A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Study of Indirect Complaint Responses in Iranian and American News Interviews: Iran's Nuclear Negotiations

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Abstract

The present study intended to compare the complaint responses used by President Rouhani and President Obama in the Iranian and US news interview contexts. For this purpose, Boxer's (1993) six types of indirect complaint responses were adopted: 'ignorance', 'questions', 'topic switch', 'contradiction', 'joke/teasing', 'advice/lecture' and 'agreement/commiseration'. The transcripts of the live news interviews were selected from Tehran Times in Iran and 'The New York Times', 'The Atlantic Daily', and 'National Public Radio' all carried out in 2015. The results of quantitative and qualitative data analyses revealed both universal and culture-specific responses. Whereas both nations made nearly equal use of 'question' response in order to make solidarity, 'contradiction' was used most frequently in the US interviews and 'topic-switch' and 'commiseration' were more frequent in Iranian transcripts. The findings are discussed with respect to the culture-specificity and universality and the way that news interviews deal with the political information including Iran's nuclear negotiations.

Keywords: pragmatics, speech act, complaint, news interview, nuclear negotiations

Introduction

In the classification of speech act, Austin (1962) placed complaint in the class of performatives and the subclass of behabitives, which are concerned with our attitudes and expressions of attitudes towards one's social behavior. In contrast, Searle (1976) categorized the complaint as a kind of expressive speech act, and as the term suggests, it expresses the psychological state of a person. For example, when we complain, we express our dissatisfaction about the matter of the complaint. Edward, (2005) and Drew, (1998) defined the term "complaint" as a speech act which is used to indicate speaker's dissatisfaction of existing situations and to point out some transgression on the part of the person who performs some complainable action; such disturbing activity usually includes grievance on the part of the complainer.

Complaint as a linguistic speech act is researched within the more general term of politeness. This speech act is totally context-dependent (Boxer, 1991) since participants need to know how to perform the it with regard to factors such as the hearer, the relationship with the hearer, the topic, the intention of the speech, and the suitable linguistic forms for the speech act. In this respect, Hymes, (1972) proposed that the speaker is required to have sociocultural competence of language use in a language as well as linguistic competence to perform the speech act appropriately. In addition, the speech act of complaining is a face-threatening act when the speaker violates the sociocultural rules of speaking. This can lead to a breakdown in communication and in the relationship with other participants (Brown & Levinson, 1989; Khezrlou, 2018; Khezrlou, Ellis & Sadeghi, 2017). In Searle's (1976) typology, apologies and complaints are classified as expressive speech acts that convey the psychological state of the speaker. According to Brown and Levinson (1989), expressives threaten the addressee's positive

face. Thus, there is an interplay between the need to respond to a socially unacceptable act (by complaining) and the awareness that doing so constitutes a threat to the addressee's positive face. Complaints are, therefore, related to the issue of politeness which refers to the particular ways of behaving with people, saying and performing acts that considers the affective states of the interlocutors. This means that the polite statement of meanings is more indirect and less sophisticated that the meanings uttered without taking the addressee's feelings into account (McConnell-Ginet, Borker, & Furman, 1980; Snoeck Henkemans, 2014). McConnell-Ginet, et.al., (1980) relate respecting the feelings of others to the concept of face. Accordingly, it is asserted that two aspects of individuals' feelings are determining in face: the preference that their face is not threatened which represents the notion of negative face and the fact that they like to be complimented by means of likes, admirations and so on, referring to the concept of positive face. McConnell-Ginet, Borker, & Furman (1980) propose that both aspects be combined into one the notion of face because they are both used in the act of detriment to face.

Previous studies in speech acts of complaint provide a broad picture of the varied nature of complaining as an activity in interaction, while at the same time, pointing towards issues that are of relevance to complaint; for example: the emergent, nature and structure of complaint, the way in which the activity of complaining may be influenced by other relevancies (such as social status, power, social distance) and the effect that complaining may have on the relationships between different participants in interaction (Bayat, 2013; Deveci, 2010; Khezrlou, 2012). They demonstrated that the movement from a potential complaint into something that can be viewed as a complaint is eventually a cooperative activity between the interlocutors in interaction. They proposed a large number of complaint cases, from potential complaints that do not change into complaints to effective complaints that are mutually developed by the interlocutors to the extent at which it is no longer possible to identify who is the complainant and who is the recipient, reaching to cases in which a recipient answers a complaint that the interlocutor refutes having been uttered. On the whole, these studies forcefully attest that complaints cannot simply be defined as particular expressions of discontent that are produced unilaterally by one of the participants (Schegloff, 2005).

