

## **Lingua-Pragmatic Analyze Of Politeness In Persian And Uzbek Languages**

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**Abstract:** *This study is dedicated to research Politeness of Persian and Uzbek language comparatively. Politeness is one aspect of language use that strongly reflects different cultural perspectives, thus polite expressions in the first language may not directly translate into the second language. The method of the study is based on the observation, namely involving with theoretical database and depending on practical sources of the verbal communication. Study has analyzed the several cases of politeness on contrast, such as complimenting, self-debasing and so forth. Similarities and differences of both languages are mentioned.*

**Keywords:**

Politeness, taarof, verbal communication, Persian, Uzbek, culture, sociology.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the important part of the people's life. Communicating way can be the first reason for both success and failure in further progression or regression. Communicating in proper and polite way with the people in different cultural background is becoming one of the most important matters that still lacks researching.

As Jiang Zhu states, "In cross-cultural communication, cultural differences play an important role in speech act in the disciplines in use of speech. Moreover, people tend to use the principles of their own culture as the standard to explain and evaluate other people's behavior. This is what is called "pragmatic transfer". Due to this, pragmatic failure occurs easily and the cross-cultural communication is blocked."

In this article comparative analyze of Persian and Uzbek politeness in cross-cultural communication will be conducted considering the "pragmatic transfer". As both Persian and Uzbek language are full of verbal politeness phrases, it will be always urgent topic for international linguistics. This subject has attracted many sociolinguists' attention all around the world especially in European languages. However, only few studies have reportedly been done on Persian and Uzbek language.

Iran and Uzbekistan follow the cultural rules connected with family traditions, national customs, relations between people in society, verbal politeness level changing according to the age and social status of the addressee what are special mostly to Asian countries.

Both Iranian and Uzbek people always use terms of politeness daily. Pragmatic comparative study between these languages on Politeness needs conducting deeper in order to avoid of misunderstandings situations during mutual communication. Thus, compliments, self-debasing, praising other people, praising back and other terms of politeness are used in specific occasions in Persian which can be similar or totally different with Uzbek politeness. As Abdulfattah Omar<sup>1</sup> and others state, "Speakers with same cultural background and who speak the same language can easily understand these pragmatic forms but non-native speakers face difficulties in understanding the message carried by these forms. Hence, *lingua-pragmatic* forms can be said to be totally language-specific and culturespecific."

In this study Uzbek and Persian polite terms of Hospitality and Compliments will be researched pragmatically considering FTA. The findings of this study are expected to be effective source and beneficial to the field of linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology and foreign language teaching and learning.

## PREVIOUS STUDIES REVIEW

If we look through the *previous studies*, initial theory of politeness and investigations on this subject started in China and Japan (XIX), later it became popular in the West (*second part of XX century*).

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<sup>1</sup> Abdulfattah Omar, Mohammed Ilyas, Mohamed Ali Mohamed Kassem "Linguistic Politeness and Media Education: A Lingua-Pragmatic Study of Changing trends in 'Forms of Address' in Egyptian Media Talk Shows" Journal of Social Studies Education Research 2018 [www.jsser.org](http://www.jsser.org)

In Western studies politeness has been a major topic in pragmatics since the 1960s. **Irving Goffman (1967)**<sup>2</sup> was intrigued by what lay behind everyday expressions such as ‘losing face’, ‘saving face’ and ‘being shamefaced.’ As he states “Face = the image that we present of ourselves to others.”

**Robin Lakoff (1973)** is one of the first linguists who invented a theory of politeness. Lakoff defines politeness as forms of behavior that have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction. In her Politeness Principle, she proposes that politeness consists of three things which are “Don’t impose or Distance”, “Give option or Deference”, and lastly “Make audience feel good or Camaraderie”. The theory underlying **Lakoff** to invent this Politeness Principle is what we call Pragmatic Competence which is the ability to use language appropriately considering to whom we are talking (Tenor), what we are talking about (Field), and how we are talking (Mode). Lakoff designed the Rules of Politeness to make people easily understand each other when they have a conversation which can be achieved if people are involved in a cooperative transactions.<sup>3</sup>

**Paul Grice (1975)**<sup>4</sup>, an English language philosopher, argues that speakers intend to be cooperative when they talk. For Grice, *cooperative* means that the speaker knows that each utterance is a potential interference in the personal rights, autonomy and wishes (a potential face-threatening act) of the other. That is why we have to shape our utterances in a certain way. Grice formulated the principle of cooperation that underlies conversation, as follows: *Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.* **Grice** asserts that in conversing, a speaker should obey four maxims: Maxim of Quality (Be true), Maxim of Quantity (Be brief), Maxim of Relation (Be relevant), and Maxim of Manner (Be clear).

