the changing process of the terms. Likewise, Labov (2010: 9) argues that "within the speech community, change in progress is reflected by the steady advance of younger speakers over older speakers within each social group". This trend reflects the increase in levels of change during the first language acquisition.

To see if this tendency towards using Persian kinship terms by Bahmaie speakers is a stylistic variation, different social variables were examined. The first factor was general contexts such as home, party, school, hospital, etc. Findings indicated that regardless of the context, 15–19 age group speakers favored the Persian terms and 40–above members favored Bahmaie terms. It means that parents' insistence on encouraging their children to learn and use Persian has been reflected in all contexts. And it can be implied that contexts such as those mentioned in Table 6 do not affect the 15–19 age group speakers' use of kinship terms. For the 40–above age group, variation is not systematic. As a matter of fact, their diction is being fixed and changes in some vocabularies are more difficult than other age groups. Hence, with observing some variation in their use of kinship terms, no systematic tendency was observed. Nevertheless, results indicated that context affected 20–29 and 30–39 age groups' use of kinship terms. It seems that they vary their use of kinship terms based on the contexts.

The second factor supposed to be effective in stylistic variation was the educational level of the interlocutors. Bahmaie speakers over different age groups reported that they highly preferred to use Persian kinship terms during conversation with speakers of higher and the same educational level (2775 vs. 794 and 2296 vs. 1270, respectively). However, this difference was not so significant for lower educational levels (2212 vs. 1928). So, it can be concluded that stylistic variation towards using Persian kinship terms while talking with a speaker with a higher educational level is systematic. This systematicity is not surely generalized for lower and same educational level speakers.

The third factor found to be important in language variation was the language of interlocutors. The subjects were asked to answer what kinship terms they use during communication with a Bahmaie or Persian speaker. According to the results given in Table 8, both males and females in the 40–above age group and females in the 30–39 age group used Bahmaie kinship terms more than Persian ones during conversation with a Bahmaie speaker. Males of 30–39 and females and males of 1519 and 20–29 age groups used Persian terms more than Bahmaie ones. In talking with a Persian speaker, all age groups significantly used Persian kinship terms. For the contexts with mixed language use, except for females in 40–above age groups, the speakers used Persian kinship terms. So, the interlocutor is important in choosing kinship terms. This stylistic variation was more observed among 30–39 and 40–above age groups.

The last factor considered in relation with stylistic variation among Bahmaie speakers was third person presence during conversation with an interlocutor. Results of analyzing this factor in Table 9 demonstrated that third person presence was not influential, at least for the use of kinship terms among Bahmaie speakers. Some Bahmaie kinship terms are about to be replaced by their Persian equivalents. Bahmaie speakers especially in 15–19 and 20–29 age groups are internalizing these changes and without attention to the context, educational level, interlocutors' language, and third person presence use them in their everyday interactions. These changes are common among males and females. In other words, in the context of Ramhormoz, age, as a non-linguistic factor, is more important in language variation than gender.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the stylistic variation of kinship terms among Bahmaie dialect speakers living in Ramhormoz, an eastern city in Khuzestan province, Iran. The factors investigated in this regard were age, gender, educational level, and context of use. The findings showed that age is an important variable in stylistic variation of kinship terms among Bahmaie speakers. The 15–19 age group reported to use Persian terms more frequently. They believe that Persian is a prestigious language and they should get accustomed to it for a more successful future life and communication. The convergence of Bahmaie dialect with Persian is rooted in its limited areas of use, lower social status, lack of documentation, and absence in the media. This convergence and shift from the local dialect to the formal national language have put this dialect in danger, and this needs to be attenuated by the speakers and linguists. As Epps et al. (2022) warn, the rates of language endangerment are sharply increasing over recent years. Lack of linguistic diversity has been considered as evidence for this language change and loss. Additionally, the changes in using linguistic varieties in cultural contexts imply the practice of language change and the culture reproduced in that variety (Ibid). The dialectal changes observed in Ramhormoz and the cultural contact have endangered the Bahmaie dialect. Therefore, it is required to study this prediction in detail in order to identify the main factors and provide insightful findings for making facilitative decisions.

The language of interlocutors was also effective in kinship choices. This finding is in line with the sociolinguistic theories acknowledging the roles of interlocutors' language and status in communication. The speakers' choices of kinship terms based on the context and the addresses confirmed that nonlinguistic factors are significant in dialect change and communication preferences. These insights offer significant implications for the studies of language change, language dominance and maintenance, stylistic variation, and effects of language contact. Also, understanding the factors that affect kinship choices enriches our comprehension of universal models of language change. At the same time, in-depth knowledge about the factors affecting these changes can hinder language imperialism and promote cultural maintenance.

Educational attainment was also found to be important in stylistic variation of kinship terms. Most of the educated speakers in our study preferred to use Persian as the higher status language of communication. This acceptance of Persian terms and norms is in line with the process of uniformity. Labov (1972) and Lass (1997) pointed to the similar processes occurring over time. Therefore, the interaction of uniformity and linguistic variability in regions like Ramhormoz shows the effects of Persian language and the tendencies towards producing linguistic and cultural changes in this region. Additionally, as Epps et al. (2022) noted, these findings can be consistent with cross-linguistic and cross-cultural changes and insightful in making possible predictions.

The correlation of age and language variation, as Sankoff and Thibault (1981) claimed, may be regarded as evidence of language change. The high frequency of Persian kinship terms across different contexts in this study suggests that Bahmaie dialect is about to be Persified. This process of change and hegemony of Persian terms was in line with language imperialism. As language imperialism is defined as a theory analyzing the associations between the dominant and the dominated culture (Philipson 2013), the changes in the subcultures in favor of the dominant culture within a country like Iran is also regarded as language imperialism. Different signs of linguistic change can be traced in subcultures like Luri. In this study, the changes in the use of kinship terms over different contexts were observed to be the signs of Persian dominance over the Bahmaie speakers' dialect. Lack of Bahmaie kinship terms in the youths' discourse is an evidence for this dominance. The new generation tend to use Persian kinship terms and this is dangerous for the Bahmaie culture and dialect. Philipson (2013) noted that such changes in discourse are the symptoms of linguistic imperialism. In fact, the power of the dominant language, Persian, is negotiated and practiced in the discourse of the new generation of Bahmaie speakers, and this structure is an imperialist structure. According to Obler (1993), retrieving less-frequent items is difficult. Therefore, if the new Bahmaie generation continues using Persian terms, they might forget the Bahmaie equivalents due to the Persian dominance. Erfani (2013) and Aliakbari & Khodakarami (2013) emphasize that it is necessary to provide opportunities such as holding seminars and conferences, publishing books, budgeting research projects, for making speakers aware of this language change. Therefore, Bahmaie scholars along with sociolinguists should shoulder this responsibility and save Bahmaie dialect.

The findings of this study were based on the age groups and some nonlinguistic factors. This grouping procedure might be a limitation for the generalization of these findings. Similar studies with different grouping procedures can be a good complement for the issues presented here.