The production of the complaint speech acts might vary in different contexts depending on the sources of tension, individuals' background, contextual variables and so forth (Schegloff, 2005). One of the richest contexts for the study of how complaints can emerge is the political context. In the following section, the specificities of news interview with a political discourse orientation are overviewed.

News Interview as Political Discourse

Information published in the mainstream news media has greater credibility among audiences than information found in other forms of popular media (for example, films, television programs, cartoons, Internet-based blogs) because the news media are expected to adhere to journalistic ethical standards of accuracy, objectivity and balance. The news media place high value on stories about conflict (Patrona, 2011). Along with ethic of providing balance in any story, this preference for controversy increased news media attention to the 'skeptical' lobby's strategy of framing the issue as uncertain and controversial (Eriksson, 2011).

Broadcast media display an essential difference from print: print is spatially arrayed; the reader skims, then focuses on or revisits particular passages. Such scrutiny is not as readily available to the television viewer or radio listener (Kroon Lundell & Eriksson, 2010). While the printed news interview can deliver careful and measured detail and context, it is still "the first rough draft of history": it edits and reports—that is to say it versions—what *has* happened. Of

course, broadcast talk is now literally and irrevocably broadcast through the ether, and retrievable in a variety of digital media. On the contrary, the live broadcast interview is not important; it is the development of a spot of history—on-line, evolving, unedited, often intuitive, constantly and universally unchangeable.

Its on-line evolving makes the live news interview a possibly dangerous mission for a public figure. It cannot be 'off the record', and the record consists of not only the interviewee's basic utterances regarding the topic, but also a display of their ideology and character, ethical background, reliability, and honesty (Craig, 2010; Ekström, Eriksson, Johansson, & Wikström, 2012). A politician who cannot reliably deal with strong questioning is now doubtful to achieve or sustain senior office. "Just as speechmaking skills were crucial in the days of the public square, the capacity to field questions has become a core skill for public figures in the television age" (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p. 2). It is a vague isolation from political discussion before a town hall audience explained by Atkinson (1984). A remarkable performance in form, content, or both, quickly travels from its immediate audience to other media and to the debating chambers of politicians.

In a relevant study, Jiang (2006) intended to explore the request and refusal speech acts used in the question and response pairs in the press conferences held in China and the US regarding the North Korea nuclear crisis. The analysis that examined press conferences of 5 months revealed that the differences between China and the US in several ways. Regarding the conventional and conservative nature of Chinese culture, press conferences seemed to be more regulated and based mainly on turn allocations, with almost no disruptions or follow-ups in the question–response units. The questions that the journalists asked fundamentally sought particular information, required approval, clarification, and comments. However, in the US, more questions were asked for approval and clarification. There were different refusal strategies in Chinese data, showing an inclination towards avoidance and inadequate responses and comparatively a low number of direct refusals were used. In contrast, the US spokespersons employed several direct refusals. The cultural features, according to Jiang, might clarify the differences, such as implicit and face-directed communication styles.

Literature review
Complaint and Politeness
In the realm of complaint and politeness very few studies have been conducted. One study is Laforest's (2008) research that investigated the role of direct complaint in front of a witness in communications that included more than two participants. The findings indicated that, of all the witness's probable reactions, affiliation with the complainant was the most frequent. The complaint is as a result 'collectivized', which results in a more aggressive reaction against the complainee. In spite of this, the witness remains cautious: if the sequence appears to call for conflict, they obviously respond to avoid a deterioration of the interactional atmosphere. Therefore, the witness carries out two activities concurrently: he/she leads to both regulating behaviors and to sustaining a controllable level of apprehension between the participants. The majority of research in the field of speech acts particularly complains have mainly focused on the comparison of the different individuals' language use from distinct cultures. In the following section, these cross-cultural differences that have been explored in numerous studies are highlighted.