**Brown and Levinson (1987)**<sup>5</sup> developed Goffman’s theory of “face” into a theory of politeness: ‘positive and negative face’. Politeness involves showing concern for two different kinds of needs: *negative self-respect needs* (the need to not be imposed upon) and *positive self-respect needs* (the need to be liked and admired). **Negative Face** – the desire to feel unimpeded, i.e. the freedom from feeling imposed upon by the interaction. **Positive Face** – the desire to feel approved of, i.e. to maintain a positive and consistent self-image during the interaction.

**Fraser’s (1990)**<sup>6</sup> (“*Perspective on Politeness.*”) paper addresses a number of questions raised by Brown and Levinson model of politeness, questions such as whether politeness communicated, what the status of a politeness principle is. According to him these raise but a few of the important questions to be asked in pursuit of an understanding of what linguistic

<sup>2</sup>Goffman, E. (1967). *International ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. New York: Pantheon Books.

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.academia.edu/9669467/ROBIN\\_LAKOFF\\_S\\_POLITENESS\\_PRINCIPLES](https://www.academia.edu/9669467/ROBIN_LAKOFF_S_POLITENESS_PRINCIPLES)  
Virna Margetan English Language Teaching Department Grace, Kartika Ratih Faculty of Language and Literature, Permata Dipaning Ratri Satya Wacana Christian University (2014)

<sup>4</sup><http://www.ello.uos.de/field.php/EarlyModernEnglish/GriceSMaximsOfConversations>  
English Language and Linguistics Online

<sup>5</sup>Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Fraser (1990) (“*Perspective on Politeness.*”) *Journal of Pragmatics* 1, 2190-236

politeness is, how it is used, what factors influence a speaker's choice to be heard as polite and what sort of a model is maximally useful.

**Arndt and Richard**<sup>7</sup> (1991) (*Verbal, prosodic, and kinesic emotive contrasts in speech*) consider politeness as emotive communication and interpersonal politeness. Emotive communication] “refers to transitory attitudes, feelings and other affective states”.

Despite the fact we observe Politeness, namely, **Taarof**<sup>8</sup> in early written resources in Persian language, but theoretical researches actively were held started in XX century. The sweetest point of Persian language and culture is Taarof. Taarof تعارف - the intricate system of etiquette and good manners, emphasising extreme deference, humility, and respect. As Sahragard states “Taarof is a very important concept in Iranian interpersonal interactional situations. Beeman gives definition to taarof: “Taarof is the active, ritualized realization of differential perceptions of superiority and inferiority in interaction. It underscores and preserves the integrity of culturally defined roles as it is carried out in the life of every Iranian every day.””

A couple of examples for Persian taarof were mentioned in Sahragard's research as following: “An American nearly possessed an Iranian friend's coat when the Iranian responded to the American's compliment with a translated taarof, “you can have it” (male shomast – مال شماست). Also there have been reports that Iranians have gone hungry and thirsty when they have used their taarof strategies of politely refusing hospitality with non-Iranian hosts.

Taarof's meaning was observed in Persian-English dictionaries as following: soft tongue, honey phrases, discourse, showing respect, polite relationship, polite attitude, gentleness, formality, compliment, humbleness, modesty, controlling negative mood.

Iranian linguists divide taarof into 5 meaning.

1. Adab ادب - Good behavior, politeness, gentleness
2. Ehteram احترام - Respect
3. Rudarbayesti رودر بایستی – getting ashamed, honor
4. Tavazo' تواضع - modesty
5. Mehmonnavozi مهماننوازی – hospitality

Taarof is defined as “compliment(s), ceremony, offer, gift, flummery, courtesy, flattery, formality, good manners, soft tongue, honeyed phrases and respect” (Aryanpour & Aryanpour, 1976, p. 306-307). “The word has an Arabic root, *arafa*, meaning to know or acquire knowledge of.

Before taarof was used for mutual conversations of the high class people of the society. Also taarof can be seen in literature and poetry of central centuries of Iran. Iranian people love literature and poetry more than anything. Simple not very educated person also knows well about his/her own literature and can tell some examples of famous Persian poems. Perhaps it is the reason that Iranian speech is more beautiful and rich with flower words using taarof phrases. As a person who knows own literature well, loves it much, he/she always can express the ideas/words in nice way. Later it became usual phrases for ordinary people either.

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<sup>7</sup> Arndt, H. & Richard J. Verbal, prosodic, and kinesic emotive contrasts in speech. Journal of Pragmatics 15:521-549. 1991.