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Appendix A: Kinship terms in Bahmaie dialect

English	Persian	Luri
father	/bɑ:bɑ:/	/bəʊ/
Mother	/mɑ:mɑ:n/	/dɑ:/
grandfather	/bɑ:bɑ: bɔ:zɔ:rg/	/nænə/
grandmother	/dɑ:dɑ:ʃ/	/gəʊ/
brother	/ɑ:dʒi:/	/dædə/

English	**Persian**	**Luri**
Sister	/æmu:/	/tɑ:tə/
uncle	/dɑ:ji:/	/hɑ:lu:/
uncle	/æmu:/	/tɑ:tə/
Aunt	/æmə/	/mɑ:mə/
Aunt	/xɑ:lə/	/xɑ:læ/
son/boy	/pəsær/	/kɔr/
daughter/girl	/dɔxtær/	/dɔwær/
cousin	/pəsær xɑ:lə/	/xɔrzu/

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Translingualism and intercultural narratives in Kiana Davenport's "House of Many Gods"

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Abstract
Language and culture contacts resulting from the migration of population, as well as current geopolitical and technological processes, enhance the increase of translingual works that reveal symbiotic phenomena of languages and cultures in contact. However, there are still many unsolved problems in defining the translingual discourse and linguistic devices for creating it. The article discusses intercultural narratives in a novel by Kiana Davenport, an American author of Hawaiian descent, whose literary creative translingual work is enhanced by intercultural phenomena related to the contacts of American English, Hawaiian, and Russian languages. The article aims to describe linguistic devices for creating translingualism and to characterize the processes that take place in assimilation and language alteration in contact situations. The research has revealed that translinguality characterizes not only texts that are written in a second language, as is a traditional point of view, but also writings of a bilingual with two native languages enhanced by a third one. Translinguality can be reached by various linguistic tools comprising lexical borrowings, including endonymic toponyms and culture-specific concepts, loan translations, allusions, as well as pidginization of speech and some others. The findings showed that pidginization of speech of different characters results in stylized dialogues with deviated articulation of English words, intentional grammatical deviations, set expressions from Hawaiian Pidgin and wordplay. The results of the paper expand the idea of translingualism and intercultural communication and can be used for further research into linguistic and cultural contacts.

Key words: *translingualism, translingual discourse, intercultural communication, native Hawaiian, American English, Russian, transculturalism*

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Транслингвизм и межкультурные нарративы в романе Кианы Давенпорт «Приют для ваших богов»

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Аннотация
Благодаря языковым и культурным контактам, связанным с миграцией населения, геополитическими и технологическими процессами, свойственными современному миру, растет чило транслингвальных произведений, в которых прослеживаются симбиозные явления контактирующих языков и культур. Однако как в определении транслингвального дискурса, так и в описании средств его создания остается много нерешенных вопросов. В статье рассматриваются межкультурные нарративы в романе К. Давенпорт, американской писательницы гавайского происхождения, чье художественное транслингвальное творчество обогащено межкультурными явлениями, связанными с контактами английского (при его американском варианте), гавайского и русского языков. Цель статьи – выявить языковые средства создания транслингвальности и охарактеризовать процессы, происходящие в ассимиляции и изменении языков в ситуации языкового контакта. Результаты исследования показали, что транслингвальность характеризует не только речь автора, пишущего на иностранном языке, но также речь билингва, использующего оба родных языка, усиленных третьим. Она может создаваться различными языковыми средствами, среди которых – лексические заимствования, в том числе эндонимические топонимы и культурно-специфические понятия; кальки, аллюзии, а также пиджинизация речи и др. Пиджинизация речи персонажей приводит к стилизованным диалогам с измененной артикуляцией английских слов, намеренными грамматическими отклонениями, устойчивыми выражениями из гавайского пиджина, игре слов и др. Полученные данные расширяют представление о транслингвизме и межкультурной коммуникации и могут быть использованы для изучения языковых и культурных контактов.
Ключевые слова: *транслингвальность, траслингвальный дискурс, межкультурная коммуникация, гавайский язык, английский язык, русский язык, транскультурация*

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of translinguality was noticed and defined in the end of the 20th century (Kellman 2000) and is still an issue open to debate in the 2020s. The problem concerns the definition of the concept, the spectrum of authors that could be labeled translingual, the interrelation of the term with synonymic names, such as bilinguality and intercultural communication, and the ways translinguality is expressed with.

The emergence of the theory of translinguality was preceded by such notions as transculturality and transculturation. And until now the two notions go hand in hand and are sometimes interchangeable (e.g., translingual literature is also termed transcultural literature), which is hardly surprising, for language and culture are interdependent if not inseparable in social discourse. It has been noticed that the latter term (transculturality) is preferred mostly by philosophers, anthropologists, and politicians discussing relations of Western and postcolonial cultures. The Cuban philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Fernando Ortiz first introduced the term *transculturality* in 1940 in his book "Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar" (Ortiz 1995). One of the most notable figures amongst postcolonial intellectuals who helped reinstate the original concept of transculturality was Edward Said, a Palestinian-American researcher. In his most recognized work "Culture and Imperialism" E. Said argued that the oppressing and the oppressed cultures do not fully absorb one another, invoking specific relations between them (Said 1993: 51). Transculturation produces particular identities, which are impossible to grasp within the functionalist framework. The Cuban philosopher advocated for studying cultures not from the point of view of an external observer but from the inside, which allows researchers to distance themselves from the imperialist and colonial remnants of the past and engage in a productive process of transcultural interaction. This also brings us closer to the idea of translingualism that we are going to discuss further on.

To speak of Western and other cultures as presented in one work, we have chosen a novel by Kiana Davenport who is a *Kanaka Māoli* (Native Hawaiian) and American author. She was born in Honolulu to a mixed-race family, with her father from Alabama and mother of native Hawaiian descent.

"House of Many Gods" is Davenport's third novel. It develops three distinctive plotlines. One of them is the story of Anahola, a young Hawaiian woman, and Max, an immunologist at a San Francisco clinic. The second main narrative of the novel centers around the daughter of Anahola, Ana, who was abandoned by her mother and raised by her Hawaiian family, later becoming the embodiment of the Hawaiian Renaissance movement. The third line is a story of Nikolai Volenko, a Russian who came to Hawai'i as a documentary film-maker and met Ana who became his beloved and soulmate. Thus, the novel presents three cultures and languages voiced by Hawaiians, Americans and a Russian, two of which are personified in the author and one (Russian) is an external one.

Davenport's bilingualism and biculturalism are reflected in her writing, as she demonstrates great usage of literary English and an understanding of the indigenous culture of Hawai'i, which allows her to integrate two different cultural experiences. However, with this research we want to prove that "House of Many Gods" is not simply bicultural, but rather transcultural and translingual, as well as intercultural, because of an overarching narrative that is reflected in the stories of characters who belong to three distinct cultures – Hawaiian, American and Russian – and who frequently engage in intercultural communication.

Thus, the objectives of this paper are twofold: to scrutinize the concepts of translinguality, transculturality, and intercultural communication and their relationship as well as to prove that "House of Many Gods" is transcultural and translingual with the addition of interculturality; and to reveal a set of linguistic devices that create these transcultural and translingual narratives to serve intercultural understanding.

This paper is organized in the following way. Section 2 (Theoretical basis) serves as a presentation of the theories of transculturation and translingualism, as compared with intercultural communication theory. In section 3 (Material and Methods), we describe the material that has become the source for our study as well as the tools, which will be used to evaluate it. Section 4 (Findings) analyses the various linguistic devices used to create transcultural and translingual narratives in Davenport's novel under study. Section 5 (Discussion) delves into the novel's translinguality, transculturality and their relevance for intercultural communication. Section 6 (Conclusion) serves as a summary of the answers to the research questions set in the introduction as objectives of the paper.

2. Theoretical basis

The central concepts of this study are translingualism, transculturation and intercultural communication. The notion of **translingualism/translinguality** first originated in the 1990s and was introduced into the field of linguistics by the American critic and academic Steven G. Kellman (2000). In his most notable work "The Translingual Imagination", Kellman conducted a detailed analysis of literary works of various African and Jewish authors, as well as such authors as Mary Antin, Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, John Maxwell Coetzee and others (Kellman 2000, see also Kellman 2019). The results of this research allowed Kellman to lay a foundation of what translingualism is and how it manifests itself in different literary practices. In general, translinguality implies a harmonious transition from one linguaculture to another, leading to their partial merging without complete assimilation. At the same time, members of linguacultures that are in this process of transition manage to retain their identities and create mixed narratives and discourses (Canagarajah 2002: 38). Translinguality also implies a sort of intertwinement of languages, which results in the apparition of an enriched and qualitatively new linguaculture (Proshina 2016: 6). Because of this constant borderline state and the mutual enrichment of linguacultures, the theory of translingualism views language not as a system (which is typical of bilingualism), but as a practice, a process of creation of speech. And, since a translingual person possesses a wider range of linguistic resources, their speech can be characterized as transformative, ludic and integrating. Being translingual opens up additional opportunities, since someone who is translingual can successfully use languages that are in their repertoire, while sometimes allowing themselves to break certain norms and adapt language codes according to their goals and specific contexts (Canagarajah 2013). There are a number of communicative strategies that allow translinguals to transmit information and act as full-fledged participants of a communicative act: code switching; borrowings; hybridization and pidginization of language; simplification; use of international words; paraphrasing; use of non-verbal gestures; activation of metalinguistic knowledge, etc. (Proshina 2017: 162, Lee 2022).