Cross-Cultural Differences in Complain Speech Act Use

In the various studies exploring the speech act performance of native speakers of different languages, it has become clear that even though the typology of speech acts seemed to be universal, their perceptions and verbalization could differ largely in different cultures (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Put differently, speakers from different cultures can have access to the same number of speech acts and conception strategies, but they can vary in the strategies they select. As an instance, according to House and Kasper's measures of directness (1981), German speakers opted for higher levels of directness and used fewer down-graders than did English speakers.

DeCapua (1998) examined the phenomenon of pragmatic transfer as a possible basis for cultural stereotypes. A cultural stereotype is defined as "the tendency of people of one culture to characterize the members of different cultures in overly simplified or inappropriate terms (p. 4526)". Americans, for instance, often stereotype Germans as rude and aggressive and Japanese as meek and deferential. In this study, DeCapua wanted to examine pragmatic transfer into English by native speakers of German within the speech act of complaints. In this study, he compared how native speakers of German complain in service settings in German, their native language, and in English, their second language, and compared these sets of data with data produced by native speakers of American English in the same situation. The results indicated that the type and the tone of German responses differed from those of the Americans responses, which led to cultural misunderstandings. These cultural misunderstandings, when occurred consistently among groups of the same language nonnative speakers, could give rise to cultural stereotypes.

Keiko's (2010) comparative study of complaint sequences in English and Japanese was an investigation of how Japanese and Americans expressed their dissatisfaction to those who caused it in their native language and in the target language (Japanese or English). The data analyses was based on the role-play performances of four situations by ten dyads in each of the four groups (native speakers of Japanese speaking Japanese to a Japanese (JJJ), native speakers of English speaking English to an American (EEE), native speakers of Japanese speaking English to a native speaker of English (JEE), and native speakers of English speaking Japanese to a native speaker of Japanese (EJJ). The findings referred to some discrepancies between the groups of native speakers of English and Japanese regarding the length of their exchanges and the application of strategies by complainers and complainees. On the whole, complaint sequences in English were characterized as shorter, and the complaint strategies used by the JJJ group were less indirect compared to those employed by the EEE group.

Chen (2003) compared American and Chinese complaint conceptualizations. A discourse completion test (DCT) including eight scenarios was used to collect data from tertiary level learners in the United States and Taiwan. The complaint strategies used by the forty subjects comprised opting out, implicit reproach, indirect complaint, indirect allegation, direct complaint, request for repair and intimidation. The quantitative findings revealed that both the Americans and Chinese employed indirect complaint and request for repair most consistently and that the incorporation of these two strategies had the highest frequency of incidence. The qualitative findings, on the other hand, showed that different sociocultural norms between American and Chinese societies were mirrored in the linguistic features and content they uttered. For instance, Chinese revere those who are higher in status, whereas, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), Americans realize impositions as negligible and social parameters as never very great.

Therefore, from the aforementioned studies, it is apparent that cross-cultural miscommunication is more culture-specific than is a linguistic competency based. Accordingly, research within the fields of pragmatics and sociolinguistics might exert a magnificent influence

upon signifying the potential areas one must explore in an attempt to find out the similarities and differences between language behaviors of individuals from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds. These discrepancies or similarities become even more evident and linguistically and socially more complicated when it comes to the analysis of political genres. The complex relations and factors when the political discourse and specifically news interviews were the focus of the present study from the perspective of complain speech act.

This Study

The essential specificities distinguishing live news interview from other forms of new media and its conflicting nature makes this genre perfectly appropriate for the pragmatic analysis of speech act particularly complain act. This analysis gains special significance when there would be a comparison made between two culturally different sources. The present study, therefore, attempted to achieve this purpose by analyzing Iranian and American news interview transcripts during the Iranian nuclear negotiation period. The indirect complain speech act was selected for this comparison due to a number of reasons. Although both direct and indirect complaints have the potential of leading to lengthy interactions between the speaker and the addressee (in this study the president and the interviewee), it is usually in the indirect complaint or griping that one finds conversational materials upon which shared beliefs and attitudes may be expressed (Tatsuki, 2000). In the same situations, indirect complaint sequences tend to be longer, because they contain several phases (Clayman, 2010).

