A Study of the Discursive Accomplishment of Stereotypes in Everyday Discourse
A Case of Persian Speakers

Fatemeh Ghanavati Nasab [1], Moussa Ahmadian [2*]

[1] *PhD Candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Languages, Arak University, Arak, Iran*
[2] *Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Languages, Arak University, Arak, Iran*

Abstract: This study set out to examine how stereotypes as social psychological phenomena are enacted in everyday discourse. Besides discussing how ingroups and outgroups are formed in mundane talk, it is argued that stereotypes are ideological constructs that are jointly achieved in social contexts. Moreover, it is assumed that the ways in which stereotypes are constructed and discussed in discourse are informed by a number of underlying moral conceptualizations which might justify the potential face-threatening acts and the impoliteness inherent in prejudiced talk targeted to a third party. The study is an ethnographic case study informed by an eclectic approach to the analysis of data so as to shed light on how the expression of thoughts and feelings are constructed as talk in ordinary social interactions unfolds and what these expressions achieve. The analyses revealed that the construction of outgroup stereotypes is a mutual accomplishment and possibly a face-threatening act moderated by mitigating discourse features.

Keywords: Stereotypes, Intergroup Differentiation, Impoliteness, Morality, Discourse.

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[*] **Corresponding Author.**

Authors' Email Address:
[1] **Fatemeh Ghanavati Nasab** (fatima_gh1985@yahoo.com), [2] **Moussa Ahmadian** (m-ahmadian@araku.ac.ir)

Introduction

Within an ideological framework, the main criterion for defining a social group is sharing a sense of belonging among group members as conveyed by an "us" versus "them" attitude and expressed by the pronoun "we" (van Dijk, 2006). Unlike communities that have a common knowledge base, language, custom, and religion, social groups of people share ideologies that take account of their relationship with other groups. Although groups are less natural when compared to communities, they still share common goals and interests.

On the one hand, when strangers start to interact with one another, they might experience feelings of uneasiness, anxiety, uncertainty, and discomfort; these feelings may affect the course of initial interactions. This intergroup anxiety amplifies behavioral responses to a given situation and increases reliance on cognitive heuristics such as stereotypes and prejudice among group members (Stephan & Stephan, 1989). Apart from the situational factors, individuals' deficient styles of thinking can dispose them to develop biased personalities and make them active participants in prejudiced talk. Biased talk, within a cognitive framework, is the product of the ways in which people select, process, and organize social information. This structural orientation then paves the way for a more functional one within which frustration, aggression, incompatible goals, and factors alike can be investigated (Wilder, 1986).

Alternatively, it is assumed that stereotyping is essentially concerned with moral judgments. The idea is that one's perceptions of right or wrong determine the moral aspect of decision-making regardless of whether the ultimate decision is moral or not (Haidt, 2007). In any case, being engaged in stereotyping as an inherent impolite act (Ladegaard, 2011) is a moral issue as it takes into decisions about what is right or wrong.

Moreover, the discursive construction of otherness, as well as the ways it is negotiated and challenged within the public sphere, have a lot to do with the linguistically-oriented discussions revolving around the "us" versus "them" distinction and its underlying contextual, cognitive, and ideological motives (Kopytowska & Baider, 2017; Kalyango & Kopytowska, 2014; Karner & Kopytowska, 2017; Kopytowska, 2017).

Besides, it is generally assumed that (im)polite beliefs are morally grounded (Haugh, 2015) and impoliteness is discursively constructed through prejudiced talk and negative judgments concerning the (im)morality or (in)appropriateness of conduct attributed to an outgroup. Nonetheless, as "talking about the other is potentially face-threatening" (Ladegaard, 2011, p. 85),

there is a touch on the notion of face and the strategies that the participants employ to soften criticism. As Janney and Arndt (2005) contend, in any culture, verbal and non-verbal behavior is modified so as to avoid conflict and foster affiliation among group members. Therefore, regulating verbal behavior is of paramount importance when discussing stereotypes as virtually loaded face-threatening acts. In other words, since stereotyping as a form of indirect complaint is a potentially face-threatening act, it calls for resorting to a number of strategies to decrease the conflict and bring the discussion closer to some kind of resolution. Accordingly, this study conducts a micro-analysis of a number of extracts from naturalistic talk in taxi conversations in order to explore how positive ingroup and negative outgroup stereotypes are constructed with concerns for what the interlocutors deem morally acceptable or deviant. It analyzes two excerpts with 'stereotyping' as the common theme with a focus on how ingroups and outgroups are formed in mundane talk and makes an attempt to delve into the ways interlocutors enact stereotypes with concerns for ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation in real-world natural discourse. Real-world experience is preferred over self-report measures and other data collection tools in that controlled settings are assumed to give rise to the speakers' strategic control over the responses and therefore more possibilities for the intervening effects of socially desirable responses or the experimenter pressure. The study of stereotypes in the socio-cultural milieu in which they are constructed and discussed helps gain a holistic perspective into how they emerge in moment-to-moment interactions. Moreover, focusing on group members' discourse practices can shed light on values and beliefs inherent in specific social contexts as they are discursively constructed and manifested in the situated use of language and other symbolic resources (Bhatia, Flowerdew, & Jones, 2008). Reflections inspired by and manifested by language and stereotyping present implications for various disciplines ranging from sociolinguistics and social psychology to business, law, medicine, and pedagogy (Deutschmann & Steinvall, 2020; Dixon, Mahoney, & Cocks, 2002; Carson, Drummond, & Newton, 2004; Buchstaller, 2006).

Theoretical Background

Stereotypes and Ingroup/Outgroup Differentiations

As Stephan (1985) puts it, Stereotypes are "sets of traits ascribed to social groups ... used to predict and explain behavior" while the concept of *prejudice* encompasses "negative attitudes toward social groups" (p. 600). He further defines a "social group" in terms of "individuals in social categories" (cited in Horwitz & Rabbie, 1989). Accordingly, the focus of psychological

studies shifts from individuals to their interaction within groups as well as the interactions between groups so as to account for the dynamics of psychological environments in which people interact (Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982). This perspective on stereotypes and prejudice can trigger traditional approaches such as the Social Identity theory for the analysis of data.

According to the tenets of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), there is a psychological basis for intergroup discrimination. It helps individuals enhance feelings of safety and self-worth by developing a positive identity. This theory further makes a distinction between personal and social identity. While personal identity is a kind of self-evaluation, social identity is the evaluation of an ingroup and encompasses the ways other members of a group evaluate the group to which one belongs. Being an ingroup member entails the integration of one's self into an ingroup prototype as well as having the assumption of similarities to members of the same group (Smith & Henry, 1996). Moreover, a positive self-concept is built through both one's individual characteristics and the group characteristics that one belongs. In other words, this positive self-concept involves one's personal identity and social identity.

Positive evaluation of an ingroup is a prerequisite to create a positive social identity that is associated with membership within that group. Just in case an ingroup is evaluated positively, ingroup bias and out-group discrimination are generated to maintain social identity among group members. Such "ingroup celebration" and "outgroup derogation" derive from socially shared expectations among a number of other underlying factors (van Dijk, 2014, p. 397). This ingroup/outgroup categorization as an inherent characteristic of human cognition along with the emotional need to be accepted as one member of the community sets the stage for ingroup dynamics (Stillman & Baumeister, 2009).

In the light of the shared beliefs, the similarity of the norms, and proper patterns of conduct, membership in an ingroup gains value and emotional significance (Tajfel, 1981) and generates a sense of identity for loyal group members (Jandt, 2007). This sense of identity is created through an "us" versus "them" attitude (Tajfel, 1981). Outgroup members are characterized as those with whom we are "emotionally and psychologically detached" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 306) and with whom we feel a perceived "distance" with regard to values, knowledge, and emotions (Kopytowska, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Based on the tenets of the social identity approach, ingroup favoritism is triggered by a number of variables (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the first of which is the internalization of group membership as part of one's self-concept. The second variable is the social context within which inter-group comparison is made. The third variable is the perceived relevance of the comparison group. People tend to

display favoritism when their self-definition is bound to their ingroup membership with a favorable outcome (Forgas & Williams, 2001). Accordingly, favoring an in-group and discriminating against an outgroup form two components of bias. Yet, it is assumed that resentment of an out-group does not guarantee enhancing ingroup membership.