Since the study of translingualism is basically associated with a translingual process of creating literary works of "culturally mobile" authors (Dagnino 2012: 1) who do not write in their mother tongue but maintain their linguacultural and ethnic identity, the notion of translingualism is frequently related to transculturalism and transcultural literature (Wanner 2011, Rivlina 2016). One of the main features of this kind of literature is cultural synergy – the unification of elements that are culturally different, which creates a qualitatively different formation the effect of which surpasses the sum of its elements (Zhukova et al. 2013: 367). However, though in the collocation "translingual/transcultural literature" the attributive terms are used as synonyms, it is better to differentiate between them, with "transcultural" focusing on the cultural aspect of literature and "translingual" relating to the verbal means of expressing linguacultural identity.

Today the term "**transculturation**" is used not only in the field of culture studies and anthropology, but also in the context of other humanitarian and social sciences and is perceived as a contemporary societal and cultural principal and an epistemological model, which manifests itself in various areas of life and is more fitting for the current era of globalization (Tlostanova 2011: 133). Therefore, transculturation is based on a sort of cultural polylogue, in which cultures actively interact with one another, while not fully merging and retaining their right to opacity (Tlostanova 2004: 28). Sometimes transculturality is defined as "the formation of multifaceted, fluid identities resulting from diverse cultural encounters" (Nordin et al. 2013: ix). In this context a transcultural person acts as a carrier of several identities in both cultures, and this leads to acceptance of differences, hybridization and creation of a new culture that is beyond the established boundaries of different national, racial, gender and professional cultures (Zhukova et al. 2013: 419).

This contemporary understanding of transculturation is inevitably linked but not limited to what is understood by **intercultural communication**. In a general sense, intercultural communication means interaction between people that represent different cultures (Ter-Minasova 2004). Experts in linguaculture study view intercultural communication as an either direct or indirect exchange of information between members of different linguacultures (Leontovich 2003). One of the more thorough definitions is provided by interdisciplinary scholars. From an interdisciplinary point of view intercultural communication is defined as follows: a combination of cognitive-affective and behavioral processes of sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages, produced by communicators that possess different background knowledge and that are interacting in an interpersonal, group, organizational or societal context (Ishii 2006). Given that transculturation creates a qualitatively new culture through a cultural polylogue, intercultural communication can be viewed as an essential step that has to be taken in order to achieve transculturation. In the triad "intercultural communication –

transculturation – translingualism", the third element should be seen as a result of the first two. Translingualism appears to be motivated by transculturation that belongs to an individual and emerges in intercultural communication between representatives of different cultures.

3. Material and methods

Kiana Davenport's novel "House of Many Gods" was chosen as the primary source of transcultural, translingual and intercultural practices, such as code switching; borrowings; hybridization and pidginization of language; simplification; paraphrasing different culture's concepts, and other language phenomena hinting at linguistic and cultural synergy. The material to be analyzed was selected by method of continuous sampling.

To respond to the research questions motivated by the objectives set in the Introductory section (Can the work of the Hawaiian American author whose native language is English be termed translingual, transcultural or just intercultural? What are the linguistic tools to produce the effect of translinguality, transculturation, or interculturality?), we had to do basic exploratory research developing the theory of translingualism and allowing us to expand the understanding of the discussed concepts. The descriptive analysis was used based on qualitative primary data.

All obtained extracts that were marked as containing results of language contact were grouped according to their linguistic characteristics. The contextual analysis helped to mark the effect of the used translingual devices onto the recipient characters. In cases of doubt, native Hawaiian language resources (Ulukau Hawaiian Dictionaries) were used in order to facilitate the understanding of certain words and phrases.

In addition to that, a number of studies were consulted and cited in order to provide the necessary context for a better understanding of Davenport's verbalization and cultural explanations. Scholarly texts in the field of contemporary Hawaiian literature helped understand the key defining features of a native Hawaiian novel and thus highlight the distinctive characteristics of the writing in question.

4. Findings

This section of our research is dedicated to the systematization of different linguistic tools that are used to create translingual, transcultural and intercultural narratives in K. Davenport's "House of Many Gods". In case of the material that we have gathered, these tools are as follows: lexical borrowings from Native Hawaiian (which include endonymic toponyms and culture-specific concepts), transliterated Russian words and translations from Russian into English.

4.1. Lexical borrowings from Native Hawaiian

The first and the most noticeable linguistic device that Davenport employs in her writing is the use of lexical borrowings or loanwords from *'Ōlelo Hawai'i*, the indigenous Hawaiian language. Due to the prolonged co-existence of the indigenous population and their Western colonizers, many words from Native Hawaiian entered American English as borrowings and are now widely used by different ethnic subgroups of the island.

In the context of the novel, the use of loanwords serves a clear purpose of uniting characters that are speakers of the Hawaiian language, as it allows them to refer to shared cultural and social experiences and reflects their socio-cultural identity. Borrowings from the indigenous language allow Ana, Anahola and other members of their family to express their bicultural identity, communicate what they feel about their intersectional position in society and make sense of their experience living in postcolonial Hawai'i.

4.1.1. Endonymic toponyms

The first major group of borrowings is comprised of endonymic toponyms, meaning native names for certain geographical places and locations. Nowadays, these borrowings transcend cultural bounds and help interlocutors from different subcultures of Hawai'i and Polynesia communicate, as such toponyms are known to members of all cultures represented in the region.

In the novel, endonymic toponyms serve not only the purpose of establishing certain geographical bounds, but also as a means of showing love for one's indigenous land and expressing pride in Hawaiian linguistic heritage. For instance, names of mountains are known to be vitally important to Hawaiian people as they point to the kindred of indigenous communities that are believed to be spiritually connected with the mountains they were born at. The narrator frequently mentions such places as Wai'anae, Ma'ili, Nanakuli, Lualualei, Makaha and Mākua, all of which are real locations on the island of O'ahu. In example (1) we see how all of them are used in the same passage.

(1) This was the wild place, the untutored place, where the Grand Tūtū of the coast, the rugged **Wai'anae** Mountains, watched over the generations. Here, thirty miles west of Honolulu, were the rough tribes of **Wai'anae**, native clans that spawned outcasts and felons. Yet their towns had names like lullabies – **Ma'ili**, **Nanakuli**, **Lualualei** – until up past **Makaha** and **Mākua** the coastal road ran out, coming to a blunt point like a shark's snout (Davenport 2007: 4).

Example (2) demonstrates the use of a specific endonymic toponym that is deeply rooted in Hawaiian mythology – Wai'ale'ale. It is a sleeping volcano and a sacred mountain named after the wife of Kaua'i, an indigenous god whose name was later given to the second-oldest of the main Hawaiian Islands. Wai'ale'ale as a word can be translated as "rippling/overflowing water", referring to the tropical rainforest climate atop the volcano, which causes substantial rainfall throughout the whole year.