In particular, this study intended to address the following research question:

Q. Are there any significant differences between Iranian and American news interview transcripts with regard to the responses to indirect complaints addressed to them?

Method

Taxonomy

According to Boxer's (1993) study on complaining and commiserating, an indirect complaint is defined as a negative evaluation wherein the addressee is not held responsible for the perceived offense (i.e., griping); the expression of dissatisfaction to an interlocutor about a speaker himself/herself or someone/something that is not present.

Boxer (1993) found six types of ICs responses as major categories of ways in which people respond to indirect complaints:
1) ignorance
2) questions
3) topic switch
4) contradiction
5) joke/teasing
6) advice/lecture
7) agreement/commiseration

Table 1 (adopted from Boxer, 1993) demonstrates the coding scheme, whose strategies are arranged from the least making rapport to the most establishing solidarity.

Table 1. *complaint Coding Scheme*

IC Responses	Functions	Examples
Ø Response: The speaker ignores to response	Minimize or terminate an exchange.	A: What an adverse weather condition? B: hum
Contradiction: The addressee tells the speaker that the complaint is not accepted or approved	Contradict the speaker or take the part of the object of the complaint through defense on its part	A: he is a good professor. B: he is just strict.
Topic Switch: The addressee changes the topic of the complaint to terminate the exchange.	To remove the pressure of the offense.	A: I hate teaching stupid students. B: we work so long each day.
Joke/Teasing: The addressee response the speaker complaint with the sense of humor.	To bring the interlocutors Closer to each other	A: single student B: teacher A: sorry I'm late. B: don't worry, you have so many children.
Question: The addressee wanted to get more information about the reason.	Interrogating	A: my mum opens and reads my personal letters. B: Why does she do so?
Advice: A lecture given by the addressee to the speaker	Solving a problem	A: what a pity, I pour the juice on my new shirt. B: Don't worry about it. It could happen to anybody.
Commiseration: The addressee agrees with the speaker and confirms the validity of complaint.	To make the speaker feel better.	A: I need some privacy for me. I don't like to be observed by my parents all of the time. B: of course, it's your absolute right.

Corpus

In this study three new interviews with President Obama and three news interviews with President Rouhani were analyzed. For the American interviews, three time periods in which the interviews were published in different platforms were selected:

●May 21, 2015 The Atlantic Daily (An American magazine founded in 1857 that presents daily coverage and analysis of breaking news, politics and international affairs, education, technology, health, science and culture)

●April 5, 2015 The New York Times (An American newspaper based in New York city and founded in 1851. The New York Times is ranked 17th in the world by circulation and 2nd in the US).

●April 7, 2015 National Public Radio (An American non-profit membership media organization based in Washington D.C. that produces and distributes news and cultural programming).

And, for the Iranian news interview, three time periods within the nuclear deal time were selected in the following way:

●November 3, 2015 Tehran Times (An Iranian newspaper founded in 1979 as the first English language daily newspaper in Iran).

●September 29, 2015 Tehran Times
●September 27, 2015 Tehran Times
        The reason for the selection of these interviews was their timing since they were all within the same time period provoking the most extensive debate about the nuclear negotiations. The American interviews were 8000 words on the whole and the Iranian interviewed counted 6700 words. These written transcripts were analyzed in terms of Boxer's classification. The researcher with the help of an experienced PhD graduate in TESOL transcribed the interviews. In order to ensure the inter-rater reliability of the transcriptions, a Cohen's Kappa test was used which indicated an acceptable level of agreement between the two raters ($\kappa = .97$).

Data Analysis
        In comparing the diversity of details made available in these reports, a qualitative approach had to be adopted first, followed then by calculation of elements which had been qualitatively categorized. First, all the response types to the conflicting issues were qualitatively analyzed and their coverage in news interview texts was used to determine all occurrences of complaint responses. Every single piece of information was coded in news texts. These information codes were then entered into a statistical analysis program: Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

Results
        The overall percentage results for the use of complaint strategies in both Iranian and American news interviews are reported in Table 2. And, Table 3 presents the frequency results divided by Iranian and American contexts. In addition, Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the findings.

