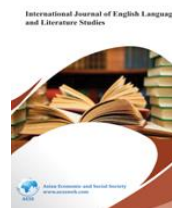




## International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies

ISSN(e): 2306-0646/ISSN(p): 2306-9910

URL: www.aessweb.com



### TRACING NATIVE CULTURE IN IRANIAN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING: FOCUS ON ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Mohammad Khatib<sup>1</sup> --- Bizhan Hekmatshoar Tabari<sup>2</sup> --- Mohammad Javad Mohammadi<sup>3†</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate professor at Allameh Tabataba'i University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Ayandegan Institute of Higher Education, Tonekabon, Iran

<sup>3</sup>PhD candidate in TEFL at Allameh Tabataba'i University of Tehran, Iran

#### ABSTRACT

*It seems obvious that there are some differences in the writing traditions among the university students all around the world. It can be attributed to different identity, ethnic, race as well as benefiting from various cultural backgrounds. Generally, culture is believed to be transmitted through language. Academic writing as a genre of language widely exploited by the students all over the world is not excluded from this rule. Written language is an attempt to communicate with the reader. A writer has an intention or purpose, as well as information to convey. Thus, the current study gives some enlightenment on the different cultural schemata utilized by the native speakers of Persian (NSP) in writing their dissertation acknowledgments. The findings revealed some interesting Persian culture-based themes in this part of academic writing. As a whole, it can be concluded that domestic culture is present in all aspects of human life even in the realm of academic writing.*

© 2016 AESS Publications. All Rights Reserved.

**Keywords:** Culture, Language, Academic writing, Acknowledgments, Persian culture.

**Received:** 11 July 2015/ **Revised:** 17 October 2015/ **Accepted:** 24 November 2015/ **Published:** 3 December 2015

#### Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes to the existing literature on the relationship between language and culture in the Iranian academic context focusing mainly on the acknowledgments as the genre in which many cordials and social ties as well as cultural issues are revealed.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The world is made up of different communities, in turn, each consists of members sharing similar experiences, beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and ways of working. The members of the communities also develop ways of speaking and communicating with each other which reflect their beliefs and what they see as valuable. As a whole, citizenship and culture are intertwined to and go hand in hand with each other in the way that citizenship without referring to culture cannot be seen sound. Culture is not an ornament that we human beings can apply, it's the factor distinguishing human from non-human. In other words, without it, there would be no humans. It is made up of traditions, beliefs and ways of life from the most spiritual to the most material giving us meaning, a way of leading

† Corresponding author

DOI: 10.18488/journal.23/2016.5.1/23.1.46.54

ISSN(e): 2306-0646/ISSN(p): 2306-9910

© 2016 AESS Publications. All Rights Reserved.

our lives. Human beings are creators of culture and, at the same time, culture is what makes us human. Our citizenship is, therefore, cultural.

Based on the above mentioned statements, it can be concluded that cultures have values for their members. These cultural values and beliefs are normally internalized through their socialization process (Eisenhart, 2001) and through interaction between individuals and their communities (Krause *et al.*, 2003). Despite the fashions, cultural values tend to change slowly. Values are supposed to endure over a long period of time. They give intensity, stability, direction, order and predictability to all aspects of one's life (Smith, 2000). Thus, it is quite natural to trace the culture even in academic texts. In other words, the same community system works in academia too. In different countries and cultures, the way academics communicate with others in their community represents their shared assumptions and values. In other words, writers with different cultural backgrounds have different rhetorical features. Risager (2005) establishes the concept of languaculture as very useful in the construction of the new understanding of the relationship between language, culture and society in a globalizing world. Languaculture may be a key concept in the understanding of language as both a social and a cultural phenomenon. The relationship between language and culture varies according to the point of departure. In a generic sense, language and culture (Chang, 2003; Risager, 2007) are always inseparable for culture is a system of symbols and language is one such system in the network. In addition, language use is always confined to a cultural context, i.e. the interpretation of language codes results from the social and cultural semantic systems).