Alternatively, Stubbe et al. (2003) assert that stereotypes are not just cognitive schemas but social and ideological constructs that are socially formed and discursively shaped in the course of everyday conversations (Augoustinos, Walker, & Danaghue, 2006). In view of that, social categorization and stereotyping can be considered discursive constructs generated in the course of everyday conversations with regard to both contextual and situational factors (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, Ladegaard, 2011).

Discourse is a Multidisciplinary Field

It is assumed that individuals do not identify themselves with fixed identities but discursively ascribe themselves to particular groups while engaged in particular interactions. More specifically, it is assumed that stereotyping, impoliteness, moral conceptualizations, and interactants' orientations towards certain groups are joint accomplishments that are constructed and reconstructed as talk unfolds within the sphere of social interaction. The relationship between impoliteness and group identity has been credited in several studies as interlocutors get engaged in the discursive construction of othering (Blitvich, Lorenzo-Dus, & Bou-Franch, 2013; Mak & Chui, 2014). Interlocutors tend to express negative attitudes towards what runs afoul of their expectations (Culpeper, 2011) and express discontent toward those social practices which they perceive as morally wrong or inappropriate. In the same line, impoliteness as a form of "situated moral judgment" becomes highly context-dependent (Sinkeviciute, 2018, p. 271).

On the other hand, discussions regarding the underlying moral assumptions gain significance as morality is what renders civilization possible (Haidt, 2012). Therefore, "human capacities for moral evaluation" underlies their communal living (Decety & Cowell, 2014). Accordingly, the function of moral systems is to make social life possible by adhering to the values and virtues as defined within the moral systems (Haidt, 2012; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Based on the tenets of the social intuitionist model of moral judgments proposed by Haidt (2001), moral judgments are intuitive and can be classified into five categories: harm/care, justice/fairness, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. This intuition-based

model holds that moral decision-making is a spur-of-the-moment event that is triggered by at least one of the five moral modules (Haidt, 2001; Haidt, 2007).

The degree to which each of these modules is activated and becomes prominent largely depends on cultural and familial learning (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008a). The impulsive reactions to the moral dilemma are often determined by the norms of the culture in which people are brought up which consequently determines which intuition becomes applicable (Haidt, 2001, 2007). Should it occur, any deliberation is a post-hoc explanation to justify the spontaneous judgments aroused by those "gut feelings or intuitions" (Haidt 2001, p. 54). Most often, individuals become entangled in what is termed "moral dumbfounding" (Haidt, 2007) and fail to offer rational arguments for their intuitive moral decision-making. Yet, Jacobson (2012) argues that being unable to verbalize to support their opinions should not rule out the possibility that rational thought does exist and claims that participants oftentimes fail to support their opinions due to experimenter pressure and context cues. Nonetheless, the intuition-based perspective deems deliberation as rare which only occurs to justify the initial reaction (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008b).

According to the intuitionist point of view, stereotyping and prejudice are often legitimately triggered by the ingroup/loyalty and purity/sanctity domains and are therefore their unfortunate side effects (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008b). Contrary to the intuitionist viewpoint, the reason-based perspective holds that reliance on ingroup and purity modules within the realm of the moral domain results from finding fault in the system (Gibbs, 2013). There is a claim for people overcome their ingroup and purity instincts if given the opportunity. Yet, the combined perspective claims for the existence of both spontaneous and deliberative processes in the formation of stereotypes. The point of departure is that in case of an opportunity to deliberate, those low in prejudice with an egalitarian self-concept are more likely to act in a non-prejudiced manner while those high in prejudice are more stereotype-consistent (Devine, 1989; Amodio, Devine, & Harmon-Jones, 2008).

Discourse and Ideology

Van Dijk (2006) describes ideology as a multidisciplinary framework nourished from a combination of cognitive, social, and discursive factors. From a socio-cognitive perspective, ideologies represent systems of ideas shared among social groups and shape their norms, values, identities, and their relations to other social groups. Nonetheless, ideologies are acquired, established, perpetuated, and conveyed in the social practices of group members.

Systematic discourse analysis is a powerful means through which the functions of underlying ideologies can be examined. The ideological division between ingroups and outgroups can be examined in text and talk by considering how ingroups assign themselves proper codes of conduct. Ideologies, establish shared social representations, and organize the joint actions of group members. They are the crossing point between the discourse and social practices of group members and their social structures. Since people acquire, express, and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk, a discourse analytical study of ideology is most relevant.

The dialectical relationship between discursive events and the social structures that engenders them is established and expressed through language use (Wodak, 1996). For social scientists, talk is a conduit for the transmission of information and ideas. Discursive psychology, however, takes a dim view of talk as a blurred edge on the pure message and instead consider features of talk as a rich resource for deciphering the action being performed (Potter, 2010a). It relies heavily on 'conversation' as the unit of analysis and emphasizes social life as a discursive construct and solely takes interest in what is relevant in discourse (Edwards, 1997). In other words, it focuses on the inner psychological worlds as represented in discourse (Edwards, Ashmore, & Potter, 1995; Gergen, 2009) and takes interest in studying discourse expressed through talk in interaction. There is no focus on language as an abstract entity but rather a focus on language as a medium of interaction that helps reveal what people do through language (Billig, 1996). Accordingly, Discursive Psychology falls squarely within the realm of structural sociology and individual psychology with an analytic focus on authentic talk in naturalistic settings.

Yet, the critical perspective regards 'talk' as only a fragment of social life that needs to be analyzed in the wider social and ideological context (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). This study makes an attempt to have a more integrated approach to social categorization. Therefore, it adopts an eclectic approach to the analysis of the thread of talk so as to provide a sufficient understanding of the social reality of talk in interaction (Edwards, 2010) with regard to the notion of stereotypes and argues that stereotypes and other forms of social categorization are joint constructs among interlocutors and has to be perused beyond discourse level (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). Thereby, data are analyzed through an eclectic approach in order to provide a more comprehensive view of how social categorization and ingroup and outgroup distinctions are formed in mundane talk. It is motivated on the grounds that insights provided by discursive perspectives can be enriched if supplemented with traditional approaches so as

to surpass the epistemological and conceptual limitations (Augoustinos et al., 2006; Ladegaard, 2011). Therefore, this study aims to answer the following three questions:

1. How does the discursive practice of 'othering' help the construction of negative stereotypes and intergroup differentiation?
2. How does an inherent impoliteness-relatedness discourse become constructed and justified when discussing stereotypes?
3. What are the probable underlying moral grounds based on which prejudiced talk, intergroup differentiation, and stereotypes are justified?

Data Collection

The analysis of data is based on semantic macrostructures of talk (van Dijk, 1981). This set of data was chosen from a corpus of more than 50 taxi conversations without the interlocutors being aware that they are being recorded. This widened the context of analysis as the exchanges involved people in real-life interactions without their being under pressure due to their roles. In other words, this type of data collection allowed researchers to gain access to data in which interlocutors, contexts, and topics are by no means different from the ones in real-life situations. It is claimed that it is through conversational exchanges that people establish relationships, negotiate, and reproduce their identities. Therefore, these interactional exchanges allowed interlocutors to blame, criticize, disagree, and argue with others. Furthermore, these primary forms of social action are considered to be "as real, concrete, consequential and as fundamental as any other form of conduct" (Bhatia, Flowerdew, & Jones, 2008, p. 23). Accordingly, the study of a thread of talk in an ongoing discourse is the study of the actions through which social life is discursively constructed. Nevertheless, taking a critical perspective, talk only forms a fragment of our social life and must be investigated within the broader social and ideological context in which it is constructed (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Ladegaard, 2011). Data in the present study are natural in the sense that they are independent of the action of the researcher or any kind of social research technology. These recordings are then coded for analysis with regard to the aims of the study[1].

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[1] The audio recordings in taxis were gathered and transcribed by a sociologist, Hesam Mazaheri (2013a,b), and published in two book series called "Ma'mure sigariye khoda" and "Bani hendel". The books were published by Ofogh and Arma (publications), respectively. The books consist of taxi conversations in Isfahan, Tehran, Sari, Mashhad, Rasht, and Ahvaz. The generated corpus consists of more than 31600 words.

It is argued that what constitutes social realities are not individual texts but bodies of texts or discourses that establish social phenomena (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Therefore, the selection of audio transcriptions is critical as it justifies the validity of the insights presented in the analysis (Alvesson, Hardy, & Harley, 2008). The present study responds to the criticism cited against observer effects in ethnographic research which allows for the potential bias of the researcher and invalid research findings. The topics of the conversations were naturally and spontaneously discussed between group members as they voluntarily got engaged in conversations in an unmitigated setting. Data collection procedure allowed for gaining access to the informal discussion of key topics in an unmitigated atmosphere where the interlocutors were not afraid of what they said and how they said it.