Table 2. *The Overall Percentage of Complaint Response Types*

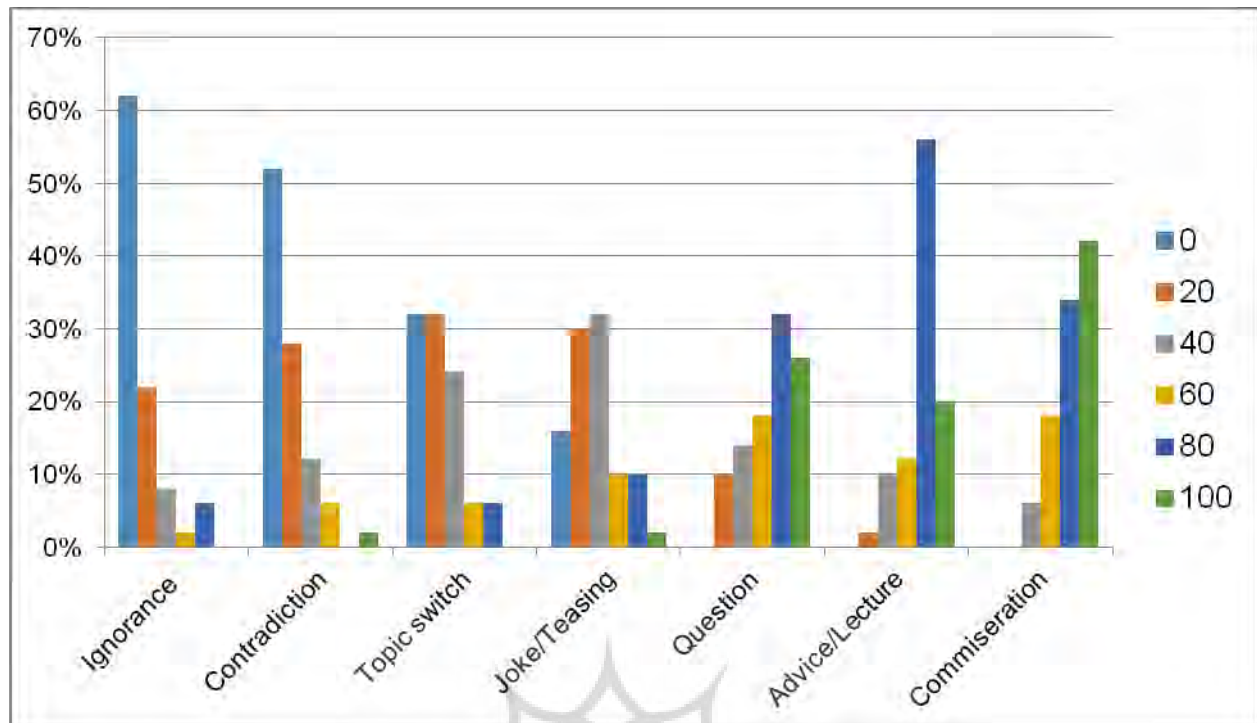| Type of response	0 = blocking conversation			100= establishing solidarity			
	0	20	40	60	80	100	Total
Ignorance	62%	22%	8%	2%	6%	0%	100%
Contradiction	52%	28%	12%	6%	0%	2%	100%
Topic switch	32%	32%	24%	6%	6%	0%	100%
Joke/Teasing	16%	30%	32%	10%	10%	2%	100%
Question	0%	10%	14%	18%	32%	26%	100%
Advice/Lecture	0%	2%	10%	12%	56%	20%	100%
Commiseration	0%	0%	6%	18%	34%	42%	100%