### 1.1. Academic writing

The value of academic writing as the fulcrum on which many other aspects of scholarship depend should be respected. Academic writing is indeed vital for growth and enhancement of important skills to be able to lead a successful life after the completion of studies. As claimed by Swales and Feak (2004) academic writing plays a major role in the field of higher education and is the primary form of communication within individual subject disciplines. It is used to express acquired knowledge in a specific subject area. Such writing tends to be serious in nature and often demonstrates particular theories or arguments in relation to a specified discourse. Academic writing is mainly undertaken for learning development or course assessment purposes and the same principles apply to dissertations and theses. In summary, as it can be inferred from Murray and Moore (2006) academic writing is a substantial issue that needs attention and support from the academic community.

### 1.2. Acknowledgments as an Academic Genre

One of the areas in academic settings demanding more investigation by the experts in the field is acknowledgment texts. Acknowledgments are types of academic writings that researchers write with utmost joy and delight. A dissertation acknowledgment is addressed by Hyland as a "Cinderella" genre signaling that it is "neither strictly academic nor entirely personal" and seems to constitute a peculiar genre of its own (Hyland, 2003). According to Hyland (2004) acknowledgments are textual components where writers need to express their gratitude to the ones who helped them appropriately consider the very intricate rules of communication (e.g., the face needs of the other and the self, the social context, representation of the self) (p. 304). Thus, these areas are significant in enabling authors to build a credible scholarly and social character in readers' mind.

Earning the doctorate, the highest academic degree in any university, is a major educational, professional, and personal accomplishment, requiring not only years of diligence and days and nights of time devoted by the writers, but also the assistance, encouragement, support, and favor of others both in academic and moral realms. Acknowledgments in dissertations, as argued by Hyland (2004) allow students to demonstrate their awareness of central academic values such as modesty and gratitude, establish their credibility, recognize debts, and achieve a sense of closure at the end of what is often a long and demanding research process (p. 304). The acknowledgment

sections are, thus, short but important pieces of text. They orient the reader to what the student has done as well as where the student is placed in various scholarly and social networks. These seemingly simple texts need as much attention as other parts of student's texts. Like the table of contents, the acknowledgment sections are often the last thing a student writes, but among the first things an examiner reads (Paltridge and Starfield, 2007). As Finn (2005) argues, "first impressions last" in the examination process. A clear and well-written acknowledgment can help make that first impression a good one.

Through acknowledgments, writers explicitly negotiate interpersonal relationships and reflect socio-cultural interactions that have received little attention in the research literature. Notwithstanding these views, as argued by Genette (1997, cited in Giannoni (2002)) this section, unlike the main component sections of the dissertation, does not form an instrumental construction to the dissertation's rhetorical epistemology and stands outside the research record of establishing academic issues due to the assumption that acknowledgments along with prefaces, illustrations, and dedications belong to the paratext category. On the other hand, currently, in the light of several studies that have been done (e.g., (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993; Kumatoridani, 1999; Ruhi, 2006)) we can better talk about the different tendencies of cultures in regard to performing certain acts (i.e., thanking expressions, requests, apologies etc.) in language.

In light of what claimed by Jalilifar and Mohammadi (2014) acknowledgment as a genre is extensively used in academic discourse to express sincere thanks and gratitude for the assistance and contribution received from an individual or an institution, thus establishing an auspicious academic and social credit. Acknowledgments have been of some interest to genre analysts. We can classify the studies on acknowledgments into three groups. The first group of studies draws on the acknowledgments written by the natives of English (e.g., (Ben-Ari, 1987; Cronin, 1991; McCain, 1991; Davis and Cronin, 1993)). The second group focuses on acknowledgments written by non-natives of English (e.g., (Hyland, 2003; Al-Ali, 2004; Hyland, 2004; Hyland and Tse, 2004; Al-Ali, 2010; Mingwei and Yajun, 2010)). And the third group centers around the cross-cultural studies on acknowledgments (e.g., (Giannoni, 2002; GolpourLasaki, 2011; Jalilifar and Mohammadi, 2014)).