Descriptive data are gathered as they reveal how people locate meanings in events and how they attribute those meanings to their social world (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This descriptive study, therefore, takes a sociolinguistic perspective to the analysis of stereotypes as these constructs are not assumed to be separated from the system of values and the social context in which it occurs. No manipulation of the environment was involved and the activities of interest were those manifested in the specific societal and cultural contexts under investigation. That is, the context under which audio recordings were gathered was natural[1]. The presented cases are examples of common discourse constituting the norm instead of exceptions in the context under scrutiny.

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[2] The experimental nature and artificiality of matched-guise techniques, used widely in the study of stereotypes in disciplines such as social psychology, business, sociolinguistics, and low (Buchstaller, 2006; Carson et al., 2004), has been criticized in that instances of spoken material are read as texts, in laboratory settings and are far removed from actual, everyday communications to have any generalizable relevance (Deutschmann & Steinvall, 2020). Furthermore, the experimental nature of the design when examining bias and stereotypes, creates methodological dilemmas as the respondents are urged to voice their stand on a stimulus, far removed from authentic speech, on a likert rating scale (Deutschmann & Steinvall, 2020). In addition, such techniques, at best examine one situational context and do not capture the potential complexity regarding perceptions and attitudes. That is, respondents may adopt different attitudes when they actually take part in a real speech exchange (Ryan, Giles, & Hewstone, 1988). Therefore, experimental design is down prioritized in favor of authentic language which provides us with data based on what people do/say in real life situations rather than what they think they would do/say. That is to claim that although experimental data would provide the researchers with relevant metadata of the respondents such as educational background and age, they could provide us with no more than self-estimation measures of stereotyping and other related concepts.

The conversations which were too short to contain any formative data were not considered. Likewise, conversations of adequate length that contained no revealing information to our purpose were omitted. Accordingly, purposive sampling was employed and audio transcriptions that best served the purpose of the study were selected. The saturation of data was determined when the analysis of new audio transcriptions generated no additional information and reached the point of redundancy. In terms of mode and style, Joos's (1961) model of formality was adopted to classify the conversations into different formality levels, and ultimately two conversations in casual style, commonly used in ingroup interactions, were chosen.

Methodology

This study adapts a two-stage methodology that comprises a) metadiscourse analysis and b) discourse analysis. At a metadiscourse level, the focus is on words or stretches of sentences uttered by interlocutors as they draw ingroup/outgroup distinctions and form evaluations regarding the objectionable outgroup. At a discourse and a conceptual level, however, researchers take an emic perspective to analyze the underlying moral grounds within a 'sociocentric culture' (see Haidt 2012, p. 30) that gives rise to the discursive construction of group identity and the ways impoliteness manifests itself through socially and societally grounded expectations and evaluations (Kádár & Haugh, 2013) which may go unnoticed by interlocutors as the interaction unfolds.

Data Analysis

The first excerpt demonstrates how expected patterns of behaviour and the underlying moral norms "regarding how humans should treat one another" (Decety & Cowell, 2014, p. 337) generate a sense of solidarity and in-groupness (Haidt, 2012; Purzycki et al., 2018) when interlocutors as part of a social group discuss a set of common values that are morally informed (Decety & Cowell, 2014; Haidt, 2012; Williams, 2012).

Excerpt 1

1. **Passenger:** *aghab râ se nafar hesâb mikonam. Dighe vây nasâ!*
   Passenger: Taxi is chartered. Don't pick up any more passengers.

2. **Driver:** *Chashm.*
   Driver: OK

3. *Passenger: har ruz hamin vaz-e? kheili sholughe.*
   Passenger: Is it like this every day? It's too crowded.

4. *Driver: âre dighe. Khiyâbunâ barik kardan vase metro. Emruzam panjshanbas.*
   Driver: Yeah. They have narrowed the street for subway (construction). And today's Thursday.

5. *Driver: Dighe vâveylâs. Mardomam dighe balânesbat baziyashun ravâni mishan. Alân in taxiy-e posht-e sar-e man mosâferam dâre hey bugh mizane. Mibine râh bastas bâzam bugh mizane hâmâl.*
   Driver: Holy shit. Some people go psycho, present company excepted. Now the taxi behind, which is full of passengers, keeps honking. He knows the road is closed and keeps honking, he coolie.

6. *Passenger: koja mikhâd bere asan tu in terâfic?*
   Passenger: Where does he want to go in this traffic?

7. *Driver: Che midunam vâlâ. Isfahaniha hamin juran hamashun. Man hifdah sâle tu Isfahan sâkenam[1].*
   Driver: I don't know. Isfahanians are all like this. I've lived in Isfahan for 17 years.

It seems that the driver's statements are influenced by "prediction mechanisms" in that expectations are aroused by experience (Clark, 2013, p. 181) and the need to process every new experience is hindered through the perception of prior probabilities (Clark, 2015).

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[1] Place names gain significance as they symbolize national and territorial identities (Saparov, 2003). Therefore, it is assumed that the cautious use of these names safeguards the moral rights of the people belonging to the particular territory who identify themselves with the place. Yet, Morse and Coulehan (2015) claim that the need for pseudonymization is blurred provided that sufficient depth of analysis distills the key ideas and ideologies. Different disciplines within the realm of psychology and sociology have taken account of how stereotypes develop. From a sociological perspective, the formation of stereotypes might be the upshot of poor parenting, conflict, or lack of emotional or mental development ("Stereotype," 2021). Yet, delving into the psychological or sociological reasons of stereotyping is neither the aim nor the scope of the paper. The main purpose is, however, to look at how ingroups and outgroups are formed in mundane talk. Besides, we acknowledge that the analysis of case study data entails a limited range of data samples. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the ethnic stereotypes presented in this study are neither widely accepted cultural stereotypes nor a representative sample of the ideological thinking within the Iranian society. Moreover, it should be noted that the stretch of talk under investigation is not necessarily that of elites but reflects an ethnocentric view on the part of individuals whose educational, cultural backgrounds, economic status, and intellectual level is not recognized. Thereby, we do apologize if some of these comments are too harsh and acknowledge that the narration of this biased piece of talk does not entail any support or verification for their correctness.

According to Jussim (2012), a lack of enough information about a social category urges the perceiver to develop stereotypical images. Therefore, people act like naïve scientists as they make every effort to make correct predictions about people and events on the basis of expectations (Jussim, 2012; Hinton, 2017). In this excerpt, the driver acts as a naïve scientist who attempts to justify and legitimize his tendencies for ingroup favoritism and ethnic bias through his references to his personal experience. His positive self-image manifests in the light of blame attribution and denigration of an unfavorable ethnic outgroup and therefore indirectly attributes an ingroup with positive values.

On the other hand, as Wetherell (2001) asserts, social categorization and stereotyping are discursive constructs that are formed by contextual and situational factors. In this excerpt, the extreme traffic congestion, the busy roads, the narrow streets, and the constant horning of other drivers (1-5) are all contributing factors to the generation of idle talk. The talk starts with a reasonably neutral comment, but almost immediately takes on more negative characteristics.

Stereotyping is used to create intergroup differentiation for rhetorical ends and get engaged in a discussion. The driver seems to know that the use of the words "coolie", and "psycho" is generally considered inconsistent with the widely held views of tolerance and politeness. This on-record strategy with no attempts to acknowledge other people's face wants (see Brown & Levinson, 1987) is accompanied by his making references to the number of years he has lived in Isfahan (7) so as to justify his claims through his personal experiences (Tusting, Crawshaw, & Callen, 2002).

8. *Passenger: Khob be salâmati.*
    Passenger: OK.

9. *Driver: tu in hifdah sâl bâvar kon bâ ye nafar rafigh nistam.*
    Driver: Take my word for it, I haven't made any friends all through these 17 years

10. *Passenger: Jedi? Cherâ?*
    Passenger: Seriously? Why?

It seems that asking questions (10) is to moderate the solemnity of talk. It may also be an attempt on the part of the passenger to balance the negative comments. These questions (10) as well as back channeling (8) help the mutual construction of discourse (Ladegaard, 2011).

11. *Driver: nistam dige. Na salâm o aleiki. Na neshast o barkhâsti. Na raft o âmadi.*

Driver: I didn't. No greetings, no mingling (with people), and no visits.

12. *Passenger: fâmili kasi nadâri?*

   Passenger: Haven't you got any relatives?