Figure 1. *Overall complaint responses*

Table 3. *The Frequency Complaint Response Types across Nationality*

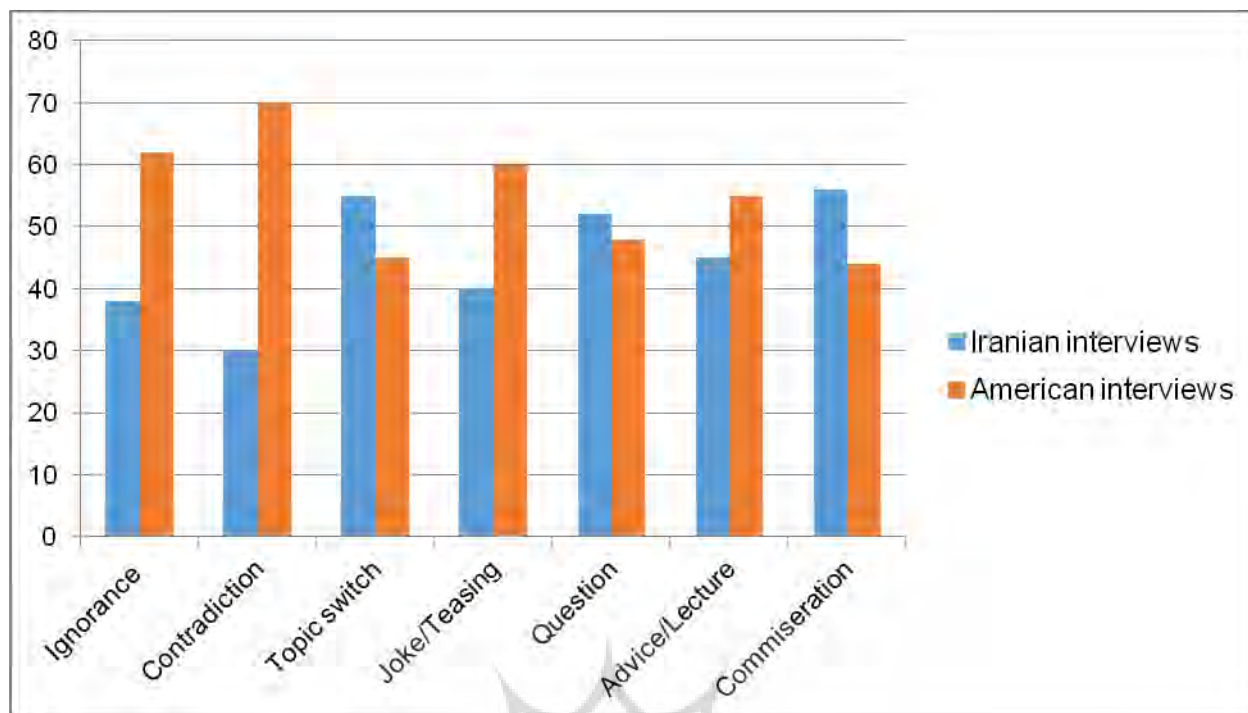|	Iranian interviews	American interviews	Total
Ignorance	38	62	100
Contradiction	30	70	100
Topic switch	55	45	100
Joke/Teasing	40	60	100
Question	52	48	100
Advice/Lecture	45	55	100
Commiseration	56	44	100

Figure 2. *Complaint responses across nationality*

It can be noticed from Table 3 that 62% of ignorance was used in the analyzed American news interviews have resulted in missing opportunity. The Iranian texts, however, used 38% ignorance as a strategy to respond to complaint. As is obvious in Table 2, for contradiction responses, 52% gave rank (0) and 2% gave rank (100) which means this kind of response caused blocking conversation, mostly used in the American context (70). For the third kind of response i.e., topic switch, 32% gave rank (0) and 32% gave rank (20) so, it means that overall 64% of this kind of response minimizes the conversation and only 12% is possible to make solidarity. Although joke/teasing functions to bring interlocutors closer to each other, the higher ranks were (20) 30% and (40) 32%. Regarding to question type of response, 32% and 26% of the participants, made use of this response. Advice and lecture had the highest frequency (80) which means it is a more preferable kind of response to establishing solidarity and 20% selected rank (100). This frequency doubles in commiseration responses to 42%. And because this kind of response makes the speaker feel better and have a kind of embedded agreement, could contribute to the high frequencies in the ranks (60, 80, 100) respectively. This strategy was mostly adopted in the Iranian texts (56).

These differences were subject to a Mann-Whitney U test to figure out the significant differences. Results are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. *Mann-Whitney U Test Results*

	Complaint strategy use
Mann-Whitney U	4712.1.500
Wicoxon W	954837.500

Z	-2.500
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.012

As Table 4 reports, there is a significant difference ($z = -2.500$, $p < 0.05$) between the Iranian and American news interviews in the use of complaint strategies.