<http://article.sapub.org/10.5923.j.linguistics.20130202.02.html>

<sup>8</sup>origins of ta'arof - Arabic word meaning "acquaintance" or "knowledge."

Example:

A: *امروز خیلی خوشگل شدی! Vay! Emroz kheili khoshgel shodi!* (O! Naqadar go'zalsiz bugun.) - How beautiful you are today.

B: *چشمت قشنگ میبینه. مرسى. Cheshmat ghashang mibine!* (sizing ko'zingiz chiroyli ko'ryapti.)—No, your eyes are seeing me in beautiful way.

Neutral	Debasing oneself	Discoursing others
رفتن [räftän] To go	زیارت کردن [ziyarät kârdän] Pilgrimage	تشریف بردن [täşrif bordän] To go
آمدن [amädän] To come	به خدمت رسیدن [be xedmät räsidän] Serve, to be at smb's disposal	تشریف آوردن [täşrif avärdän] Come
گفتن [goftän] To say	ارز کردن [ärz kârdän] To say	فرمودن [färmudän] To utter
دادن [dadän] To give	تقدیم کردن [täydim kârdän] To present	لطف فرمودن [lotf färmudän] To show kindness

*Uzbek politeness.* In Uzbek culture taarof is accordingly called “mulozamat”, “xushmuomalalik” or “takalluf”. Politeness theory is quite young subject in Uzbek sociolinguistics. Although Uzbek language includes an interesting scale of particular and specific characteristics of “Politeness”, this topic is new research subject and less-investigated up to present. We have found very few of researches that have been examined by Uzbek linguists which emphasise only some matters of Uzbek Politeness.

We only could find some definitons of Uzbek words for Politeness as following:

Mulozamat<sup>9</sup> - Kishining ko'nglini olish uchun ko'rsatilgan iltifot; e'zoz-ikrom, takalluf (Trying to make pleased the other person, show respect); Takalluf<sup>10</sup> - Hurmat-extirom va e'zoz-ikrom bilan qilingan muomala, mulozamat (addressing politely, with respect); Xushmuomalalik<sup>11</sup> - Muomalasi, gap-so'zlari, xatti-harakati yoqimli; xushfe'l (having polite manners, ways of speech, pleasant)

Following works similar with politeness topics were looked through.

1. Hojiyeva Halima Yahyoevna “O'zbek tilida hurmat maydoni va uning lisoniy-nutqiy xususiyati” (politeness phrases were discussed according to its structure, function and semantics-Parts of speech);

2. Mo'minov Siddiqjon Mirsobirovich “O'zbek muloqot xulqining ijtimoiy-lisoniy xususiyatlari” (theoretical study, psycholinguistic aspects of uzbek politeness)

As Iran and Uzbekistan has established friendly cooperation, interest and desire to know each other of both countries is raising day by day. It is obvious there are plenty of programs for studying, culture-exchanging, researching, volunteering, traveling and working chances in both countries for one another.

The power of the word, using correct version of phrases will lead not only to mutual understanding, but also can create a nice atmosphere for our daily activities. A person got in touch with another person using politeness manners, trying to say selected nice words and

<sup>9</sup><https://uz.wiktionary.org/wiki/mulozamat>

<sup>10</sup><https://uz.wiktionary.org/wiki/takalluf>

<sup>11</sup><https://uz.wiktionary.org/wiki/xushmuomala>

giving sincere smile is much happier than the person who does not tend to be polite much. As Politeness is the key of good relations and peaceful world.

As Uzbek Scholar Abdulla Kahhar asserts: *The power which prevents from cruel war is politeness and selected words to make everything smooth. The word is stronger than atom*<sup>12</sup>”

## METHODOLOGY

**Data collection :** A) Observation B) Questionnaire

*Observation of practical sources:* The situations above mentioned were observed via lively, taking videos on the agreement of the participants, movies, and videos on YouTube channels and by reading fiction works. (Learn Persian (Farsi) with Chai and Conversation<sup>13</sup>; - What is Taarof? – Persian Culture<sup>14</sup>; <https://www.behance.net/gallery/52180201/-Taarof>; [www.ziyonet.com](http://www.ziyonet.com), Atash Bas –Cease Fire Persian movie)

*Questionnaire:* Survey was conducted as a form of questionnaire among 40 people (20 Uzbek and 20 Iranian people) using google.form including questions related to Compliments and Trade conversation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the result of the study *205 Persian taarof* and *154 Uzbek etiquette phrases* were observed in the term of complementing and trade conversation and compared according to the using way.