13. *Driver: fâmil dâram. Vali raft o âmad nadâram bâshun. Bi adabi nabâshe ye vaght khodây nakarde chon zarfiyatesh o nadâran.*

   Driver: I have relatives but no visits. God forbid, no offense but they are not made for it.

14. *Passenger: fâmilây-e shomâ intoran yâ kolan migi?*

   Passenger: Are you talking about your relatives or are you talking (about people) in general?

15. *Driver: kolan. In bardâshtiy-e ke khodam kardam. Chon man manâteghe mokhtalef raftam tu keshvar hame jây-e Iran khub nistandâ vali Isfahaniya normâl nisan bi Ta'arof. Hâlâ momken-e badeshun biyâd vali zâhereshun khub-e kheili châplusan o bebakhshin khânom! Mazerat mikhâm ye vaght su-e tafâhom pish nayâd.*

   Driver: In general. That's my own interpretation. I've been to different places in the country and not all these people are good. But Isfahanians are not normal *bi Ta'arof* [1,2] *(to be frank)*. They may take offense but they keep face while (they are) too servile… sorry Madam. I apologize, I hope there would be

   no misunderstanding. *He's addressing a young lady sitting on the front seat.*

The driver then resorts to the double strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (Verkuyten, 2001; Augoustinos & Every, 2007) to protect his positive self-image (11-15) and once more justifies his prejudice by referring to his personal experience (15).

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[1] Beeman (1986) refers to *ta'arof* as the language of politeness.

 Yet, as Sharifian and Tayebi (2017, p. 240) point out:

 "One aspect of the *ta'arof* schema is that it encourages speakers (in order to appear polite) to avoid expressing their genuine opinions, particularly when they feel critical. In this regard, 'not doing *ta'arof*', that is, not acting according to the schema of *ta'arof*, in expressing one's real opinion, offering criticism, or telling the truth is equivalent to such Anglo-Saxon concepts as being brutally honest, or overly frank or forward".

[2] The difficulty in translating culture-specific words indicates that "we are not dealing with equivalent notions here but rather with analogous conceptualisations" (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 191).

16. *Girl: Na râhat bâshin. Man Isfahani nistam.*

   Girl: (with laughter) No, it doesn't matter. I'm not from Isfahan.

   Then she twiddles with her scarf and takes out her sunglasses from her bag and wears them.

The interlocutors seem to be aware that making negative stereotypes is not in congruence with norms of good conduct and fully know that their out-group negative stereotypes are face threatening to the speakers as well. Their strategy is, therefore, on record with redressive action: positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) as they perform the face-threatening act against a third party. Nonetheless, at the same time, they try to satisfy their positive face needs by making attempts to justify their claims.

The driver's insincere apology is no more than an indirect quest of the girls' ethnicity as the presence or absence of a perpetrator who belongs to the ethnic group being talked about, can be a determining factor in reaching agreement or disagreement and the construction of ingroup/ outgroup differentiation.

The girl's answer (16) seems to be no more than an avoidance of out-group identity and at the same time a support for the drivers' prejudices and a contribution to the realization of the intragroup harmony. It also helps the maintenance of the negative outgroup stereotype. It seems that the girl avoids opposition so as not to lose face (Gu, 1990). She tries to mark herself off from the outgroup (Hogg & Abrams, 2003) in order to maintain in-group coherence and intergroup differentiation. This in-group identity, however, is not clearly defined. Besides, it seems that the girl's tendency to generate a positive in-group identity is an inclination to exclude herself from the driver's negative characterization of the out-group. This ingroup discourse enables the passengers to exclude themselves from the negative stereotypes (Hajek, Abrams, & Murachver, 2005; Reid, Giles, & Harwood, 2005). Yet, laughter may serve as a face-saving act as she may be dissatisfied with her own ethnocentric behavior (Ladegaard, 2011).

17. *Driver: khod shirinan. In tajrobey-e hifdah sâliy-e ke tu Isfahan budam.*

   Driver: They are obsequious. That's my experience of having lived in Isfahan for 17-18 years.

18. *Passenger: ghablesh kodom shahra budi?*

   Passenger: Which cities have you been living in?

19. *Driver: Man hame jây-e Irân o ghashtam. Az shomâl o jonub o hame jâ. Shoghlam ye juri bud-e ke majbur budam hame jâ bâsham. Vali in modat ke sâken-e Isfahan budam, na mohebati, Hichi.*

Driver: I've been everywhere. From north to south, everywhere. My job required me to be everywhere. But during my stay in Isfahan, no kindness, nothing.

Attempts are made on the part of the driver to persuade the other interlocutor for the validity of his claims and distinguish himself from the outgroup (Boukala, 2016) whose members are not ethical or moral. The discriminatory attitude expresses disapproval towards the outgroup's moral character which is "detrimental to the feeling of self-worth" and therefore characterizes some form of 'soft hate speech' (Assimakopoulos, Baider, & Millar, 2017, p. 43). The driver claims a moral and ethical character for himself by attributing negative characteristics to outgroup members as displayed by the distinction between us versus them (Boukala, 2016; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017). In other words, by characterizing the "other" as immoral, the driver tries to define the "self" as ethical and moral with pure traits that should be preserved in society (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017, p. 32).

Interlocutors are aware that stereotyping is by and large considered undesirable and therefore try to legitimize these generalizations and negative attitudes by resorting to some sort of authoritative observation in the form of personal experiences (Tusting et al., 2002). Moreover, persuasiveness is influenced by the credibility of the speaker (van Dijk, 1984). This explains why the driver repeatedly tries to present some form of evidence to support his claims regarding the mentioned stereotypes. By referring to his personal experiences (e.g. 17 & 19) he tries to support the otherwise negative outgroup characterization. That is, with some sort of exaggeration about his experience of having lived everywhere, he resorts to a rhetorical strategy to be able to legitimize his sweeping statements regarding the people being talking about (Tusting et al., 2002).

Moreover, as Ladegaard (1998; 2011) asserts, individuals form a sense of identity not only through a sense of who they are but also through a sense of who they are not. Positive self-esteem is formed by pointing out the negative characteristics of the outgroup (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999; Klein, Tindale, & Brauer, 2008). The outgroup is constructed as unfriendly and unkind (19) which leaves the speaker on the other side of the pole.

20. *Passenger: shahrây-e dige che toran be nazaret?*
    Passenger: What's your opinion about (people in) other cities?

21. *Driver: tu shomâl migan Rashtiya folânan. Vali bâvar kon Rashtiya kheili bâ mohebat taran. Albate ye khosusiyât-e akhlâghiyam dârandâ. Ziyâd bâ kasi ghâti nemishan. Ziyâd be harf-e kasi etemâd nemikonan. Hamin harfâyi ke man mizanam. Vali mohebateshun bishtar az jâhây-e digas. Masalan Anzalichiya.*

    Driver: In the north, the Rashtis are believed to be so and so. But believe me they are more warm-hearted. However, they are not flawless. They don't mingle with others. They don't trust others much. That's it but they are more warm-hearted than others. For example, (compared to) people from Anzali.

22. *Girl: Anzaliya âre. Vali Rashtiya na.*

    Girl: Anzaliyans, yes. But not the Rashtis.

23. *Driver: az che nazar na?*

    Driver: Why not?

24. *Girl: Rashtiya bad jensan âkhe.*

    Girl: Rashtis are mean.

25. *Driver: Anzalichiya be ghole maruf hâlat-e in khorus jangiyâ ro dâran. Bandariyâ hamin tor. Bandar Abbasiya ham hamin tor. Be mâ hâ ke mâl-e un ostân nistim mehmunim migan sar hadi.*

    Driver: As the saying goes, people from Anzali are like cockfights. People from Bandar Abbas the same. They call us, who are not locals, frontiers.

26. *Passenger: unâ be mâ migan yâ mâ be unâ?*

    Passenger: Do they call us frontiers or do we call them so?

27. *Driver: unâ migan. Yani migan inâ bandari nistan. Ziyâd bâ mâhâ râbetey-e khubi nadâran. Khodeshun khuban migan mikhandan vali dus nadârân bâ mâ neshast o barkhast konan.*

    Driver: They call us. It means we are not locals. They don't get along well with us. They are OK with one another but (they) don't like to mingle with us.