Table 5 presents the excerpts from the news interviews for each complaint response:

Table 5. *Sample Excerpts from the Interviews for Each Complaint Response*

Category	Excerpt
Topic Switch	US President: "We are going to make sure that the lessons we've learned from our hardships and our persecutions are applied to how we govern and how we treat others".
Contradiction	**Goldberg:** So in 2012 you told me, when we were talking about Iran, "It is almost certain that other players in the region would feel it necessary to get their own nuclear weapons if Iran got them." Now we're in this kind of weird situation in which there's talk that Saudi Arabia, maybe Turkey, maybe Egypt would go build nuclear infrastructures come the finalization of this deal to match the infrastructure that your deal is going to leave in place in Iran. So my question to you is: Have you asked the Saudis not to go down any kind of nuclear path? What have they told you about this? And what are the consequences if other countries in the region say, "Well you know what, they have 5,000 centrifuges? We're going to have 5,000 centrifuges." **Obama**: There's been talk in the media, unsourced— **Goldberg**: Well, [Saudi Arabia's] Prince Turki said it publicly— **Obama**: Well, he's not in the government. There has been no indication from the Saudis or any other [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries that they have an intention to pursue their own nuclear program. Part of the reason why they would not pursue their own nuclear program—assuming that we have been successful in preventing Iran from continuing down the path of obtaining a nuclear weapon— is that the protection that we provide as their

	partner is a far greater deterrent than they could ever hope to achieve by developing their own nuclear stockpile or trying to achieve breakout capacity when it comes to nuclear weapons, and they understand that.
Teasing	While still resisting what he deemed congressional interference, Mr. Obama reached out to Republicans, calling Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, a "good and decent man."
Ignorance	"My hope is that we can find something that allows Congress to express itself but does not encroach on traditional presidential prerogatives and ensures that if in fact we get a good deal that we can go ahead and implement it," Mr. Obama said.
Commiseration	"Today, a new chapter has been opened in Iran's relations with the world," President Rouhani told the delegates from across the world.
Advice	President Rouhani said, "Of course, my advice that I give on a daily basis, on a continuous basis, to the judiciary, is never about a specific individual. I have given different sets of advice. And I do believe that the prisoners who have dual citizenship – even though, let's remember that according to the laws of my country, my nation, we do not accept dual citizenship – however I have proposed that the folks who have dual citizenship and are in Iran, the government must render all possible aid in resolving their issues, and, simultaneously, there would be a natural expectation from the United States government to take reciprocal actions in order to carry forward the same legal files of the Iranians who have been unfairly incarcerated here."
Question	"When you hear the inevitable critics of the deal sound off, ask them a simple question: Do you really think that this verifiable deal, if fully implemented, backed by the world's major powers, is a worse option than the risk of

another war in the Middle East?" Obama said.

Discussion

In line with prior research, speech acts conceptualization differs cross-culturally (Einstein & Bodman, 1986; Romaniuk, 2013; Tolson, 2012). The distinctions can be realized based on who the speakers are, what they are performing specific speech acts for, and how often they do it. In order to better understand these issues, speakers need to have interactional competence to realize the speech act effectively. Interactional competence concerns the learners' knowledge that helps them participate with others in the interactive practices representing life in the social world.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the IC responses made by Iranian and American Presidents in the news interviews which would possibly contributes to the debate on universality versus culture-specificity. The findings revealed that there are specific general processes controlling human languages such as conversational maxims (Grice, 1975), politeness theories (Brown & Levinson, 1987, Leech, 1983), and taxonomy of communicative acts (Searle, 1975). On the other hand, other lines of research are in contrast with the notion of universality and postulate that speech acts differ in terms of conceptualization and verbalization across languages because pragmatic knowledge is a manifestation of cultural norms. The most representative proponent is Wierzbicka (1991), who asserts that universality is in reality Anglo-Saxon prejudiced since modern pragmatics has been strongly impacted by British and American philosophers.