(2) "Folks say this is our most beautiful island. Here is one of the world's great annual rainfalls high up on Mt. **Wai'ale'ale**."
"Which means?"
"A Rippling on the Water. Because of the pond up there on the plateau of that peak. Also **Wai'ale'ale** was the wife of the god **Kaua'i**." (Davenport 2007: 92)

Example (3) provides us with several *Kanaka Māoli* toponyms that are all connected to the *Menehune*, who are a mythological race of dwarf people that inhabit remote areas of the Hawaiian Islands. One of the toponyms is Pu'ukapele, a mountain peak on the Kaua'i island believed to be a point of worship and gathering for the dwarf people. The next borrowed placename is Waimea, which in this particular case refers to the so-called Grand Canyon of the Pacific that was formed by a river of the same name. Its literal translation is "reddish water", a reference to the color of the canyon's soil. The last endonym of the extract is Maka-ihu-wa'a, a mythologeme of an ancient indigenous lighthouse that was built by the *Menehune* in order to help them find their way back when they go out fishing on the deep ocean in their canoes. It is also a compound word that can be translated as "eyes at the prow of the canoe", an image of a lighthouse that helps voyagers find their way.

(3) "…There is a place, called **Pu'ukapele**, high up in **Waimea** Canyon. It was the home of the ***Menehune***. They gathered there to talk and to debate, rather like the Athenian agora…"
…
"The ***Menehune*** also built the first lighthouse in Hawai'i. They called it **Maka-ihu-wa'a**. Eyes of the canoe prow…" (Davenport 2007: 93)

In example (4) the endonym in question is Polihale, the name of a remote beach on the western side of the island of Kaua'i, now an official state park. As is pointed out in the extract, this location is directly connected to indigenous gods, or *ākua*. Upon closer inspection, we see that the endonym itself is composed of two lexemes *poli* and *hale*, the first one meaning "bosom" and the second one meaning "house". The word *poli* itself contains the root *po* that has several meanings, one of which is "the realm of the gods", while another pertains to Hawaiian mythology and refers to the original darkness from which life and the world were manifested.

(4) "***Polihale***," Ana whispered. "Home of the spirits. Here the coast road ends and our gods begin. Our ***ākua***." (Davenport 2007: 94)

Example (5) contains a hydronym, *Wailua*, which other than being an official placename also contains the meanings "spirit", "ghost" and "remains of the dead". The name of the next location is *Wailua Nui Hoano*, which translates as "great sacred spirit" and refers to a part of land that is taboo to common people and that was once an ancient capital of Kaua'i.

(5) "There's **Wailua** River. See where it flows into the sea? Home to the island's kings and high chiefs. They called it ***Wailua Nui Hoano***." (Davenport 2007: 105)

The endonymic toponyms found in examples (1)–(5) mostly refer to proper names of mountains and mountain ranges, bodies of water, towns and cities and, in some cases, geographical features whose names exhibit connections to *Kanaka Māoli* mythology.

4.1.2. Culture-specific concepts

Another type of Hawaiian lexical borrowings that are present in the novel are words used to signify certain culture-specific concepts. *Kanaka Māoli* words that refer to flora, fauna and food are often used by Native Hawaiians in their English speech, and some of these words are widely-known and can also be employed by the white population of the island. However, some concepts are too specific, understanding them requires additional background knowledge, which is why their use is reserved to indigenous speakers.

Loanwords that are present in example (6) describe various elements of Hawaiian culture. The word *tūtū* is a varied spelling of *kūkū*, which is an affectionate form of address to a grandparent, granduncle or grandaunt and any relative or close friend of this person's generation. The next lexeme, *taro*, is a borrowing from the Māori language that has successfully entered English and is now more popular than its Native Hawaiian variant *kalo*. It is the name of a traditional root vegetable that is cultivated all across Polynesia and, more broadly, Oceania. The phrase *Mahealani Hoku* is composed of two words, both of which describe a specific time period – the night of the full moon in ancient Hawaiian calendar. The word Mahealani itself is composed of *māhea*, meaning "hazy", and *lani*, meaning "sky", which is meant to convey the image of a sky that is hazy during moonlight. *Lo'i* refers to the irrigated soil used to cultivate taro. Next is the lexeme *heiau* that contains the meanings "shrine" and "high place of worship" and is closely connected to the concept of *kapu*, a quality of sacredness and prohibition that can be attributed to certain places, actions, words and foods.

(6) Still, old ***tūtū*** men and women planted their ***taro*** at ***Mahealani Hoku***, the full moon. And when they harvested the **taro**, underneath was good. And slogging in the ***lo'i***, the taro mud, was good.

…

Here too, among steep ridges in valley recesses were ancient ruins, sacred ***heiau***, prayer-towns, and sacrificial altars. Here in caves hidden by volcanic rocks, in bags of rotting nets, eyeless skulls watched the land to see what ***kapu*** would be broken (Davenport 2007: 4).

Example (7) contains a lot of loanwords that describe concepts related to childbirth, *Hānau*. It can be used as a noun, meaning simply "childbirth", or as the idiom "to give birth". The *alawela* refers to the lines that appear on the stomach of a pregnant woman and converge near the navel, in this case described by the Hawaiian word *piko*. The compound noun *pale keiki* consists of the verb *pale*, which is "to deliver, as a child", and the noun *keiki*, which stands for "child", but combined together they create a new meaning – "midwife", a person who assists childbirth, enunciates its different stages and makes sure that the whole process goes according to Native Hawaiian tradition. *Ko'o kua* is yet another borrowed phrase, which is made of *ko'o* that possesses the meanings of "to support" or "helper" and *kua*, meaning both "burden" and "back". It is used to describe a person, whose job is to sit behind a woman in labor, support her back and provide psychological relief. The two exclamations that follow, "*Ē hāmau!*" and "*Ho'olohe!*", correspond to the verbs "to be silent" and "to listen" in the imperative mood. *'Ewe'ewe-iki* is a mythologeme that refers to a woman, who, according to an indigenous legend, died during childbirth and is said to return at night as a ghost and produce a certain cry. In Native Hawaiian tradition this is considered an omen of a birth that is approaching. Finally, there is the borrowed noun *'ina'ina*, which describes the amniotic fluid that precedes labor during childbirth.

> (7) When the lines of the ***alawela***, the scorched path, had met and gone into Rosie's navel her labor pains began. The old ***pale keiki*** was called. Boiling water, towels, and clean sheets were readied. Ana prepared herself as ***ko'o kua***, Rosie's back support.
>
> …
>
> "***Ē hāmau! Ho'olohe!***" Be silent. Listen. "Have not the dark lines of the ***alawela*** met at the ***piko***? Has not the cry of ***'Ewe'ewe-iki***, ghost mother, been heard singing on the roof? And look. The ***'ina'ina*** has appeared." First bloodstains. "It is time of ***Hānau***." Childbirth (Davenport 2007: 54).

In example (8) a certain process of *Hā* is mentioned. The word itself can be translated as either the noun "exhale" or the verb "to breathe", but in the context of this example it also takes upon itself the symbolic meaning of a ritual that consists of someone "exhaling" their lifeforce into another human being. This is also a way of transferring one's *mana*, supernatural or divine power, a Polynesian concept that is well-known to English speakers as it has already become part of contemporary pop culture.

> (8) Through wracking pain and morphine, Emma had whispered, "Child. This is my last will and testament. Through this ***Hā***, you have received my ***mana***." (Davenport 2007: 65)

Examples (6)–(8) demonstrate the use of culture-specific loanwords that describe Native Hawaiian concepts pertaining to food, forms of address, time periods, sacred practices, supernatural beings and powers.

4.2. Pidginization of speech

The next major translingual and transcultural device is the pidginization of speech of some *Kanaka Māoli* characters in the novel with the use of a specific vernacular called Hawaiian Pidgin, though it would be more appropriate to term it 'creole', as it has native speakers unlike pidgin (Swann et al. 2004). Pidgin is recognized as an official state language of Hawai'i and is still widely used, particularly in rural areas. Considering that the novel is set in the second half of the 20th century, when Pidgin was spoken by older and younger generations of Hawaiians alike (Drager 2012), the use of the vernacular is reflected in the text.

Example (9) describes the reaction of Native Hawaiian kids to the prospect of learning American English, which the character calls "proper" with a clear negative connotation. When recounting the kids' question, the narrating figure preserves their Pidgin speech by omitting the first-person plural of the auxiliary verb "to be" after the adverb "how" and before the according pronoun. There is also a lack of the particle "to" before the infinitive (*going talk)*. The incorrect pronunciation of the voiced dental fricative in the word "without" is reflected graphically by changing the orthography of the word to "widdout". Another deliberate deviation is observed in the last sentence, where there is no auxiliary verb and no article before the idiom "the same as".

