**Cultural Intelligence, Cultural Identity and Iranian EFL learners' use of Politeness Strategies**

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**Abstract**

Human beings are defined as an embodiment of social and cultural understanding which can develop by engaging in various social contexts. Cultural intelligence and cultural identity are, thus, accounted noteworthy in learning particular aspects of language which are culture-specific. The present study intended to investigate the interaction effect of cultural intelligence and cultural identity on Iranian EFL learners' use of politeness strategies. To that end, the participants were divided into two groups of high and low cultural intelligence and cultural identity. Moreover, regardless of their membership in the two groups, the participants were included in the assessment of the relationship between cultural intelligence and politeness strategies. Fifty-two intermediate language learners whose proficiency level was determined through Oxford Quick Proficiency Test were required to fill out the questionnaires of Cultural Intelligence, L1 Cultural identity and Discourse Completion Tasks. Two-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation were used to analyze the research questions. The results of the two-way ANOVA proved no interaction effect of cultural intelligence and cultural identity levels on the use of politeness strategies. Moreover, the analysis of the relationship between the four factors of cultural intelligence and the use of politeness strategies yielded no significant relationship. The findings can inform of imminent obliterating L1 cultural identity among EFL learners. Broaching the subjects such as globalization, cultural homogeneity and English linguicism, the study calls for the need for further inquiries to revise already established findings such as the role of home culture, L1 and attitudes towards target culture in EFL domain.

**Keywords:** cultural intelligence; cultural identity; politeness strategies

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## 1. Introduction

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), a review of the state of the art would accentuate the importance of factors such as globalization on language acquisition (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). Unlike the common assumptions about the benefits of globalization, it has engendered many cultural conflicts as well (Ang, Van Dyne & Ling Tan, 2010; Ang, Van Dyne & Rockstuhl, 2015). Zahed (2004) posits that individuals may provoke different reactions to globalization according to identities they possess. As he points out, some with strong L1 cultural identity, psychological membership of individuals with a specific national group (Kosmitzki, 1996), consider globalization a threat since they feel their own values endangered and undervalued while encountering with the world. In fact, it can reveal the identity individuals possess and indicate their loyalty to their culture. Therefore, cultural identity may act as a deterrent effect in interactions across cultures. Besides, globalization made researchers contrive to put forward cultural intelligence (CQ), the potential ability of individuals to handle and successfully control various cultural contexts (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008), as a seminal factor resolving the conflicts rising of globalization (Ang, Van Dyne & Rockstuhl, 2015). Accordingly, on the one hand, cultural identity is propounded as a factor which can impinge on cross-cultural interactions. On the other hand, cultural intelligence has been studied as a noteworthy element in diverse cultural situations.

Apropos of the importance of culture in culturally diverse interactions, those aspects of language which are highly culture-specific bear the brunt of satisfactory communication across cultures. From among the multitude of language components, politeness, one of the overarching areas of pragmatics, is deemed to be highly culture-specific and context-dependent (Chen, 2010). Sifianou (1999) maintains that rules of politeness are perceived differently across cultures. Moreover, Holmes (2006) points out the significance of language structure in the perception of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987) expand upon the notion of politeness and state that the speaker should assess three elements of situation while doing a face-threatening act (FTA); they are: The power of the addressee over the speaker, the degree of imposition and the social distance between the interlocutors. Their model powerfully predicts ways which speakers choose linguistic expressions to mitigate FTAs (Watts, 2003).

Prima facie, it might seem that cultural intelligence can contribute to the effective use of politeness strategies while this may hold true as far as the presumptive effects of L1 cultural identity are disregarded. Accordingly, it might seem sensible to analyze the interaction effects of cultural intelligence and cultural identity on politeness strategies. Besides, cultural intelligence comprises four distinct dimensions including metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Surprisingly, there is no vivid pattern in research studies since some consider CQ as an aggregated construct and some others focus on the effect

of each of the four dimensions (Ng, Van Dyne & Ang, 2012). As a result, in addition to the analysis of the interaction effect of cultural identity and aggregated representation of cultural intelligence, this study intended to scrutinize the relationship between each of the four dimensions of cultural intelligence and politeness strategy in the Iranian EFL context to better signify whether the outcomes match to the aggregated CQ or each specific dimension. The aforementioned issues, therefore, would afford due spur to conduct this study.