### 1.3. The Relationship between Language and Culture

An understanding of the relationship between language and culture is important for language learners, users, and for all those involved in language education. As asserted by Elmes (2013) for language teachers and learners in general, an appreciation for the differences in opinion regarding the relationship between language and culture can help to illuminate the diversity of views held toward the use of language. For all language users, the recognition of how their language affects others can greatly impact the direction and motivation for both language study and interpersonal relationships, and it can also add great insight and value to language education, program planning, and curriculum development (Ibid).

It is generally agreed that language and culture are closely related. Language can be viewed as a verbal expression of culture. It is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Language provides us with many of the categories we use for expression of our thoughts, so it is therefore natural to assume that our thinking is influenced by the language which we use. The values and customs in the country we grow up in shape the way in which we think to a certain extent.

Language, in light of what was claimed by Jiang (2000) is the mirror of culture in the sense that people can see a culture through its language. Another metaphor used culture to symbolize language and culture is the iceberg. The visible part is the language, with a small part of culture; the greater part, lying hidden beneath the surface, is the invisible aspect of culture (Ibid).

Many linguists explore the relationship between language and culture. Nida (1998) holds the view that "Language and culture are two symbolic systems. As announced by Jiang, everything we say in language has

meanings, designative or sociative, denotative or connotative (Jiang, 2000). Every language form we use has meanings, carries meanings that are not in the same sense because it is associated with culture and culture is more extensive than language.” People of different cultures can refer to different things while using the same language forms. For example, when one says lunch, an Englishman may be referring to hamburger, but an Iranian man will most probably be referring to bread or rice.

Thus, regarding the intertwined relationship between language and culture, most notably in academic language and the importance of acknowledgment texts in academia, the current study, regarding the fact that few studies have been devoted to examine the trace of culture in Persian academic writing, highlights some cultural themes employed by Iranian Ph.D. students in writing their theses acknowledgments to shed some light on as well as appreciate the considered themes.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Data

The data for the current study comes from 70 dissertation acknowledgments written by the NSP in social sciences. Social sciences’ dissertation acknowledgments were chosen to be analyzed due to their important role they play in human life. Social sciences or soft sciences study the human aspects of the world. They include an in-depth study and evaluation of human behavior, among them the communication behavior, by using scientific methods in either quantitative or qualitative manner. Consequently, seven disciplines, namely library sciences, literature, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology were selected for subsequent analyses.

### 2.2. Procedures

For data collection, a series of trips was made to the universities of Ahvaz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz, and Mazandaran, and samples of acknowledgments in dissertations written within the same time frame were picked from the relevant departments once permission was made from the universities. For the ease of data analysis, the mentioned disciplines were coded as Lib representing library sciences, Lit representing literature, His representing history, Phil representing philosophy, Psy representing psychology, Soc representing sociology, and Theo representing theology. Also, in the present study P stands for Persian and ACK stands for acknowledgment. In what follows, the proportion of Persian acknowledgments along with the universities from which these texts are picked is shown (Table 1).

**Table-1.** The proportion of Persian doctoral dissertation acknowledgments

Discipline	No of acknowledgments	Proportion of acknowledgements from universities
Lit	10	Mazandaran (6) & Esfahan (4)
Lib	10	Ahvaz (6) & Shiraz (4)
His	10	Tabriz (10)
Psy	10	Tabriz (10)
Phil	10	Ahvaz (3), Esfahan (4), & Shiraz (3)
Soc	10	Esfahan (10)
Theo	10	Esfahan (5), Tabriz (3) & Ahvaz (2)

Following the data collection, the acknowledgment texts were scrutinized to find various Persian (Iranian) cultural themes employed to socialize such texts.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The values and norms dominating cultures have arisen the interests of many experts working in social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and inevitably studies in language as the main tool for communication.