(9) "Today my teacher said we got to learn 'proper' English, so we can study things like math and science. Ho, man! Kids got plenty angry. Everybody yelling. 'How we going talk to parents widdout Pidgin? Pidgin same as English.'" (Davenport 2007: 52)

Example (10) demonstrates similar features of Hawaiian Pidgin, as there is once again a lack of the first-person singular of the auxiliary verb "to be" before the verbal "going" and no appropriate particle after it. In the same sentence there is an omission of the close-mid back rounded vowel in the word "okay". The pronoun "that" in the next sentence is pronounced differently, and the voiced dental fricative is once again expressed by the orthographic use of the letter "d". The use of the filler "like" instead of the more grammatically correct modal verb "will" in the phrase "I like have" also is emblematic of Hawaiian Pidgin. In the last sentence the already familiar omission of an appropriate form of the auxiliary verb "to be" before the verb "telling" is observed. The voiced postalveolar approximant is cut from the pronunciation of the preposition "for", another recurring characteristic of the vernacular, which turns it into "fo'" with an apostrophe. The phrase "dis kine" is a set expression in Hawaiian Pidgin, with "da kine" as a more frequent form, and grammatically it functions as a placeholder name. Interestingly, when talking about standard, "proper" English, the interlocutor also attributes to it a negative connotation by characterizing it as "*haole* English", *haole* here being an ethnonym used by Native Hawaiians to describe white people.

(10) One of the boys spoke earnestly. "Aunty, I going finish high school, 'kay? But I like fixing cars, I like engines. Smell of oil, stuff like dat. Maybe one day I like have my own garage. You telling me I got to learn ***haole*** English fo' dis kine work?" (Davenport 2007: 53)

Similar characteristics of Hawaiian Pidgin are once again observed in example (11): multiple omissions of the auxiliary verb "to be" in appropriate forms; a lack of the particles "to"; the omission of the voiced postalveolar approximant with an apostrophe; the changed pronunciation of the voiced dental fricative and its orthographic representation by the letter "d". However, in case of the articulation of the preposition "with" and the noun "thing", the same fricative is articulated by Pidgin speakers as a voiceless alveolar plosive, which in writing is fixed by the single letter "t". In case of the negated imperative form "don't" the speaker drops the auxiliary verb "do" and substitutes the negating particle "not" for the simpler form "no". Lastly, a case of wordplay is observed in the extract – the word "homolectuals", which is a play on the plural form of the noun "homosexual" with a substitution of its root for the one from the word "lecture". This pejorative also demonstrates the attitude of Pidgin speakers towards those who are trying to get higher education and implicitly position themselves above Native Hawaiians.

(11) They called out as she passed by. "Ey, Ana! Hear you going university. Going hang out wit all dem… homolectuals."
"What you trying prove wit all dem books? No fo'get, you one Nanakuli girl. Only good fo' do one t'ing." (Davenport 2007: 66)

Examples (9)–(11) demonstrate a fluent use of Hawaiian Pidgin with all of its linguistic properties, such as the difference in phonetic realization of some vowels and consonants, the use of a glottal stop, which is a consonant in Hawaiian, the use of both English and Hawaiian lexical items, and a word order that differs from that in English. In terms of perception of the novel, the use of Hawai'i Pidgin English serves a specific purpose: the repeated patterns of speech among a variety of characters incentivize the reader to attribute them to the same linguaculture, while also allowing them to peek into this linguaculture by virtue of an English-based Pidgin.

4.3. Lexical borrowings from Russian

Another linguistic device that is worth pointing out is related to the third major culture present in the text, and that device is the use of lexical borrowings from the Russian language. These lexemes can be found in the speech of several characters that appear throughout the novel, and most of them are toponyms and transliterated or transcribed words that describe culture-specific concepts.

4.3.1. Russian toponyms

Among the Russian toponyms that can be found throughout the novel, there is a certain category that is frequented more often – econyms. These designate proper names of residential buildings, houses and sites, but in a broader sense can also signify the proper name of an inhabited settlement.

Example (12) contains mentions of three Baroque palaces that are all located in the city of St. Petersburg: *Beloselsky-Belozersky, Stroganov* and *Menshikov Palaces*. These econyms are tied to Russian history, as they were attributed to the architectural structures because of the noble families and persons that inhabited them. The Beloselsky-Belozersky were an aristocratic family, the Stroganovs were highly successful merchants and Aleksander Danilovich Menshikov was a Russian statesman and an associate of Peter the Great.

(12) In pearly, northern light, each palace had an eerie, otherworldly beauty. "**Beloselsky-Belozersky** Palace… **Stroganov** Palace… **Menshikov** Palace… Each set in splendid, private park." (Davenport 2007: 263)

Example (13) contains another econym attributed to a palace in St. Petersburg – *Sheremetyev*. The palace was built by the Sheremetevs, an influential and wealthy Russian family, but nowadays it holds a different name – The Fountain House, which takes after the nearby river, Fontanka. This hydronym is also mentioned in the extract.

(13) "… I want to sit in a tiny garden, behind old **Sheremetyev** Palace overlooking the **Fontanka** Canal…" (Davenport 2007: 272)

The provided examples contain famous toponyms of the city of St. Petersburg, which sets certain geographical boundaries of the narrative, demonstrates the author's knowledge of these locations and serves a specific purpose that will be discussed later.

4.3.2. Transliterated and transcribed Russian words

Transliterated Russian words are used by the author in order to reflect certain realities and concepts that the characters experience while being in Russia, as well as words and phrases that they hear from others or try to emulate themselves. In example (14), one of the native Russian characters is unable to find a suitable English word in order to convey his message, which leads to his using a Russian word "форточка" instead, which means 'vent pane'. The word itself is transcribed as "fortushka" in order to demonstrate the specific pronunciation of the word.

(14) "You were suffering. I want to take away the pain. Make you breathe, feel life again. I want to be your… ***fortushka***." (Davenport 2007: 202)

Example (15) contains an excerpt from the scene, in which a Native Hawaiian character, who is a fluent English speaker, is trying to order food at a restaurant in Russia. The menu items in question are "борщ", "шашлык" and "чашка чая", all of which are transliterated and then described in the next sentence.

(15) Seeing three words on the menu she understood, she pointed and ordered.
"***Borscht*, *shashlik*, *i chashka chaya***." Cabbage soup, shish kebab, and tea (Davenport 2007: 265).

In example (16) the same Native Hawaiian character meets people on a night train and decides to greet them in Russian with the phrase "доброе утро", which is transliterated. This creates confusion and prompts laughter from other passengers, as the speaker does not know that this greeting is not appropriate during evening hours.

(16) "***Dobraye utra***," she cried. Good morning.
A couple laughed, for it was night, not morning (Davenport 2007: 275).

Example (17) contains another loanword that pertains to the realm of food – "zakuski", the transliterated form of the Russian "закуски". Due to the specificity of the products laid out before the narrator, they choose to employ this exotic borrowing instead of an English equivalent like "snacks", "appetizers" or "starters".

(17) A dish of ***zakuski***, little tasties, appeared – radishes, cucumbers, meats, and cheese, tiny pancakes filled with roe (Davenport 2007: 282).

In example (18) we find the borrowing "tapochki", a transliterated form of the Russian "тапочки", which is also used as an exoticism due to the fact that the narrator is a stranger to the practice of wearing carpet slippers in their household.

(18) Katya gestured toward two sets of ***tapochki***, carpet slippers, beside a pair of men's shoes (Davenport 2007: 294).

In examples (14)–(18), the author puts Russian borrowings in the right context and manages to convey their sound either through transliteration or transcription (reflecting weak reduced vowels), thus putting the characters in the realities of Russia. As is the case with some borrowings from the Hawaiian language, Davenport uses Russian toponyms to set the scene and point out different foreign locations.