## 2.Literature Review

### 2.1. Cultural Intelligence

Earley and Ang (2003, as cited in Ang & Van Dyne, 2008) first introduced the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) as the key to success of certain individuals in cross-cultural settings. They defined it as the capability to learn patterns and attitudes of different cultures and revealing proper behaviors to those conventions. In 2004, the first symposium on CQ was held at the "Academy of management annual meeting." The first article on CQ which offered a valid scale to measure CQ was published by Ang et al. (2007). This article paved the way for future researches on the topic (Ng et al., 2012). Ang and Van Dyne (2008) remarked that the idea of cultural intelligence thrived by the issue of globalization and defined it as the potential ability of individuals to handle and successfully control various cultural contexts.

Ang et al. (2010) stated that CQ is embedded in the lengthy list of individual differences. According to them, individual differences consist of three broad categories of abilities or capabilities, personality and interest. Since CQ can be classified as ability or capability, it is assumed an individual difference.

Unlike personality characteristics that are static and aren't likely to change in time period, capabilities such as CQ can evolve over time and improve through training, experience and education (Ang & Dyne, 2008; Ang et al., 2015). CQ is the ability of individuals to adapt themselves to diverse cultural situations and to exhibit behaviors proper to contexts. CQ renders three implications to the field: 1) it is precise and explicit in the design of its framework, 2) it possesses a comprehensive framework which comprises all four factors of intercultural competencies, and 3) it broadens the scope of research on intelligence in relation to the field (Ng et al., 2012).

On the basis of framework of multiple intelligence, devised by Sternberg and Detterman (1986, cited in Ang & Van Dyne, 2008), a multidimensional view to CQ was proposed. As this view suggests, CQ comprises metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral dimensions.

## 2.2 The Four Facets of Cultural Intelligence

Metacognitive CQ is the conscious cultural awareness each individual possesses during interaction in cross-cultural setting. Related capabilities of metacognitive CQ include planning, monitoring and revising typical cultural patterns and ethos of various groups of people (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2012; Van Dyne, Ang & Koh, 2008).

Cognitive CQ is the knowledge individuals possess of values, rules, assumptions and conventions of other cultures that may have been acquired through their personal experiences or learnt in educational settings. It includes both general and specific knowledge about culture (Ang et al., 2015; Van Dyne et al., 2008).

Motivational CQ is a driving force to make effort and energy in order to behave appropriately in cross-cultural situations. Motivational CQ equips people with a special confidence to resist the challenges occurring in workforce environment (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al. 2012; Van Dyne, Ang, Livermore, 2010).

Behavioral CQ is defined as the ability to exhibit proper verbal and non-verbal behaviors when interacting in diverse cultural settings. It is, in fact, individual's ability to put their thoughts into practice effectively (Ng et al., 2012).

A few research investigations studied the effect of CQ on each of the four language skills and components. Ghonsooly and Shalchy (2013) explored the relationship between CQ and writing ability and fluency. They revealed that individuals with high cultural intelligence succeed in a kind of writing that is appropriate to their intended audience feelings and outlook. They proposed that teachers and designers of educational materials should consider and include cultural aspects to enhance learners' cultural competency.

Rafieyan, Golerazeghi and Orang (2015) aimed to explore the relationship between CQ and pragmatic comprehension. The participants were Iranian English learners studying in the United States. The participants were supposed to recognize correct intended meaning in the dialogues to measure their pragmatic comprehension. The results of data analysis revealed strong positive relationship between CQ and pragmatic comprehension.