To this end, surprisingly, in recent years, studies conducted in social and interactional aspects of language have gained a significant scholastic interests and the number of these studies has increased praiseworthy. In this regard, as more studies targeted specific cultures, it was uncovered that the notion of appropriateness in language differs from culture to culture since different cultures are dominated by different values and norms and these are reflected by different choices of language patterns in communication (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993; Koutlaki, 2002). To shed some more light on this area of study, the current presentation examined the application of various culture-bound schemata in Persian dissertation acknowledgments.

At the very beginning of analysis, an important point attracted our attention in opening the acknowledgments by NSP. Iranian students in more than 65% of their acknowledgments begin their work by commenting on his/her research experience. This part acts as an introduction to the main body of the acknowledgments, i.e. acknowledging different sources. In this part, writers, by sharing their personal experience and showing the relationship between this private experience and the research process, create a more personal text, which, in turn, allows them both to elevate the value of the received help from the acknowledgees and the value of their own expressions of thanking. Note the following example.

1) *Kar-e tâhghighiâmridoshvarvâtâklifi shag âst.* (P. ACK. Soc. No. 1)  
(*Conducting research is a hard and burdensome task.*)

It seems that the Persian writers are inclined to present themselves as the owners of their dissertations and let others know about the difficulties they encountered during the complex process of writing a doctoral dissertation. Here, we can point to the “self-enhancement” style of communication offered by Ting-Toomey (1999). He argues that the self-enhancement verbal style reflects the vaunting of people when they perform an exhausting task.

Thus, we might claim that NSP are culturally more apt to use a language of self-enhancement. Indeed, Persian writers exploited this move to reflect on both the struggles they were involved and accomplishments they achieved in conducting their study. In other words, they wished to let others know the arduous task of writing a doctoral dissertation as well as the understandings they gained following the accomplishment of the study. Generally, within achievement domains, if people succeed in an important task, they may become proud of their ability or accomplishment. Pride is a manifestation of self-esteem and is acceptable as celebration and sharing of one’s worthy accomplishments with others. Thus, many writers display their authorship of the dissertations by inserting a resonating move to comment on research experiences and the difficult journey they have had.

The other interesting issue was thanking God, the almighty as a divine source assisting them in accomplishing their task. Frequently cited in Persian, i.e., in more than 80%, acknowledgments are assumed to be influenced by religion to the extent that in the Iranian Muslim society, there is no separation between religion and social life. Following is an example of this step’s employment in Persian acknowledgments.

2) *Pârvârdegar ra shakerâmke be mântâvan dad ta pâsâz se sal tâlash in pâzhuhesh ra be payan beresanâm.* (P. ACK. His. No. 5)

(*I thank God who empowered me to finish this research after three years attempting.*)

This step usually embodies a form of gratitude to Allah (God) who is believed by Muslims as the source of inspiration, strength, and confidence, making the completion of the task possible. This is compatible with what was discovered by Al-Ali (2010) emphasizing this sub-move as an obligatory section in Jordanian Arabic dissertations. The importance of religion can be signaled by the large number of verses, scriptures, and hadiths (quotations narrated from Prophet Mohammad and spiritual leaders) stressing thankfulness, most notably to God in Islam. This centrality comes from what is stated explicitly in the Holy Quran:

*If you are grateful, I [your Lord] will add more (favors) unto you; but if you showing gratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed. (Quran 14:7).*

Being predominantly a Muslim society, Islamic laws and practices play a vital role in one's personal and social life in Iran. Although the Iranian writers are of different ethnic groups, they have assimilated an Islamic identity with their ethnic identity. According to Watts (1987, cited in Faruqi (2005)) ethnic and religious identities can be assimilated in the case of Islam. Thus, it is likely to argue that Islamic values influence the Iranians' socio-cultural practices in one of the basic features. In such a deeply-rooted religious context in which religion is believed to have the upper hand, gratitude, most notably expressed towards God, is given much importance and emphasis, and so it is a habit among most Muslims to thank God for His blessings and bounties. Since in the Islamic culture everyone is usually assumed to start work by the name of God and finish it by thanking God, so it is quite natural if such a step recurs even in dissertation acknowledgements.