Uncovering Stereotypes in this excerpt is done through an off-record strategy whereby the interlocutors gradually and jointly construct the discourse together. Step by step other interlocutors join in and take a role in expanding a prejudiced discourse. Based on what Said (1978) claims, stereotypes disclose more about the speaker than the people being talked about. Moreover, the perception of self cannot be fully separated from the perception of the outgroup. Therefore, labeling the third party with negative characteristics shows a desire on the part of the speakers not to be recognized as such (Ladegaard, 2011). Gradually, making negative stereotypes about the third party turns to be a group accomplishment that helps the creation of

cohesive unity. The girl who has been silent for the most part takes part in the conversation and bias creeps in through her wordings.

This is in line with the tenets of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978) as the formation of group identity entails the categorization of the "in-group" with positive characteristics who then enjoy a collective, depersonalized identity based on group membership (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). It seems that what the interlocutors jointly accomplish is the formation of a cohesive universe (Hogg, 1993), by emphasizing negative outgroup and positive ingroup stereotypes.

28. **Passenger**: *hâlâ Tehruniya chetoran?*
    Passenger: What about Tehranians?

29. **Driver**: *Tehruniya ke harfesho nazan. Mâhan. Be khodâ! Jân-e khodam!*
    Driver: Needless to say, Tehranians are great. I swear to God! I swear on my life!

30. **Passenger**: *Jedi? Unâm ke nesfeshun Torkan ke.*
    Passenger: Seriously? Half of them are Torks. Aren't they?

31. **Driver**: *Khob khodet ke dâri migi. Unâshun ke torkan ke hichi. Tehruni nistan.*
    Driver: You're saying that. Forget those Torks. They're not Tehrani.

In general, these ethnocentric attitudes and feelings of superiority are a sentiment of cohesion and commitment to an ingroup to defend its values against a detested outgroup (Sumner, 1911). The driver seems to hold favorable beliefs about a specific ethnic group and in the form of a compliment or praise, makes some positive generalizations and stereotypes. However, his being positively stereotyped in one domain indirectly leads to his being negatively stereotyped in another domain (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). He praises a group (Tehranians) and immediately separates them from a subgroup living in the same place (Torks) (28-31). Therefore, some kind of categorization and recategorization results, and this realignment serves to indirectly voice his negative stereotypes regarding the particular subgroup. His tendency to consider their intergroup as the frame of reference against which others can be judged is evidence of ethnocentric behavior. As Wolman (1973) asserts, ethnocentrism makes people develop a personality syndrome or attitude wherein social reality is defined in terms of in-/out-group differentiations. Therefore, people with tendencies to

stereotype are dependent on their group membership and other power-oriented social relations (Wolman, 1973). In addition, van Dijk (1984) claims that prejudiced people are typically characterized by their admiration of power and dominance and repugnance of minority groups. According to him, these groups of people are characterized by their ingroup conformism.

On a more discursive level, this excerpt, in line with politeness theories gives rise to the idea that judgments regarding the supposed incivility of ethnic groups and tendencies to characterize them as outgroups are often emotionally charged (Mills, 2009). Negative judgments often target those who have been accused of impoliteness due to their lack of alignment with a social group or due to factors within the affective domain (Watts, 2003; Mills, 2003a,b).

The discredited ethnic group regarded as 'other', is supposed to lack morality among other things (Gabriel, 2008; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017, p. 26) and is therefore considered a threat to the well-being and the integrity of the specific ingroup to which the speaker belongs.

Therefore, 'rather than seeking to mitigate face-threatening acts, impoliteness constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts that are purposefully delivered' (Bousfield, 2008, p. 72 cited in Mills, 2009). Accordingly, examining impoliteness at a social level suggests that these judgments are formed with concerns for the appropriateness of norms within the community of practice (Bousfield, 2008).

On the other hand, outgroup derogation serves to bolster the ingroup (Fein & Spencer, 1997) with concerns for issues of moral judgment (Ellithorpe, 2015). This ingroup bolstering and outgroup derogating that are claimed to be simultaneous processes (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), contribute to the maintenance of group self-esteem based on a shared identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Excerpt 2

The Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) supports the idea that ideologies in any given society either promote or mitigate intergroup hierarchies. People who accept the ideology of intergroup hierarchies tend to dominate the out-groups. Gender stereotypes can be considered ideological representations as they support the dominant world views and the existing societal norms. According to Jost and Banaji (1994), the ideological function of stereotypes is to justify and legitimize the existing differences between and among certain groups of people in a society. Gender stereotypes owe their emergence, perseverance, and sharedness to the system-justifying orthodox beliefs rather than direct observation of men and

women having different behavioral or personality profiles or taking different social roles in society (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). These stereotypes enable one to make sense of social relations and make assumptions about the appropriacy of agentic roles for men. In this excerpt, the link between impoliteness and stereotyping is made through traditional assumptions regarding hierarchical power relations (Culpeper, 1996; Divrami, 2020).

1. **Taekwondo Practitioner**: *terân hame jâsh hamin tor sholughe?*
   TKD Practitioner: Are all parts of the city crowded like this?
   He has a slight southern accent. Probably somewhere around Abadan. No one answers.

2. **The young man**: *yani tâ nârmak hamin vaze?*
   The young man: *The young man sitting next to him, who has a dark brown leather bag and a book, asks the driver:* Is it like this all the way to Narmak?

3. **Driver**: *na! hâlâ jolotar ye kam betar mishe. In khiyâbun in juriye.*
   Bâ fes fes kardanesh nazâsht in cherâghe sâb morde ro rad konim.
   Driver: No! A little way further up it gets better. This street is like this.
   We stop at the traffic light. The driver reaches a boiling point when seeing 180 on the countdown timer. He knocks on the steering wheel and mumbles curses on the driver in front of him saying "his lingering kept us from passing this damn red light"!

Naturally not all people are optimistic and positive and therefore complain more than others do. Complains, however, are typically made due to the social need to maintain good relationships with others and are often addressed to those who are not responsible for the difficulties one gripes about (Hatch, 1992). As Ladegaard (2011) asserts, stereotypes express some kind of indirect complaint and a complaint is a face-threatening act that has the potential to threaten both one's positive and negative face.

In this excerpt, the strategy employed by the interlocutors to reduce the face-threatening act is the off-record approach (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The interlocutors start to make stereotypes as a form of indirect complain so as to evade the responsibility for the face-threatening act they are performing. Their remarks otherwise can be interpreted as trivial remarks (Ladegaard, 2011).

4. **Driver**: *âghâ! In tehrun bi pedar dige jâye mundane nis! In zendegi nis ke mâ dârim be khodâ!*
   Driver: Sir! This bastard city is no longer the place to live in! For God's sake, that's not living!

5. **The Young Man**: *âre faghat vâse kâr khube! Hamin.*

The Young Man: *The young student nods in agreement saying*: yeah. Just good for working. That's all.

6. **Driver**: *na âghâ vâse kâram khub nis. Har chi dar miyâri be shab nakeshide khalâse.*

   Driver: But the driver disagrees: No sir, not (even) good for working. You spend whatever you earn before night.

7. *The young Man*: *cherâ injâ mishe pul darovord. Faghatam injâ mishe. Vali dige bâyad bi khiyâle zendegi beshi. Sob tâ shab bâyad bodoyi tâ becharkhe.*

   The young Man: The student insists on his idea saying: yes. You can earn money here, and just here. But you have to forget about life. You have to work hard to make ends meet.

8. *"eine sag"!*

   Then looks out of the window and whispers: "like a dog"!

9. **Driver**: *âghâ age kasi bekhâd zendegi kone bâyad bezane az in shahr birun!*

   Driver: If one wants to live a life, he should get out of this city!

Baider (2017) points out that forced migration and economic crisis harden divisions and give rise to group antagonism. Similarly, Allport (1954) contends that the development of prejudices cannot be set apart from the conditions that are triggered by historical, social, and personality factors. These factors further include aspects such as socialization, size of the minority groups, social changes, frustration, fatigue, aggression, and anxiety. Thus, the driver's sense of dissatisfaction, mental and physical fatigue, poor economic condition, and long working hours can all be considered contributing factors that lead to his developing a prejudiced personality. These claims are further in line with the established tradition in social science that working-class people are relatively more prejudiced than others (Lipset, 1959).

In this excerpt, a series of disagreements centers around the topic of conversation before a common ground is reached. According to Stalpers (1995), disagreement occurs when the interlocutors do not share a common ground regarding a particular matter due to a difference in opinion or a clash in interests. The common ground then must be established if the discourse is going to proceed without threatening the other person's face needs.