*Complementing / Self-debasing.* It was often mentioned that Iranian tends to debase themselves and complimenting or praising the addressee, especially if the latter are older. Somebody may say to his interlocutor nowkaretam “نوکرتم”, chakeretam “چاکرتم”, kuchiketam “کوچیکتتم” (**I am your slave/servant/menial?**) but reality may be the meaning of real compliment, or different-even opposite meaning.

The same meaning examples are met in Uzbek Politeness either, but it is not used commonly and is not applied much in Uzbek daily simple and formal conversations. We can observe some interesting cases from historical works such as poets, novels, stories that were written in 15-16 century, showing high respect the addressee or third part and debasing oneself was the sign of intelligence. For example, **“Qulingizning gustahligini afv eting, begin” (P.Qodirov) Please apologize your slave (me), my master”.**

Nowadays, if one uses honorific high level to the addressee or third part, it brings misunderstanding as it will be received as sarcasm or if this is occurred between close friends, it can be perceived as joke either. For example, **(Janobi oliylari yana nimalarni xohlaydi?) “What else would you like, Your Excellence?” (Qachon endi tashrif buyurasiz, hazrat.) “When will you visit us, your Majesty?”** The examples above, have the meaning of Irony and Joke.

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<sup>12</sup><http://uforum.uz/showthread.php?t=13146&page=11>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5oX2n1-diA>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSPI8r3rIkW>



“What else would you like, Your Excellence?”- to address someone with sarcasm who wishes many things and demands it from other people. She/he seems to act like King or Queen whose wishes should be accomplished, that’s why he/she is called as Your Excellence, to stress the irony.

“When will you visit us, your Majesty?” – The addressee is not the person who visits the speaker often. In order to show speaker’s discontentment (dissatisfaction), speaker is using “your Majesty” pointing the addressee is acting like very high person who do not visit someone, but is visited by others.

Another example of the similar Politeness in two cultures:

**A: kojain, kam peidain. “كجاين، كم پيدايين.” (Where have you been? We don't see much of you)**

**B: ma zire pave shomaim. “ما زير پاي شماييم.” (We are under your feet.)**

In this case Politeness is used in Uzbek language either.

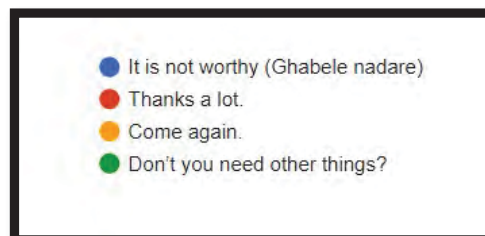
**-Bormisiz? Ko’rinmaysiz? (Lit. Are you here? We don’t see much of you)**

**-Yuribmiz-da bir chetda. (panada) (We are just rambling at the boarder/corner)**

Persian taarof stresses more self-debasing saying “I am under your feet” and placing the addressee in high position whereas Uzbek Politeness debases oneself saying “I am somewhere at the corner”. However praising or complementing has not been noticed.

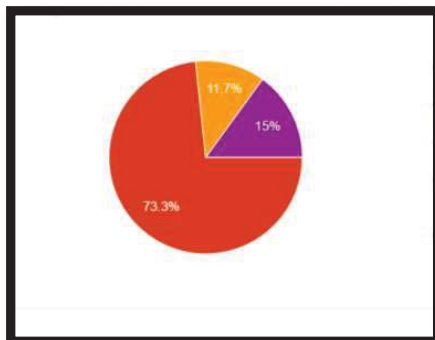
*Trade conversation.* Persian Taarof can be used to put people in an awkward position and make them do what the speaker wants. This can be true in some settings, such as trade exchanges or taxi rides, where a customer may feel inclined to barter. For instance, when a customer asks the price of an article, many shopkeepers first respond with **qabeli nadare** (‘it’s not worthy of you’, i.e. ‘you can have it for free’). This shows their good manners and respect for the customer but may also mean that because of this the customer is in the awkward position of feeling less able to bargain in order to buy cheaper. Sometimes, as a response to customers’ bartering, some shopkeepers will go as far as saying ‘You can just take it and go without giving any money’ when they are not willing to drop the price any lower. This exchange functions as a ‘safety valve’: they assure the customer of his worth to them that they are ready to give the merchandise for free, but it is practicalities that prevent them from doing so. This presumably makes the customer pay the price asked, which may be higher than it would be otherwise, and come back again.<sup>15</sup>

In the survey questioned: what does the shop assistant say, when you give money? all iranian respondents chose one answer “Ghabele nadare” – It is not worthy. Yo can have it. Uzbek people use “Come again” (73%), “Thanks” (11%), Don’t you need anything else” (15%).