Acknowledging committee members, as claimed by Hyland (2004) is present in all acknowledgment texts. But, in case of Iranian texts, it was of different nature in the way that NSP employed a lot of compliments to accredit committee members. For instance, they, by utilizing the compliment of "*ostadane ârjmândâm jenab-e aghay-e doctor Mâhmood Abbasi va jenab-e aghay-e doctor Milad Râghâmi*" (i.e. respectful instructors Excellency Dr. Mahmood Abbasi and Excellency Dr. Milad Raghami), are deferential to the committee members. This can be attributed to the pervasive place and vital role of compliments (*Taarof* in Persian) in Iranian culture as a sign of politeness (Behnam and Amizadeh, 2011) which might sometimes go to the point of extreme obsequiousness. In fact, "*Taarof*" involves uttering polite and respectful statements to please and welcome somebody. Here is one example to clarify this fact.

3) *Bâr khod lazem midanâm âz hâmey-e âsatid-e mohtaram-e goruh-e fâlsâf-e daneshgah-e Esfâhan be vizhe jenab-e aghay-e doctor Mohâmmâd Âli Ezhei, jenab-e aghay-e doctor Mehdi Dehbashi vâ doctor Yusef Shagholi-e aziz ke saliani dâr mâhzâreshan danesh amukhtâm tâshâkkor konâm. (P. ACK. Phil. No. 8).*

*(I must thank all instructors of Philosophy Faculty of Esfahan University, most notably Excellency Dr. Mohammad Ali Ezhei, Excellency Dr. Mehdi Dehbashi and dear Dr. Yusef Shaghol whom I learned from for many years.)*

Overall, Complimenting as one pragmatic feature plays an important role in the establishment of rapport between people, in particular, of different cultures. The patterns of giving and receiving compliments—like any speech act—vary among different languages and cultures. "*Taarof*" has been addressed as a backbone of Persian politeness system (Koutlaki, 2002; Sharifian, 2007; Nanbakhsh, 2009) and it seems to be dominant in the majority of interactions between Iranians in different settings. The meaning and the concept of "*Taarof*" is broad and multidimensional. Offers and expressions of thanks, as two aspects of "*Taarof*", have been claimed by Koutlaki (2002) as the main manifestation of Persian ritual politeness (pp. 1740-1742). Thus, the performance of "*Taarof*" in Persian acknowledgments is a means to indicate the speakers' adherence to the societal norms of politeness.

In thanking non-committee members, being present in about 69% of Persian acknowledgment texts, NSP also employed a unique strategy devoting more heartfelt and cordial expressions in acknowledging these people. In light of what Wierzbicka (2003, cited in Królak and Rudnicka (2006)) maintains, cordiality can be defined as the readiness of the members of some society to express their emotions openly and spontaneously as well as to favor intimate contacts with certain individuals (e.g., family members) even to the extent of what might be seen as imposing one's will on other or invading their autonomy. Following example is extracted from the corpora.