The driver's negative opinion (4) is followed by the student's tacit disagreement. He first gives positive feedback by using the backchannels of the driver's statement as a sign of agreement but then immediately voices his positive opinion regarding job opportunities in the detested city (5). Nonetheless, the driver's disagreement in the next turn (6) is an explicit

negation of the previous speaker's opinion and is in line with the first type of disagreement strategies within Stalpers' (1995) classification of disagreement patterns. Thus, his disagreement is expressed via a short direct remark of opposite orientation. The student then insists on his opinion but tries to ease the conflict by accepting the driver's reasons (7). Therefore, the conflict is resolved by both interlocutors' agreement on having difficulties in making ends meet.

10. ***The Young Man****: vali âgâ man mâle shirâzam. Mardomesh bi khiyâl! Donyâ ro âb bebare unâ râ khâb mibare. Hâl mikonan. Hamishey-e khodâ keifeshun kuk-e! be khodâ gasam!*
   The Young Man: But sir, I'm from Shiraz. The people are carefree! They get the kick out of it. They always have a smashing time. I swear to God

11. ***Driver****: âre zamâne jang tu jebhe tu gordân-e mâ chan tâ az bachâ mâl-e un tarafâ budan. Esmesh chi bud? ...masnân?!*
   Driver: Yeah. At war time, a few of the soldiers in our battalion were from around there. What was the name? …Masnan!

12. ***The Young Man****: Mamasnân?*
   The Young Man: Mamasnan?

13. ***TKD Practitioner****: Mamaseni.*
   TKD Practitioner: Mamaseni.

14. ***Driver****: hân! âre barikalâ. Mamasani. Mâle unjâ budan.*
   Driver: Yeah! Well done. Mamaseni. They were from there.

15. ***The Young Man****: âre baladam kojâs. Hâl mikonan mardomeshâ. Mese Tehrân nis. Khodâyi sag do zadan âdam o dâghun mikone. Albate tu in mamlekat in tore hâ! Hish jây-e donyâ in jur nistesh.*
   The Young Man: Yeah I know where it is. The people dig life. It's not like Tehran. This rat race makes people devastated. He pauses a little before he continues saying: of course, the situation is like this here! Nowhere around the world is like this.

According to the principles of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals' identities are formed in relation to social groups which protect and bolster their self-identities. As a member of a particular ethnic group, the student highlights the similarities of the people who belong to his in-group and emphasizes the differences of people who belong to out-groups (10 & 15). This accentuation principle has social categories as its

basic premise (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). On the other hand, the student's creation of an in-group identity (10) with a tendency to *mark* it with positive characteristics helps his formation of a collective, depersonalized identity which can be juxtaposed with negative out-group characteristics.

16. ***Azari****: âghâ! Jesârat nashe albate. Vali unjâhâ mardumunesh aslan mazhabi nistan. Hishki be hishki kâr nadâre. Har ki saresh tu lâk-e khodeshe.*
    Azari: Sir! No offense, of course. But people in those areas are not religious at all. They mind their own business. They take their minds off one another's affairs.

Voicing negative outgroup stereotypes has the potential to become a group accomplishment in case an internal agreement is reached and discourse is mutually constructed (Hogg, 1993). The passenger's verbalization of negative outgroup stereotypes is an attempt to create ingroup/outgroup cohesiveness but requires the support of other ingroup members (Condor, Figgou, Abell, Gibson, & Stevenson, 2006). However, the seriousness of the FTA makes the man resort to the use of mitigation devices (van Dijk, 1984, 2008). He doesn't like to be identified with a prejudiced identity and seems to be well aware that talking about the other is both face threatening and socially unacceptable (Ladegaard, 2011).

17. ***Driver****: b'ale! Khob dorosesham hamine. Be mâ che zendegiy-e digarun! Tu hamin tehrun dokhtare has lâk zade moratab khodesh o doros karde. Fat o farâvoon! Pariruz man yekishun o savâr kardam. Mogh-e piyâde shodan kerây-e sho dâd raf. Be man che? Zendegi khodesh-e delesh mikhâd un tori tu shahr becharkhe! Be darak-e asfal o sâfelin!*
    Driver: Yeah! That's the right thing (to do). That's not (shouldn't be) our concern. Valla! In this city the girl has nail polish and elegance of appearance. There are many of them. The day before yesterday, I gave a ride to one of them. She paid the taxi fare and got off the taxi. It's her life. She likes to appear like this around. To hell with her!

As Mills (2005, p. 276) asserts, impoliteness is not an inherent feature of talk but enacted through "a series of judgments made by interactants on the appropriateness of others' actions and these judgments themselves are influenced by stereotypes of, among other things, what is perceived to be gender appropriate behavior". The gender stereotypes prescribe rules of conduct; how to behave and how not to (Talbot, 2008). More specifically, while the positive side of these stereotypes hold women as passive and cooperative (Lakoff, 1975; Cameron, 2014), the negative side dwells on their being nonconformists to certain societal norms (Divrami, 2020). Accordingly, these misogynistic statements voiced against sub-groups of

women who do not follow the prototypical moral and societal norms indicate some form of stereotype which makes women who are overly concerned with their appearance the victim of sexist comments (Mills, 2008).

The link between impoliteness and stereotyping is created through the establishment of power relations at a discursive level (Divrami, 2020). Just like the enactment of impoliteness which assists the maintenance of hierarchical power relations (Culpeper, 1996), the formation of stereotypes against females or individuals who belong to a supposed subordinate societal or ethnic group helps the maintenance of unequal power relations (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017; Kopytowska, 2017). The power in these comments is established through the expression of stereotypical beliefs about women who are thought to deviate from societal norms and therefore pose threats to the ingroup (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017).

The female stereotypes found in this short excerpt (17-20) represent the image of favorable ingroup women as passive obedient objects and the outgroup females as nonreligious and ideals of beauty (see Luzón Marco, 1997). This stereotype in part reflects the traditional power relations between men and women in the society. In an absentminded manner, the driver builds upon the concepts of 'nonreligiousness' and 'noninterference' to maintain the topic and extends these concepts to a new domain. Based on his personal interpretation of the concepts, he elaborates on the topic by presenting the example of a nonreligious girl. Due to the perceived seriousness of the FTA, he then resorts to the use of the slang (to hell with her) as a kind of mitigation strategy so as to mask his negative attitude regarding the topic at hand. This off-record strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987) is an attempt to avoid being accused of being prejudiced.

Moreover, the driver's prefacing his sexist statements with disclaimers can be considered an attempt to disguise the force of sexism in an attempt to deny the responsibility for the utterance (Mills, 2008). Although the driver tries to show his indifference and lack of judgment, his negative attitude is *credited for* in the distinction he immediately makes between these others and his own family.

The ways in which language is used enable interlocutors to represent their ideologies and pass opinions about ingroups and outgroups. It helps code ideological positions, influence "the persuasion-reception dimension of communication", and reveal something about their mental models of the surrounding world (van Dijk, 1996, p. 146). There are strategic means to present mental models, attitudes, ideologies, and the presentation of biased models. Disclaimers, such as "that's not my concern" or "to hell with her" are semantic moves that enable the driver to

deny being a bigot or dogmatic. However, this implied strategy and a claim for tolerance (as a socio-cultural value) are contrasted with the expression of negative attitudes toward the outgroup. In other words, there is an enactment of a face-saving strategy for the expression of prejudice (van Dijk, 1984).

18. **Driver**: *har ki zendegiy-e khodesh o dâre. Man in juri khosham nemiyâd zan o bacham o ye jur-e dige tarbiyat kardam.*

   Driver: Everyone is living his own life. I don't like it this way, (so) I train up my wife and children another way.

These sentences are indicative of an "Us versus Them" attitude which features religious ethnocentrism for the separation of the religious in-group from the nonreligious outgroups (Altemeyer, 2003). This 'us versus them' dichotomy suggests that there are norms represented by the ingroup from which the outgroup deviates (Wodak et al., 2009). The driver's statement (18) reflects his view of women as not having an autonomous status. The portrayal of the passive nature of his wife against his active character implies his view of the hegemonic group of men as dominant in power relations between men and women. The description of the woman as a passive element in decision-making indicates the assumptions of unequal power relations between the two genders in family relationships as well. The image of the female is that of a submissive and obedient one who delegates all decision-making to her husband. This female stereotype features weakness as the main attribute; the woman changes to become a male property after connubial (Cameron, 1990).

