

Describing and Analysing some Polite Words in Persian based on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory¹

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Abstract

This research, based on Politeness Theory, describes and analyzes five common words and expressions of politeness used in Persian. The data has been collected out of observations and note taking of real conversations in different natural situations as on streets, shopping centers, universities, parties, etc. Words and expressions of politeness have different meanings in different contexts. The results show that Persian speakers not only use politeness speech for mitigating face threatening acts (FTA), but also use it for the maintenance and enhancement of addressees' face and honor. This can lead us to one of the limitations of Brown and Levinson's (1987)

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Politeness Theory which describes politeness by mitigating FTA. The results also show that the major underlying strategy of words and expressions of politeness is “negative politeness” strategy. It might be worth mentioning that these words and expressions are used by speakers mostly in formal or close to formal contexts.

Keywords: politeness, Politeness Strategies, function, face, context