4) *Anjam-e in pâzhuhash bedun-e yariha vâ fâdakarihay-e bi dârigh-e hâmsâr-e aziz va mehrabanam behich ruy momken nâbud. Behtârin dorudhay-e khod ra tâghdim-e ou mikonâm. (P. ACK. His. No.6).*

*(Doing this study would not be possible without the unsparing help and devotion of my dear and kind wife. I dedicate my best salutations to her.)*

Generally, Persian writers employ cordial statements to appreciate individuals by applying the adverbs like "*sincerely*" as well as by wishing them good luck. These offers are perceived as expressions of cordiality and warmth of feeling to demonstrate sincere and positive inter-personal relationships. Overall, Iranian people always tend to make cordial ties with their relational partners to show their politeness. Certain linguistic devices used in Persian

reflect cordiality in communication. Cordiality can be seen in almost every speech of Iranians to the extent that even a simple daily act like greeting could ground a cheerful and a cordial face-to-face encounter. Generally, Iranian people, even children, display ad-hoc cordiality and good sentiments in relation with others. Here, in writing the doctoral dissertation, writers utilized devices such as praising and cordial compliments to thank their favorite people who tolerated many difficulties and encouraged writers to accomplish the study well.

The other significant cultural theme being present in about 26% of Persian acknowledgments was accepting the responsibility of possible errors to absolve supervisors and advisors of blame for any weaknesses in the dissertation. This can be interpreted by referring to the "*Shekasteh-nafsi*" (i.e., modesty in English) in the Iranian culture by which a person downgrades him/herself and raises the position of the relational partner. This self-lowering (e.g. "*my knowledge debilities and limitations*") and other-raising pattern is the commonest strategy in Persian (Beeman, 2001; Karimnia and Afghari, 2010) to the extent that "*Shekasteh-nafsi*" is considered as a sign of politeness in Iran. Sharifian (2005) introduces the cultural schema of "*Shekaste-nafsi*" as a sign of politeness in Persian. He compared compliment responses in Anglo-Australian and Persian and concluded that Persian speakers largely practice the schema of "*Shekaste-nafsi*" (modesty) in their responses while Anglo-Australian speakers do not use a similar schema. This fact is shown in the following example.

5) *Dâr payan hârgune nâghs vâ kasti dâr neveshtar hazer ra be natâvaniha vâ mâhduiathay-e elmie khodâm mârbut midanâm. (P. ACK. Soc. No.7).*

*(Finally, it should be mentioned that the deficiencies and errors of the present study are due to my knowledge debilities and limitations.)*

The last cultural schema observed in 32.85% of Persian acknowledgments was dedicating the theses to the parents in most cases. This is revealed in the following example.

13) *Dâr payan in payan name ra be ruh-e pak-e pedârâm vâ be madârâm tâghdim mikonâm. (P. ACK. Lit. No.7).*

*(Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the pure soul of my father and my mother).*

This high frequency, on the one hand, can be explained with reference to religious affiliations, as the first thing that Allah (God) enjoins upon man is to show gratitude to Him and to one's parents as He says:

*Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) goal. (Quran 31:14)*

On the other hand, presence of thanks in Persian acknowledgments can be justified by referring to the concept of "*Ehteram*" which, as argued by Azarmi and Behnam (2012) is the most pivotal aspect in human relations among Iranians (p. 81). In fact, it is most readily replaced with other concepts suggesting politeness. Any polite behavior can be grounded in "*Ehteram*". Since in Persian culture a great emphasis is placed on *Ehteram* for "*bozorgtar*" (i.e. elderly) parents are so respected by their children. In Iran the elderly, most notably parents, are treated very respectfully and they are privileged by a high position among the family members.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed that though the academic rules, regulations, and conventions might constrain writers' choice of thanking expressions to more uniform patterns of thanking across cultures (Hyland, 2003; Hyland, 2004; Al-Ali, 2010) the social and cultural background of writers still have a bearing on their language choices (Hatipoğlu, 2007).

As a whole, the world is made up of communities. Each community consists of members who share similar experiences, beliefs, values and ways of working. The members of communities have also developed ways of speaking and communicating with each other, reflecting their beliefs and what they see as valuable. The same community system works in academia too. In different countries and cultures, the way academics communicate with others in their community represents their shared assumptions and values.