Moral domains vary across cultures (Haidt, 2012) and assumptions regarding what is moral may vary from one society to another (Parvaresh & Tayebi, 2018). Therefore, it is worth mentioning that in a "sociocentric culture" the moral domain is much broader than in western cultures and embraces more domains (Haidt, 2012, p. 30). People tend to make harsher moral judgments when values attributed to the sanctity module are violated (Haidt, 2012). The violation of such values in turn can give rise to impolite comments against those condemned for an act of desecration (Parvaresh, 2019). The theme of these statements revolve around the concerns of a moral mind (Graham et al., 2011; Haidt, 2012) and the expectations the interlocutors hold regarding the morality of the situation. The inherent impoliteness in these comments can be attributed to what Kádár (2017, p. 33) describes as "reactions to an allegedly immoral/inappropriate action" (cited in Parvaresh, 2019, p. 105) and the morally grounded expectations that interlocutors bring to the interaction. These expectations are socially and

societally grounded" (Kádár & Haugh, 2013) and create "versions of the social and moral world" (Potter, 1998, cited in Haugh, 2013, p. 56) to which the interlocutors belong.

19. **The Young Man**: *âghâ alan juri shode har ki tâ ye dokhtar mibine ke ârâyesh karde migan bi din-e! man rafigham hamin toran. Beshun migam bâbâ az kojâ midunin? In juri nis.*

   The Young Man: Sir, it turns out that when one sees a girl with make-up he calls her an infidel. My friends are like this. I wonder how they knew about it. It's not like that.

Gender stereotypes have a significant role in guiding behavior and shaping attitudes through an already existing bias (Cheng & Leung, 2014). Prejudicial attitudes and stereotyping are associated constructs (Olson & Zanna, 1993) and are reflected in the boy's clear reference to female stereotypes as mentioned by his friends. The boy's engagement in a meta-reflection on the mentioned stereotypes is to mitigate or disclaim the FTAs (Mackie, 1973). Politeness is displayed as showing concern for others' feelings (Brown, 1980). The boy as an ingroup member reacts negatively to the derogation and picks up on defense for an outgroup member who is subject to criticism and runs the risk of being judged as a noncompliant ingroup member or a counter exemplar (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988).

20. **The young man**: *dokhtar-e khob. Mikhâd jalb-e tavajo kone. In tu khunesh-e.*

   The young man: A girl anyhow. She wants to draw attention (to herself). It's in her blood.

As talk proceeds, 'covert stereotypes' (Ladegaard, 1998) become manifest. Interlocutors are aware that such attitudes are socially unacceptable and are therefore reluctant to directly accord with the stereotypical views. The boy's strategy to deal with the negative stereotype is on record with redressive action: positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) as he attends to the third party's positive face wants by showing sympathy and approval (20). He is attentive to the performed FTA and tries to *detach* himself from those who are prejudiced against these so-called non-religious girls. His attempts to do so, however, lead him to state another derogatory stereotype characteristic of a patriarchal society. The phrase "it's in her blood" maintains the outdated social roles for women and assigns them with an inborn, instinctive, and natural role that makes their world dependent on that of the other gender. The notion of women being appealing draws on the stereotype of women as a subculture. These stereotypes in general replicate an ideological system in which men and women do not belong to equal social groups with equal social roles.

In addition, positive stereotypes avail members of the dominant group with alternative ways to assign members of the less privileged group to domains they have been traditionally allocated (Czopp, Kay, & Cheryan, 2015). The driver and the passengers' statements can be indicative of how the so-called nonreligious girls are perceived and treated in a predominantly religious society. For the driver and also for the boy, being nonreligious is associated with factors that do not conform to traditional societal norms. This in turn makes the girl being talked about subject to criticism and vulnerable to prejudice. Though not obviously stated, the girl is discriminated against the societal norms and belongs to the disliked social category. This deviation from the expected pattern of behavior is a socially undesirable act and can be attributed to the purity/sanctity module (Haidt, 2001).

Discrimination and prejudice can be considered as the result of an interaction between biased person perception as well as self-fulfilling prophecies (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Moreover, these prejudicial attitudes can be justified in terms of the in-group's perceived lack of respect on the part of these so-called nonreligious girls for their values. In other words, these attitudes can be triggered by a bitter resentment for the out-group's inclination to act against societal norms (Harper, 2007). Yet, what is thought of as deviant relies on ingroup norms (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

21. **The Young Man**: *vali âgâ chizi ke tu in Tehrân ziyâd shode kolâhbardâriy-e! diruz ye dokhtar-e davâzdah sâl-e umad-e pish-e man mige to ro khodâ punsad toman bede! Khomâram!*
The Young Man: But sir, scams are on the rise in this city! Yesterday a girl of (about) twelve years old begged me for five hundred tomans. (Saying that) she was hung over!

22. *[tutting to himself] hich jâ mese in jâ nis. Tu in khârab shodey-e bi pedar hame jur kuft o zahr-e mâri peidâ mishe! Kolâh bardâr gedâ dozd ghâtel châgu kesh jâni lâshi ghâchâgchi motâd hame chi!*
Driver: Tutting to himself, the driver swipes the sweat out of his neck and face with a towel (Dastmal Yazdi). Then packs his box of cigarette from among the changes (of money) near the gear. He lits a cigarette saying: It's not like this everywhere. In this bastard city any damn thing can be found. Swindlers, beggars, thieves, murderers, stabbers, smugglers, addicts …All types!

The passenger uses generalization to enrich the usefulness of his concrete example and interprets his single experience as a social truth. His biased interpretation forms a self-sufficient system whereby the interpretation of new events becomes possible (van Dijk, 1984).

Swearing is a common public act (Jay & Janschewitz, 2006), and swear words serve primarily to express emotional status such as anger and frustration (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). The use of taboo words allows him to communicate his emotions and achieve personal and social goals with utility (Jay, 2009). The driver's intentional rudeness is, therefore to vent his negative feelings.

Discussion

The current study was concerned with the relationship between stereotyping, intergroup differentiation, and how the impoliteness-related discourse become manifested in mundane talk. We also examined the probable moral grounds based on which the inherent impoliteness in biased talk becomes justified.

Regarding ingroup/outgroup differentiation, the interactions under study were, for the most part, the projection of stereotypical images reflecting disrespect to and degradation of an absent outgroup. It is the existence of an outgroup that helps define the shared social identity of ingroup members in a unidirectional manner. Stereotypes are co-constructed and their acceptability is a mutual accomplishment among ingroup members who expand on one other's comments to discuss and construct the distinction between 'self' and 'other'.

The analysis of data revealed, firstly, that categorization of people into outgroup and ingroup fostered bias and ingroup favoritism was provoked at the expense of outgroup derogation (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Outgroup members were assigned characteristics which ingroup members considered undesirable. These unfavorable images attributed to outgroup members then led the interlocutors to elaborate on some kind of stereotypical images which in turn fostered an enhanced level of self-esteem among group members (Iacoviello, Berent, Frederic, & Pereira, 2017).

To satisfy the conditions of self-fulfilling prophecy, the interlocutors provided examples, presented samples of behaviors, and made references to their personal experiences to support and justify their judgments. Stereotyping allowed interlocutors to form an ingroup based on information that was consistent with group expectations. Moreover, issues concerning group boundaries and intergroup conflict seem to stem from perceived deviations from the norms and expectations of group members. What is deemed normal has a role in "social anchoring" and the "us" versus "them" distinctions become the ideological manifestations of cultural and social values which establishes both social integration and social division (Coupland, 2010, p. 243).

The positive bias among group members was formed by minimal conditions as the mere existence of a mutually exclusive outgroup helped foster ingroup bias. Ingroup favoritism across domains of ethnicity and gender left the individuals with almost no choice but to identify themselves with ingroup attributes so as to avoid being identified with alternative characteristics. Solidarity with ingroups also seems to be an honorable value gained through joint participation. The interaction between fellow members of an ingroup came as a consequence of being attributed to positive characteristics. The interlocutors were concerned with presenting a good image of themselves as they were aware that negative bias is generally condemned by societal norms. Therefore, the interlocutors' use of disclaimers and mitigation devices to legitimize their behaviors as well as a concern for the positive face needs of the others give rise to the idea that voicing negative stereotypes against an outgroup is reckoned to be a face-threatening act (Ladegaard, 2011).

The analysis of the data revealed that the impoliteness-related discourse is a discursive move that consists of identity construction, disaffiliation with a detested outgroup, and the interlocutors' metapragmatic perceptions of impolite behavior. The interlocutors' getting engaged in the discursive practice of othering has to do with the interconnection between impoliteness and the projection of one's ingroup affiliation through group identity (Blitvich et al., 2013; Mak & Chui, 2014).