4.4. Translations from Russian into English

Other than lexical borrowings, Russian poetry, in particular translated poems of Anna Akhmatova, also plays a significant role in sculpturing transcultural narratives in the novel. The author's affection for Akhmatova's poetry is evident from the first pages of the novel, as in the preface Akhmatova's "The Last Toast" is put right after *Pule Ho'ola'a Hale*, a house dedication prayer in Native Hawaiian. The same poem makes a reappearance at a very emotional moment of the novel, which makes for a deliberate and compelling addition to the text (Davenport 2007: 273). Another poem by Akhmatova, titled "We Don't Know How to Say Goodbye", can be found earlier in the text, recited by a native Russian character to the Native Hawaiian protagonist (Davenport, 2007: 196). Although the author takes already existing translations produced by Stanley Kunitz and Max Hayward, they are weaved into the text with preciseness and play into the pre-existing narratives of the novel.

5. Discussion

We have successfully systematized the various types of linguistic devices that can be found within Davenport's novel and are relevant to the topics of translingual discourse and intercultural communication. The analysis has shown that these devices are predominantly culture-specific items that appeal to recipients that belong to two distinct cultures: Native Hawaiian and Russian.

The transcultural and translingual dimensions of the novel are conditioned by the fact that *Kanaka Māoli* culture and language are adequately represented in a text that is written in English. In general, most of the contemporary Oceanic literature produced by indigenous writers is written in a colonial language, while publications in native languages are rather scarce. When analyzing the foundations of Hawaiian literature, scholars argue that "while similarities between some indigenous Polynesian languages are close enough for a degree of mutual understanding between them, literature across the Pacific is firmly divided between colonially imposed languages, specifically English (Anglophone) and French (Francophone)" (Hoʻomanawanui 2017: 56). As "House of Many Gods" falls under the category of Anglophone literature, one might point out that it, therefore, should not be considered translingual, because, according to the established notion, translingual literature is written in a language that is not native to the author, whereas English is one of Davenport's native languages. However, when taking into consideration the definition of translinguality itself, the notion of translingual literature can be modified to also include literature that displays a harmonious transition from one linguaculture to another, which leads to their partial merging without complete assimilation. In that way, translingual literature can also include texts in the author's native language that demonstrate a high degree of crosslinguistic influence, which in turn testifies to the ethnic and linguacultural identity of the author.

Looking at the novel in question through that lens, we see that the author demonstrates a deep understanding of Hawaiian culture, as well as fluency in *'Ōlelo Hawai'i*, and is able to create a transcultural and translingual Anglo-Hawaiian narrative. For instance, the extensive use of endonymic toponyms not only serves the purpose of setting territorial boundaries and diversifying the text, but also becomes a cultural marker for those who are familiar with Hawaiian mythology and history and can recognize allusions hidden in many placenames. If at earlier stages of contact between Hawaiian and English, indigenous placenames were primarily used as exoticisms (Carr 2014, Desmond 1999), their use in postcolonial novels such as "House of Many Gods" implies deeper meanings that are hidden in the linguistic features of such toponyms. The same can be said about the multitude of lexical borrowings that describe Native Hawaiian concepts and traditional practices, some of which may be outdated but still remembered by those who cherish their *Kanaka Māoli* roots. Their inclusion in an English novel that appeals to a broad audience not only introduces culture-specific concepts to those who have no knowledge of them, but also plays into the feeling of indigenous yearning for ancestral reconnections (McDougall 2021) and further cultural decolonization (Indriyanto 2021, Trask 1999).

The pidginization of speech of different characters, itself being a reflection of a prolonged interethnic contact among Native Hawaiians and other subgroups of the population (Velupillai 2013), results in stylized dialogues with deviated articulation of English words, intentional grammatical deviations, set expressions from Hawaiian Pidgin and wordplay. This translingual device not only shows the recipient, how the vernacular is spoken in day-to-day life, but also serves as a marker for those Hawaiians who have experienced pidginized communication or communicate in Pidgin themselves.

The use of Russian lexical borrowings, however, constitutes a narrative outside of the outlined translingual discourse and goes into the realm of intercultural communication. For instance, Russian toponyms are mostly comprised of famous placenames that do not resonate with the target audience as much as the Native Hawaiian toponyms do. As the author is not a fluent Russian speaker and has a limited understanding of the realities of Russia, the loanwords that are found in the novel serve a more direct purpose of setting the scene or exoticizing the narration. Akhmatova's poems tie into the overarching story of the novel and translations of these poems represent the original text adequately and accurately, which helps convey a comprehensive message to the recipient, but they still solely act as a reference to another culture's literature, since translation is not a translingual device.

Our research has shown that the main narrative in K. Davenport's "House of Many Gods" is the transcultural and translingual Hawaiian-American narrative, represented in the text of the novel on various levels, and that this narrative comes into contact with the Russian culture, reflects it through lexical borrowings and translations, but fails to fully merge with it and create a new linguacultural formation.

6. Conclusion

In this research we sought to delineate the most characteristic verbal devices that constitute distinctive features of translingual discourse and intercultural communication based on the novel by a Hawaiian-American author. The results of our research confirmed that the novel "House of Many Gods" can be categorized as translingual and transcultural though it is written in the dominant language of the bilingual author, who fluctuates easily between her two languages creating narratives that transcend cultural bounds through the use of specific linguistic devices. The effect of lingual and cultural polylogue that makes a translingual discourse of the novel has been enhanced by the introduction of the third language and culture – that of Russian serving as an additional tool for intercultural communication in the narration. As has been determined, the devices that make linguistic polyphony are lexical borrowings from both Native Hawaiian and Russian languages, references to indigenous mythology and traditions, the pidginization of speech of several characters throughout the novel and the inclusion of translations of Anna Akhmatova's poems in the text.

While discussing manifestations of transcultural and translingual identities and intercultural communication in general, it is important to distinguish them from simple and often deliberate misappropriation of culture-specific elements. When cultures are described in a language that is foreign to them, the vocabulary of that language reorients towards the described culture and goes through the process of semantic adaptation, which, combined with stereotypes upheld by the recipient or their society, affects the way such descriptions are perceived (Kabakchi & Proshina 2021: 185). When done right, such linguistic experiments can work wonders, as they then appeal to all sides of a language and culture contact and manage to bridge a gap between these cultures.

The limitation of this research consists in its being restricted to one novel only. The expansion of the material might broaden the prospect of future conclusions. Nonetheless, with the questions discussed and inferences made, we believe to have contributed to the clarification of the concept of translingualism and its interplay with the term 'intercultural communication', which is relevant for the theory of linguistic and cultural contacts.

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Book Review / Рецензия

Review of Marco Bagli. 2021. *Tastes We Live By: The Linguistic Conceptualisation of Taste in English*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. ISBN-13: 978-3110626773 (hardback)

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Рецензия на книгу Marco Bagli. 2021. *Tastes We Live By: The Linguistic Conceptualisation of Taste in English*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. ISBN-13: 978-3110626773 (hardback)

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In this book, Marco Bagli follows the theoretical stance of cognitive linguistics, especially the notion of embodiment, and combines language, culture, cognition, perception to interpret the linguistic elaboration of taste in English and its figurative usage. The author also provides a diachronic investigation of semantic change in the English language of taste. To do this, Bagli adopts methodologies both from linguistic approaches, such as cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, corpus analysis, and lexicographic analysis, and from neighboring disciplines like philosophy, evolutionary anthropology, psychology, biology, cultural anthropology. It should thus interest a wide readership.

The book deserves reviewing since it is the first systematic attempt to investigate the linguistic conceptualisation of the sense of taste in English, which has seen only scattered and incomplete research compared with another sense, vision. It is also a good reference point for further research on the linguistic conceptualisation of the other senses and for comparing the conceptualisation of perception in different languages, which will help people better understand their bodies, minds, and cultures.