Overall, the findings of the current study exhibited that, on the one hand, NSP are religiously affected due to their high employment of *acknowledging God* in their acknowledgments. On the other hand, they seem to be audience-

sensitive in their choice of thanking expressions to the extent that distribution and quality of thanking expressions in relation to their addressees undertake a lot of changes. Findings rendered from the study uncovered that NSP writers exploit a myriad of compliments (*Taarof* in Persian) as well as more cordial statements to thank those who provided them with moral, academic and/or financial assistance. In more general sense, the results implied that NSP rely on high affective and emotional strategies of thanking in commitment to their acknowledgees. These tendencies can be justified by referring to what was asserted by Sell (1991) believing that people in different cultures can never feel the same thing exactly (p. 14). In a nutshell, what is included in acknowledgments shows a predisposition to resort to the socio-cultural values which can be attributed to the ideology that characterizes Iranian society.

**Funding:** This study received no specific financial support.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Contributors/Acknowledgement:** All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Ali, M.N., 2004. Conveying academic and social identity in graduate dissertation acknowledgements. Paper Presented at 5th International Conference of the European Association of Language for Specific Purposes, Zaragoza, Spain.
- Al-Ali, M.N., 2010. Generic patterns and socio-cultural resources in acknowledgments accompanying Arabic PhD dissertations. *Pragmatics*, 20(1): 1 – 26.
- Azarmi, A. and B. Behnam, 2012. The pragmatic knowledge of Iranian EFL learners in using face keeping strategies in reaction to complaints at two different levels. *English Language Teaching*, 5(2): 78-92.
- Beeman, W.O., 2001. Emotion and sincerity in Persian discourse: Accomplishing the representation of inner states. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 148(1): 31-57.
- Behnam, B. and N. Amizadeh, 2011. A comparative study of the compliments and compliment responses between English and Persian TV interviews. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 17(1): 65 -78.
- Ben-Ari, E., 1987. On acknowledgements in ethnographies. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 43(1): 63-84.
- Chang, Z., 2003. *Comparative studies in language & culture*. Beijing: China Ocean University Press.
- Cronin, B., 1991. Let the credits roll: A preliminary examination of the role played by mentors and trusted assessors in disciplinary formation. *Journal of Documentation*, 47(3): 227-239.
- Davis, C.H. and B. Cronin, 1993. Acknowledgements and intellectual indebtedness: A bibliometric conjecture. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 44(10): 590-592.
- Eisenhart, M., 2001. Changing conceptions of culture and ethnographic methodology: Recent thematic shifts and their implications for research on teaching. In V. Richardson (Eds.). *Handbook of research on teaching*. 4th Edn., Washington D.C: American Educational Research Association. pp: 209-225.
- Eisenstein, M. and J. Bodman, 1993. Expressing gratitude in American English. In Kasper, G., Blum-Kulka, S. (Eds.). *Inter-language pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp: 64 – 81.
- Elmes, D., 2013. The relationship between language and culture. National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya International Exchange and Language Education Center. Available from <http://www2.lib.nifs-k.ac.jp/HPBU/annals/an46/46-11.pdf>.
- Faruqi, M., 2005. Umma: The orientalist and the Qur'anic concept of identity. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 16(1): 1-34.
- Finn, J.A., 2005. *Getting a PhD: An action plan to help manage your research, your supervisor and your project*. London: Routledge.
- Giannoni, D.S., 2002. Worlds of gratitude: A contrastive study of acknowledgment texts in English and Italian research articles. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(1): 1-31.
- GolpourLasaki, F., 2011. A contrastive study of generic organization of doctoral dissertation acknowledgements written by native and non-native (Iranian) students in applied linguistics. *MJAL*, 3(2): 175-199.