The first excerpt expresses evaluations of impoliteness with regard to the concept of morality and perceptions of "socially normative behaviors" which take account of the kind of interactional practices that should not be disrupted (Sinkeviciute, 2018, p. 276). Therefore, the perception of impoliteness is context-dependent and impoliteness-related discourse expresses both the emotional and moral stances of the interlocutors.

The exchange of talk in the second excerpt mainly revolves around attributes of a female stereotype and generates a discourse that is both socially and ideologically bound. The linguistic choices reflect an unequal power relation between the two genders and assumptions regarding the traditional hierarchical power relations have a role in perpetuating stereotypes of the female gender. Impoliteness and power are claimed to be closely related (Culpeper, 1996; Mills, 2003a; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017) and therefore their role in the propagation of gender-specific stereotypes cannot be denied. Meanwhile, power relations, stereotypes, and the discursive construction of impoliteness cannot be considered separate from the societal norms which embraces them (Divrami, 2020). Stereotyping is thus an "ideological process linked to the power and social relations of a particular society" and cannot be set apart from the

discursive context which generates it (Augoustinos et al., 2006 cited in Ladegaard, 2011, p. 104).

Concerning the concept of morality, levying judgments upon the morality of behavior serves to ensure effective interactions among group members. Cooperation is promoted by interlocutors discussing instances of wrongdoing and offence (Tooby & Cosmides, 2010; Chudek & Henrich, 2011). Ingroup loyalty (Haidt, 2001) works to bring together group members who have engendered a sense of attachment to values that they identify with. This module seems to adhere well to the principles of social identity theory and the idea that individuals may form group identities even based on arbitrary characteristics (Billing & Tajfel, 1973). Yet, it is argued that morality is not constructed by individuals whose minds are like blank slates but rather by those who have an emotional or intuitive base for their moral judgments (Marcus, 2004; Haidt, 2001). It is important for the interlocutors to represent themselves as moral individuals. Therefore, attempts to be identified with a moral self-concept and moral identity are justified.

In the first excerpt, the driver's moral beliefs are founded on his own reasoning which, in turn, grants him a false sense of authority over his own morality. Therefore, getting engaged in discussing morality urges him to share evidence to defend the correctness of his position through a number of post hoc justifications (Haidt, 2001).

In the second excerpt, implicit references to the immorality of the outgroup member endorse the types of norms that the speakers prefer to comply with. These social norms are a set of standards of behavior that are deemed obligatory by members of the specific social group (Anderson, 2000) to which the speakers belong. Being a member of such a social group with defined norms entails the acceptance of norms as shared by group members; nonconforming behaviors, and therefore, triggers reactions. It is conceived that, in this excerpt, moral judgments are not solely guided by personal inclinations but by a set of social and societal norms that are prescriptive within the culture. The perception and conceptualization of these local norms possibly justify what causes offence.

These results are in line with Ladegaard's (2011) study conducted in a global business setting. Ladegaard (2011) reported that employees in the global business organization found talking about 'the other' a face-threatening act and engaged in the repeated use of mitigation techniques, disclaimers and hedging to soften criticism. Moreover, the participants' meta-reflections on the nature of stereotypes mainly served to legitimize stereotyping as it was deemed a socially unacceptable behavior. That is, the articulation of negative outgroup

stereotypes was accompanied by attending to the face wants of 'the other'. Points of similarity with Ladegaard's (2011) study are clearly marked regarding the repeated use of hedging and mitigating devices to reduce the face-threatening effect when getting engaged in a prejudiced discourse.

However, unlike the participants in Ladegaard's study (2011) who often went from one extreme to another, either stating that they were brought up to believe in stereotypes or conveying that they believed in the reality of these stereotypes, the interlocutors in the Persian setting demonstrated no such variability. The interlocutors, for the most part, raised no doubts about the validity of their claims.

Concerning gender stereotypes, the findings partly support those of previous studies regarding the idea of the existence of intricate hierarchical power relations between males and females in traditional societies. For instance, Divrami (2020) reported that the expression of impoliteness on YouTube about women who perform an abortion was affected by gender stereotypes, gender roles, and societal norms. However, unlike the internet users in Divrami's (2020) study who had tendencies to express their disagreement in an insulting manner (attacking other people's moral character or the morality of their beliefs), the interlocutors in the present study mainly highlighted distinctions between moral ingroup members and immoral outgroup members. These ingroup/outgroup distinctions were mainly informed by certain expected societal norms. Notwithstanding in both studies, expressing ideas regarding women and their conducts highlight women's assumed subordinate position on the one hand, and the powerful position of the commentators on the other.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the findings, reaching across the divide between us and them can be intrinsic to impoliteness. Yet, discussions regarding intergroup differentiation and the formation of stereotypes can be explained in terms of moral order. That is, the moral derogation of outgroups sets ingroup members free of negative characteristics or what is deemed morally or societally undesirable. Yet, such discussions are often self-biased and may serve as a means for promoting one's own moral and social image. In other words, otherness entails an inventory of negative characteristics, grounds of exclusion and bias and yet its representation is constantly constructed and reconstructed through invoking moral orders and societal norms. Moreover, endeavors about the other do not seem to be completed but are jointly constructed and are done through efforts to make sense of a meaning-loaded world through one's experience,

observation, and interpretation. Therefore, an 'us' versus 'them' attitude, entails more than a mere cognitive representation of pictures in the mind and appears to represent one's own conceptual framework in justifying and explaining biased attitudes.

In this piece of research, attempts were made to contribute to what is called a "truly pragmatic tradition" (Mey, Haberland, & Fischer, 2010, p. 8) so as to nurture research in the field of pragmatics in real-life interactions.

It is implied that if there is anything positive about stereotypes, it has to be the maintenance of group harmony which is valued. Nonetheless, these negative stereotypes enhance bias and maintain inequality. Stereotypes are not fixed cognitive constructs and cannot be separated from the discursive context which generates them in the first place. This might have negative implications for a variety of different contexts.

In language domains, stereotypes can impact students' performance and their sense of belonging in specific academic or test settings (Chaffee, Lou, & Noels, 2020). A number of studies suggest that girls may underperform on math tests (Clark, Fuesting, & Diekman, 2016; Cheryan, Ziegler, Montoya, & Jiang, 2017) or outperform boys in tests of verbal skills and foreign language learning following reminders of the gendered stereotypes (Stoet & Geary, 2013; Dewaele et al., 2016). These gendered images may parallel issues related to the stereotype that language is feminine (Chaffee et al., 2020; Plante, O'Keefe, Aronson, Fréchette-Simard, & Goulet, 2019) and math and science are masculine. Albeit individuals may not necessarily believe in such stereotypes, their awareness that society holds such attitudes leads to stereotype threat (Pennington, Heim, Levy, & Larkin, 2016) and escalates the cognitive load of tasks as the person is under pressure in relation to both the difficulty of the task and the pressure of the stereotype (Nguyen & Ryan, 2008).

In pedagogical settings, therefore, reforms need not only address structural factors and incentives but also need to address psychological obstacles to students' integration and learning. The full asset of learning opportunities will be provided if only psychological concerns regarding affect have been removed (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Mitigating the worries of learners who belong to marginalized ethnic groups and are unsure whether they belong to mainstream school settings as well as their concerns over being viewed through a negative outgroup stereotype may be one such instance.

In view of that, supporting an inclusive critical pedagogy that opens up venues for dialogue and critical thinking creates opportunities to take a step beyond a competence-based model of curriculum design and towards a holistic approach based on the concept of care with

both cognitive and affective dimensions (Duckworth, 2013). Trainees, equipped with inclusive language, aimed to avoid offense and fulfill the ideals of egalitarianism can defy negative stereotypes. They, therefore, do not fall into using a pedagogic approach built around a deficit model of teaching and learning (Duckworth & Brzeski, 2015). Fostering a pedagogical capital entails being aware of and valuing learners' community voice. Therefore, any pedagogical model should challenge inequality (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). One step ahead might be to dismantle the barriers that exist in individuals' minds by uncovering the hidden layers of bias (Verma, 1997). Empowerment can be created sustainably through knowledge and awareness raising on gender and ethnic-based stereotyping as they appear in various types of educational materials. Such notions often go unchallenged at the level of content analysis and therefore stakeholders' perceptions of stereotyping in educational settings need to be examined through a wide variety of research methods.

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