The findings from this study indicated that universality and culture-specificity coexist in the IC responses. With regard to the culture-specificity, the differences between American and Iranian IC sequence of responses have once again confirmed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Sapir, 1961 and Whorf, 1956, as cited in Grice, 1975), which assumes that language and culture of a society are interrelated because language is a channel, through which people's ideologies and values are verbalized.

The six classes of responses to ICs in this study validated the differences in reacting to IC in the two contexts. Ignorance include null responses, nonverbal backchannels as Boxer (1993) said "this response type usually indicates the unwillingness of the addressee to express mutual concern, at least with respect to the topic in question" (p. 65). When a nonsubstantive reaction occurs as an IC response, it normally leads to failure to get involved in an elaborated sequence in which support is expressed. Contradictions, used mostly in American context, include conflicts and are usually used to defend the object of the complaint. This might be related to the culture of the country and as attested in previous research (Fomin & Yakimova, 2012) as well, Americans have been found to use more confrontation and aggression in conflict discourse compared to Russians that preferred distancing and cooperation as less aggressive strategies. Topic switch refers to changing the indirect complaint topic whether to quell the speaker or not choose to continue or engage in the topic of complaint was used mostly in Iranian transcripts. Topic switch as an indirect means of complaint is employed with the purpose of reducing the tension between the interlocutors and is also pertinent to the aggressive nature of most Americans in times of conflict (Fomin & Yakimova, 2012, Sedov, 2002). Joking/Teasing responses, as face threatening acts, serve to make light of a situation employed more frequently in the American text. The question category includes questions that demand elaboration of the IC together with questions that challenge a speaker to defend his or her IC were used equally in both American and Iranian presidents. Question has been considered as an instance of positive politeness by Shen (1998) to denote the speaker's recognition of the hearer's desire to be liked and its equal use in both cultures highlights the inclination to save face in disagreements. Advice/Lecture refers to responses that

criticize as well as give advice on the ways to solve the problem which was noted mostly in American transcripts, that also reflects the ideology of a dominant language/people that think that they have overwhelmed the other languages/peoples (Morgan, 2002). This mentality leads to American people's feeling of dominance over others in all aspects including language (i.e., English as a lingua franca) and thereby trying to manipulate others in the ways they deem necessary. And, commiserative responses display agreement or comfort and were employed mostly in the Iranian news interview transcripts. Najarzadegan, Dabaghi and Eslami-Rasekh (2017) also found the positive self-representation of Iranian president in contrast to the US presidents' speeches at the UNGA (2013).

The results of the present study are in line with those of Jiang (2006) which showed that the question–response routines in press conferences revealed a difference between Chinese and American strategies for creating their policies and cope with controversies in the global diplomatic field. Their diverse ideologies, cultural presumptions, self-perceived international roles and responsibilities appeared to have influenced their views on the North Korea nuclear issue. It was concluded that "through the routine question–response activities, press conferences offer a reflection on government policies" (Jiang, 2006, p. 254).

Conclusion

This research adds to the existing literature which examines how different prestigious news interviews dealt with political information about Iran's nuclear talks. The disparity between political and real world framings of the issue identified in this research arose in part from a conflict between realistic values of careful scrutiny of political processes and journalistic values of selecting new information which preferably relates to the political and the conflictual matters and themes (Huls, & Varwijk, 2011). This was evident in the American transcripts that made a high use of 'contradiction' and 'joking' categories skewing selections of expert information about the processes of the real world.

News media is one of the few social sciences that as of yet has attracted few research attempts targeting the study of text and talk. It is suggested that writing teachers and textbook developers need to take into account the use of discourse approaches in political discourse, making a distinction between political discourse and discourse in other societal domains (such as education, business, etc), enabling the readers and discourse analysts to differentiate the sub-genres of political text and talk. Further research is clearly needed to examine the role of pragmatics and political perspectives on the use of speech acts and their responses. In addition to the role of culture and pragmatics in the use of complaint speech act, it needs to be noted that several other variables such as politics, power relations, the political orientation of the new agencies and so forth have a potential role to play which need to be explored in future investigations. More studies can investigate other speech acts in the context of news media either written or in speech form. Replication of this study using video-taped data might prove fruitful in capturing non-verbal behavior such as gestures, gaze, and postural shifts in IC responses.

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