- Hatipoğlu, Ç., 2007. (Im) politeness, national and professional identities and context: Some evidence from e-mailed call for papers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39(4): 760 -773.
- Hyland, K., 2003. Dissertation acknowledgements: The anatomy of a Cinderella genre. *Written Communication*, 20(3): 242-268.
- Hyland, K., 2004. Graduates' gratitude: The generic structure of dissertation acknowledgements. *English for Specific Purposes*, 23(3): 303-324.
- Hyland, K. and P. Tse, 2004. I would like to thank my supervisor: Acknowledgements in graduate dissertations. *Applied Linguistics*, 14(2): 259-275.
- Jalilifar, A.R. and M.J. Mohammadi, 2014. Cross-cultural investigation into generic structure of dissertation acknowledgments in English and Persian: Reflections on politeness strategies. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 6(1): 23-47.
- Jiang, W., 2000. The relationship between culture and language. *ELT Journal*, 54(4): 328-324.
- Karimnia, A. and A. Afghari, 2010. Compliments in English and Persian interaction: A cross-cultural perspective. *Jezikoslovlje*, 12(1): 27-50.
- Koutlaki, S.A., 2002. Offers and expressions of thanks as face enhancing acts: Ta'arof in Persian. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34(12): 1733-1756.
- Krause, K., S. Bochner and S. Duchesne, 2003. *Educational psychology for learning and teaching*. Victoria: Thomson.
- Królak, E. and K. Rudnicka, 2006. Selected aspects of directives in Polish. *RESLA*, 19: 129-142.
- Kumatoridani, T., 1999. Alternation and co-occurrence in Japanese thanks. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31(5): 623-642.
- McCain, K.H., 1991. Communication, competition and secrecy: The production and dissemination of research-related information in genetics. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 16(4): 491-516.
- Mingwei, Z. and J. Yajun, 2010. Dissertation acknowledgments: Generic structure and linguistic features. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 33(1): 94-109.
- Murray, R. and S. Moore, 2006. *The handbook of academic writing: A fresh approach*. Maidenhead: Open University Press-McGraw-Hill.
- Nanbakhsh, G., 2009. Persian politeness ritual: Taarof. Paper Presented in the Second Conference on Linguistic Impoliteness and Rudeness (LIAR), Lancaster, UK.
- Nida, E., 1998. Language, culture, and translation. *Foreign Languages Journal*, 11(3): 29-33.
- Paltridge, B. and S. Starfield, 2007. *Thesis and dissertation writing in a second language: A handbook for supervisors*. London: Routledge.
- Risager, K., 2005. Linguaculture as a key concept in language and culture teaching. In H.H.A.F. Bent Preisler, S. Kjaerbeck & K. Risager (Eds.). *The consequences of mobility*. Roskilde: Roskilde University. pp: 185-196.
- Risager, K., 2007. *Language and culture pedagogy: From a national to a transnational paradigm*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Ruhi, Ş., 2006. Politeness in compliment responses: A perspective from naturally occurring exchanges in Turkish. *Pragmatics*, 16(1): 43-101.
- Sell, R., 1991. Literary genre and history: Questions from a literary pragmaticist for socio-semioticians. In E. Ventola (Eds.). *Approaches to the analysis of literary discourse*. Abo: Abo Academy Press. pp: 1-35.
- Sharifian, F., 2005. The Persian cultural schema of shekasteh-nafsi: A study of complement responses in Persian and Anglo-Australian speakers. *Pragmatics and Cognition*, 13(2): 337-361.
- Sharifian, F., 2007. L1 cultural conceptualization in L2 learning: The case of Persian-speaking learners of English. In F. Sharifian, & G. B. Palmer, (Eds.). *Applied cultural linguistics*. The Netherlands: John Benjamin B. V. pp: 33-52.
- Smith, M.J., 2000. *Culture: Reinventing the social sciences*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Swales, J.M. and B. Feak, 2004. *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills*. Ann Arbor, Mich: The University of Michigan Press.
- Ting-Toomey, S., 1999. *Communicating across cultures*. New York: Guilford Publications.

*Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s), International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.*