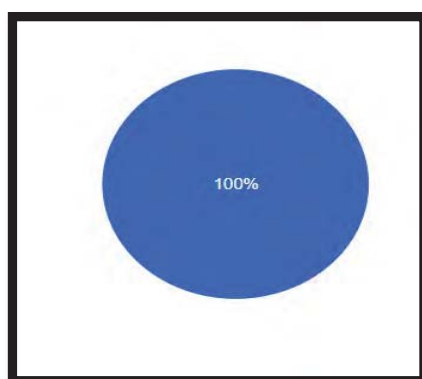


<sup>15</sup> Koutlaki, S. (1997), Persian system of politeness and the Persian concept of face with some reference to EFL teaching to Iranian native speakers. University of Wales.

Uzbek people's response:



Iranian people's response:



However, this type of taarof is never observed in Uzbek Politeness. On the contrary, Uzbek people were proven to be fond of the conversation of bargaining. (places where prices are not fixed).

-Necha pul? (How much is it?)

- Sizga 20000. (20000 only for you).

Based on findings we tried to create a table where Uzbek and Persian politeness are compared and using situations were described. Some of them will be mentioned.

Persian Taarof	English translation	Using situation	English meaning
قدمتون روی چشم Ghadametun ruye cheshm	May your footsteps fall on your eyes	It is used for inviting guest to your house	Please visit us
حاک پای شما هستم Khake paye shoma hastam	I am the dust on your feet	Used to express humility in response to compliments	You are too kind
بیخسید پشتم به شماست. گل پشت و رو نداره Bebakhshid poshtam be shomast. Gol po'sht o nadore.	A flower has neither front nor back.	Used to answer who is apologizing for sitting with his back	No need to apologize



Pir beshi پیر بېشى!	I wish you get old	Used by older people to thank young people	May you live long
Eshqam عشقم Mohlesam مجلسم Mahabbatmikonim محبت مى كنيم	You are my love I am your fan We love you	Used in order to create close atmosphere	Dear
Nurani kardid نورانى كرديد	You brought the light to this place	Used to appreciate the gladness seeing the guest	Thanks for your coming
Jayesho'makhali جاي شما خالى!	Your place was empty	Used for person who couldn't attend the particular event	Everyone missed you.

Uzbek politeness phrase	English translation	Using situation	English meaning
Qadamlaringizga hasanot!	Qadam-step, hasanot -arabic حسنات - goodness, mercy) Goodness to your steps!	It is used for welcoming warmly a guest to your house	You are very welcome
Uyaltirmang!	Don't make me shy!	Used to express humility in response to compliments	You are too kind
Oshirib yubordingiz!	You are overstating!	Used to express humility in response to compliments	You are too kind
Ko'p yashang!	Live long!	Used to thank or encouraging somebody's statement	May you live long! I agree with you!
Uyimni to'ldirdingiz!	You have filled my house!	Used to appreciate the gladness seeing the guest	Thanks for your coming
O'ringiz bilindi.	Your place was noticed.	Used for person who couldn't attend the particular event	Everyone missed you.

*Similarities and Differences:* Both Iranian and Uzbek people always use taarof (terms of politeness) in everyday life. In the study of compliments, self-debasing, praising other people, praising back existed in Persian speech, while in some cases self-debasing and placing the addressee in high position was not often observed in Uzbek speech. On the

contrary self-debasing much can lead to misunderstanding, while Uzbek speaker feels his/her opinion has been neglected or the praised person seems to be a boastful (arrogant). There is a saying in Uzbek language: “O’ta kamtarlik - manmanlikdir” with the meaning “Being *too modest* is the sign of *arrogance*.”

Conversation on the purpose of trade is also nearly similar, only one term of politeness couldn’t be observed in Uzbekistan as qabeli nadare (‘it’s not worthy of you’, i.e. ‘you can have it for free’).

## CONCLUSION

Both languages (Persian and Uzbek) have specific means to show politeness, deference, respect or recognition of the social status and age of the speaker and the hearer, the goal of the research is to study how to make two parties relaxed and comfortable with each other having realised the nuances of differences and similarities.

On theoretical research, it was known that this topic has been investigated by European academics more than Asian (namely, Iranian Uzbek) researchers.

Persian taarof can be met for the purpose of not losing face (impressing positively other people); in order to make other people free or good; just to follow folk rules of taarof no matter willingly or not; and also it can be used to put people in an awkward position and make them do what the speaker wants.

Uzbek “Politeness” aim is to remain good impression in other people’s memory and maintain the atmosphere for them to feel good / relaxed and obeying unwanted rules of politeness.

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