Among five folk categories of the senses (touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing), the sense of taste has always been neglected by researchers, and thus there is a lack of relevant studies in this topic. However, nowadays, there is an increasing interest in this sense, since research on sensory linguistics, embodiment in cognitive linguistics and also food studies have emerged. In this book, Bagli describes and interprets the linguistic conceptualizations of taste in contemporary daily English, their figurative use via human conceptual mechanisms, as well as providing a diachronic investigation of semantic change in the English language of taste. He follows the philosophical stance of cognitive linguistics with the notion of embodiment, and combines language, culture, cognition, and perception, applying various methodologies in anthropology, physiology, and linguistics to conduct the study. This book is divided into two parts. Part one "The words of taste" from Chapter 1 to 6 focuses on the lexical items on English TASTE domain. Part two "The taste of words" from Chapter 7 to 10 discusses the elaboration of taste words via conceptual operations.

From Chapters 1 to 4, the contents concern the introduction of basic notions and review of related literature, as well as discussions of the main theories and methodologies in this study. Chapter 1 introduces the interdisciplinary, usage-based and meaning-driven nature of cognitive linguistics (CL), the theory of embodiment, as well as perception in CL, proposing the interwoven relation between bodily perception, cognition and language, where culture is also a central aspect. Finally, the chapter provides the book structure. Chapter 2 first reviews studies of taste from philosophical perspective, pointing out the downplayed status of taste. It then turns to the physiological perspective, distinguishing taste and flavour, highlighting the physiological multisensoriality of the human being. It also reviews the evolution of the perception of five main taste qualities: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami. It is shown that their evolution is linked to that of human bodies and cognition and also those of other species; and that they motivate conceptual mechanisms in usage. Finally, the literature of the linguistic representation of taste is reviewed.

Chapter 3 illustrates fundamental cognitive notions: basic level/taste terms, such as categorization, salience, entrenchment and their relationship. It also compares five methodologies (pre-cognitive linguistics; corpora-based lists; lexicographic analysis; norm-based lists; and freelisting) which can be used to describe a semantic domain, and advocates the use of multiple approaches to describe words in the domain of TASTE in everyday English: use of freelistings to retrieve cognitively salient and entrenched English lexicon in the TASTE domain in speakers' long-term memories; use of Cognitive Salience Index (CSI), illustrated in the next chapter, to operationalize these lexical items, and the use of norm-based lists to compare and discuss the multisensoriality of taste (Chapter 5). These are valuable methods to help readers' understanding of different facets of the same linguistic phenomena and ensure that this study be conducted from a usage-based and emic perspective.

Chapter 4 introduces CSI, a widely applied algorithm in anthropology. It combines the frequency and the mean order of mentioned lexical items elicited in a freelisting task, to observe the degree of entrenchment and salience of each taste word. Apart from dealing with the retrieved words through freelistings, Chapter 4 also addresses the identification of basic taste terms (BTTs) in English through results from CSI and other criteria, where basicness is a matter of degree, and lists related lexical items, which are then compared with Lynott and Connell's English sensory norms (2009) in Chapter 5. They are analyzed through Modality Exclusivity Rates (ER) to classify their primarily associated sensory modality, and also to reveal which domain of sensory the word is associated with, i.e., their secondarily, thirdly, etc. associated senses, evidencing the multisensory nature of perception in linguistic representation.

Chapter 6 first discusses the lexical conflation of distinct taste terms across cultures, as well as association between different perceptual qualities in the English linguistic system. Then, it proposes designs, results and discussions of both a free sorting task and a closed sorting task. Participants in the free task are asked to create categories by associating the most salient words that result from the CSI, while participants in the closed task are invited to categorize the 52 most salient words from the freelistings within ready-made categories such as taste types, texture, and mouthfeel, based on their meanings. Together, they illustrate the semantic associations and categorization patterns of different gustatory adjectives within the domain of taste in English.

Through a detailed literature review, theoretical tenets and the application of freelistings, CSI, ER and two sorting tasks, the first part explores, analyzes and calculates the semantic dimensions of English taste/gustatory terms and conceptualization patterns of this domain. It concludes that there are six BTTs in English: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, spicy, and savoury, whose conceptual elaborations of meaning will be further discussed form a diachronic and synchronic perspective in the second part.

While Chapter 7 investigates lexicographic data of taste diachronically, Chapters 8 and 9 synchronically explain contemporary corpus data. Firstly, Bagli introduces conceptual metaphors, polysemy and their associations with sensory linguistics in Chapter 7. Then, referring to the diachronic lexicographical evidence of taste category in English "over a period of more than a millennium" (Anderson 2019: 65) provided by the web tool "Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus" (MMP), he interprets how gustatory sensations and the TASTE domain motivate English semantic expansion and change through conceptual metaphor. Via COCA, the figurative conceptualizations and meanings of six BTTS in contemporary English are elucidated in Chapter 8. It is found that they do not share the same frequency values, either in sheer occurrences or figurative usages, and this shows that their semantic conceptualizations are mainly motivated by embodied perception, evolutionary value and cultural contexts. The same COCA data are then analyzed in Chapter 9 to show the phenomenon of intrafield metaphors (so-called synaesthetic metaphors), after reviewing recent contributions on this topic and the limitations of labelling intrafield as synaesthetic. Specifically, it explores how people in English conceptualize taste to talk about other senses and the conceptual mechanisms they use to realize this. Finally, Chapter 10 summarizes the contents and results of the previous chapters, and discusses some directions for future areas of research.

Part two investigates the figurative meaning expansions of previous listed lexical items in the English TASTE domain as a source domain, including standard and intrafield transfers, and human conceptual mechanisms like conceptual metaphor and metonymy that motivate these expansions in use, by means of both lexicographic and COCA data. Once again, the embodied and multisensory nature of perception is shown, as well as the internal relationships among perception, culture and language.

To summarise, this book is the first systematic attempt to review and investigate the linguistic conceptualisation of the taste domain in English and their metaphorical and metonymic elaborations both diachronically and synchronically from a usage-based perspective, since there is little and incomplete research on it compared with other senses like vision and hearing. It concentrates not on words in specialized fields but on the common and familiar English in daily use, thus providing a general picture of English taste lexical items. It is also a good reference point for further research on the linguistic conceptualisation of other senses in English or other languages and also on the conceptualisation of perception across different languages.

The author adopts various methods from linguistic approaches such as cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, corpus analysis, and lexicographic analysis, and from neighboring disciplines like philosophy, evolutionary anthropology, psychology, biology, cultural anthropology. This methodological diversity enables a fairly exhaustive and comprehensive treatment of the central topic. Furthermore, empirical data involving native speakers and algorithms are used, in order to avoid the shortcomings of an introspection-only approach, as far as possible. The author also reviews a plethora of literature and theories about taste analysis in distinct fields, making this book more readable and easier to grasp. Thus, this book is also friendly for researchers from different fields and may attract diverse readers; for instance, those who are interested in sensory analysis, embodiment study, perception metaphor analysis, categorization study, language and cultural studies, even anthropology and food studies, as well as linguistic analysis. The title of this book is also interesting, naturally recalling the celebrated monograph in Cognitive Linguistics: *Metaphors we live by* (Lakoff & Johnson 2003), thus enabling readers to locate the book in cognitive studies and have a general idea of its terrain.

Finally, there are one or two shortcomings that we think could have further improved the work. The order of some chapter sections could perhaps be rearranged for easier reading. For instance, Chapters 3.3–3.5 regard cognitive terms, while Chapters 3.2 and 3.6 are about methodologies, an issue which could have been resolved by moving 3.2 ahead to 3.6. Alternatively, together with 3.7, they could have been combined with some of the contents of Chapter 4 and 5 to form a new separate chapter for the methodologies in the first part of this study. Moreover, we think some linguistic instances of the TASTE domain from other cultures could have been provided to be compared with English in Chapter 8. This could have better illustrated cross-cultural factors, in confirmation of sentences like "Cross-linguistic data show that this is not always the case (p. 153)" in section 8.9.

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Book Review / Рецензия

Review of Gerrard Mugford. 2022. *Developing Cross-Cultural Relational Ability in Foreign Language Learning Asset-Based Pedagogy to Enhance Pragmatic Competence*

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Рецензия на книгу Gerrard Mugford. *Developing Cross-Cultural Relational Ability in Foreign Language Learning Asset-Based Pedagogy to Enhance Pragmatic Competence* (2022)

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This book examines how bilingual speakers establish, develop, consolidate and maintain relationships in the target language (TL) while trying to present and establish themselves as legitimate, established and full-fledged language users.

Rather than providing bilingual interactants with a checklist of available structures and devices from which to select items as required, pragmatic choices should be based on what interactants want to achieve rather than on what is attainable with the resources that they have already been pre-taught and rehearsed.

Pragmatic competence has become, especially in the last few decades, one of the issues that attracted attention as an essential part of language competence. The realization that having a good command of linguistic knowledge in target language would not be enough to master the language has created the need to investigate the value and effect of pragmatic competence in language education. Pragmatics mainly deals with what is beyond the dictionary meanings of statements; in other words, it is about what is actually meant with an utterance based on the norms and conventions of a particular society, or context, in which conversation takes place (Takkaç 2016). Therefore, having a good command of the conventions enables the speaker to establish and maintain effective and appropriate communication as well as understanding each other clearly (Yule 1996) and this ability is generally referred to as pragmatic competence. Following the shift in which the emphasis in language pedagogy changed from the linguistic-based to communicative-based purposes, the impact and status of pragmatic competence has gradually increased in educational circles.

Sometimes English-language learners' pursuit of achieving fluency and accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation discourages them from achieving interactional, transactional and interpersonal goals and undermines commitment and confidence. To tackle this problem, this book pursues a more productive approach that builds on the experiences and histories of bilingual speakers and highlights their progress in reaching communicative goals that they themselves have identified and pursued. The book has adopted a broad and far-reaching approach to understanding bilingual interactants perspectives and how they employ relational assets and resources to establish, develop, maintain target-language relationships. This emic approach focuses on the realities of the language users rather than referencing the opinions, views and pronouncements of 'outside' experts. As a result, bilingual speakers do not have to feel constrained by having to adhere to prescribed TL norms and practices. The bilingual speakers' insights themselves provide the basis for a pedagogy centered on language users' own communicative objectives and on the ways in which they have developed successful interactional relationships.

An asset-based pedagogy builds on the language knowledge students already have, it views culture, literacies, and language differences of students as an added benefit to the classroom. Students are encouraged to connect to their identities and will engage with learning on a deeper level.

A non-deficit pedagogy highlights language learners' successes and achievements rather than correcting their errors and mistakes and underscoring what FL users have difficulty communicating. Instead of focusing on possible errors and robotically reinforcing correct structures, an asset-based pedagogy builds on successful communicative experiences and examines the characteristics and features of positive interaction (Goodall 2021).

The author attempts to develop an understanding of cross-cultural relational pragmatics by building on existing studies into relational work and examining how FL speakers establish, develop, consolidate and maintain interpersonal and transactional relations while employing their own resources, assets and knowledge. The author points to an asset-based pedagogy aimed at enhancing FL users' pragmatic competence. Guiding principles are outlined behind a cross-cultural relational pragmatics approach with the focus on the real-life communicative context of FL speakers and the challenges they face.

Throughout the book, the labels foreign-language and bilingual interactant/interlocutor/speaker are adopted in order to avoid using the more disparaging term 'non-native speaker' which can undermine and devalue FL users' proficiency and linguistic abilities (Braine 2010, Mugford & Rubio Michel 2018).

The book identifies specific pragmatic abilities that can help enhance and develop TL interaction in five key areas: successful interaction, relational achievement, legitimacy, positionality, relational competence.

In order to comprehend the nature and characteristics of establishing, developing and maintaining social and transactional relationships, key understandings in relational pragmatics can be categorized in terms of: positive relational work, relational knowledge and resources, existing relational understandings, acceptance and acknowledgement, individuality and conformity.

Data collection details of each study are explained in the relevant chapters, the participants in the study are Mexican bilingual interactants, aged between 18 and 25, who are studying or have studied for the B.A. at public and private universities in Guadalajara, Mexico. The cohort are middle-class and enjoy a B2-C1 level of English. By being asked to focus on their specific TL experiences, the bilingual respondents offer insights into specific incidents and experiences which help form the rationale for a critical pedagogy.

In the introductory chapter, the proposed approach, scope and objective of this book have been discussed. An argument has been made that a cross-cultural relational pragmatics approach should focus on the real-life communicative context of bilingual speaker and the challenges that they face.

Chapter 2 outlines a cross-cultural relational model which actively encourages bilingual speakers need to establish, consolidate, expand, enhance and maintain interpersonal relations. By building on Halliday's (1973/1997) understandings of ideational, interpersonal and textual language factors, this chapter argues that relational pragmatic assets, resources and knowledge should be seen as facilitative, supportive and adaptable since they allow interactants to respond to the developing, variable and sometimes unexpected nature of spoken interaction.

Chapter 3 examines how FL interlocutors develop interpersonal relations as they build rapport, solidarity and supportiveness, and show affect and concern for others. The ability to engage in everyday relational communicative situations such as small talk, chatting, gossiping, storytelling, service encounters and business social talk can significantly contribute to successful TL relational talk.

Chapter 4 examines bilingual speakers' abilities to interact in their own ways whilst conforming to social patterns and practices. Bilingual interactants were focused on achieving intelligibility and comprehensibility as they aimed to attain legitimacy and status. FL interlocutors often face difficult communicative challenges in making themselves understood. To understand intelligibility and comprehensibility in FL use, the interactants were asked to reflect on the use of humor in TL in encouraging socialization and reducing tension.

Chapter 5 describes how FL interlocutors express their individuality in TL interaction. To avoid being labelled as 'reduced' language users, interactants often assert themselves by taking a stance or position through engaging in subjectivity, evaluation and interaction (Englebretson 2007). Individuality can also be expressed through creative language use, which is rarely available to FL interactants who, more often than not, are expected to strictly follow TL norms and practices. In order to explore. real-life challenges of engaging in difficult relational work in international contexts, Mexican FL participants were asked to reflect on both positive and negative experiences when travelling abroad. Their reflections reveal how FL users find ways to express themselves intelligibly and cope with situations where they appear not to be understood and have to cope with the unknown.

Chapter 6 employs the concept of FL relational ability to examine how cross-cultural relational pedagogy can respond to FL participants' communicative needs so that they can interact in meaningful ways and use personal histories, significant experiences and practical insights to achieve successful relational work. Learners should establish what they want to be able to achieve in the target language, find their voice and be given the necessary support and guidance to reach their aims. Level of engagement, involvement and commitment depend on how each interactant understands and wants to participate in each given situation and communicative encounter.

To sum it all up, when engaging with TL speakers, communicative possibilities should not be limited by the bilingual users' language knowledge. The cross-cultural relational pragmatics values and respects FL speakers' beliefs, concerns, attitudes and practices given they are already successful language users in the first language (L1). The 'relational' aspect attempts to identify interpersonal understandings and increase bilingual speakers' awareness that can help them determine the desired type and quality of relationship they seek in any given interaction.

There is one issue that needs to be included in the conclusion of the book. Is there a direct correlation between the mastery of the TL and pragmatic competence. Sometimes poor and inefficient knowledge of the target language makes communication almost impossible and no pragmatic competence of the speaker can improve the situation.

Undoubtedly, this book stands out from other books on second/foreign-language pragmatics because it is based on histories, experiences, attitudes of bilingual interactants themselves. It records and examines their successes along with their worries, concerns and fears both when interacting in TL situations. In conducting this research, a range of real-life contexts and events are analyzed as opposed to much less likely scenarios generated by EFL textbooks such as having to refuse to work overtime or declining an invitation to a formal dinner party.

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