To enhance learning function, Peng, Van Dyne and Oh (2015) explored that cultural identity acts as a moderator of the impacts of motivational CQ on the effectiveness of students' learning function who study abroad. They proposed that learners who possess strong cultural identity may fail to adapt in different cultural contexts since they suppose exposure to other cultures a threat and may feel their cultural identity endangered. He maintained that motivational CQ could be helpful for those who possess strong cultural identity.

## 2.3. L1 Cultural Identity

Findings of many studies attest the fact that identity is expressed through the language (Joseph, 2006; Jou, 2013; Norton, 2006). Hall (1996, p. 4) stated that "identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being…"

In the 1970s and 1980s, applied linguistic scholars distinguished between social and cultural identity. Social identity is defined as the relationship between individuals and the larger social communities with communities of practice such as families, schools, and workplaces as the mediating factors. L1 Cultural identity, however, refers to "the relationship between an individual and members of a particular ethnic group who share a common history, a common language and similar ways of understanding the world" (Norton, 2011, p. 318). In the mentioned decades, a variety of researchers characterized identity as a fixed and unitary entity (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Later, in reaction to the previous approaches which viewed identity as a fact, some argued that it is necessary to see it as a product in the process of changing continually. Accordingly, two distinct views were mooted regarding cultural identity; in one view, cultural identity was defined as a common, collective entity which is shared by people belonging to a single community. This identity marks the people of a nation as 'one people' and represents historical events and cultural norms experienced and lived by all the people. In another view, cultural identity was seen as a single, unitary entity belonging to each individual. This view focuses on the differences rather than common points to delineate 'what we really are.' This view, unlike the first, considers identity as an issue of 'becoming' and 'being' together. That is to say, cultural identity has a history and at the same time is constant to change through the continual interaction with power and culture. Cultural identity "is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth" (Hall, 1990, p .226). Sussman (2000) remarked that culture resides in the soul of individuals, thus, cultural identity and its effects aren't often recognized by the individuals themselves. That is to say, there is no awareness about it except when individuals experience cultural transition and are exposed to a wide range of issues such as cultural shock, adjustment or acculturation, cultural identity comes to be evident for them.

Abdi (2009) conducted a genre analysis of Persian and English articles by employing a model of meta-discourse to indicate if cultural identity of Persian writers prevails in their writings or they follow the rules of academic discourse writing. He found out that they utilize different norms of writing and the cultural identity of writers may be identifiable in their texts. He suggested that writing teachers should consider cultural differences in their syllabus.

Reitz (2014) studied the relationship between motivation and cultural identity in originally Spanish learners born in the United States, with high proficiency in Spanish language. The results revealed that cultural identity of these learners affect their motivation in learning language.

*2.4. Politeness Strategy*

Politeness, as a social practice which determines appropriate behavior, is one of the dimensions of culture that is patently reflected through the language. Holmes (2006) pointed out that cultures have various ways of defining norms of politeness. This issue goes further as far as the use of certain forms of utterance and politeness has been studied in the field of sociolinguistics. This accounts for the fact that in some cultures the use of some strategies is prescribed by the norms and mores of social conventions.

The notion of politeness was scrutinized by Brown and Levinson (1987). They maintained that representing politeness in social interactions requires an awareness of face. They defined face as the image every individual of a society wishes to be known with. Though self is a belonging of personality, the constant possession of it will come through society. Thus, maintaining face requires a mutual understanding and effort from the part of interlocutors. They maintained that though interpreting face differs in various cultures, the knowledge of each other's face and understanding the necessity of taking heed of it, in social interactions, are universal. They differentiated between positive and negative face. Negative face is the desire not to be imposed by other members of the society. Positive face refers to a sense of appreciation and acceptance which individuals aspire to.

The actions which contradict with the face wants of either speaker or addressee are called face-threatening activities (FTA). Acts that leave no room for the independence and freedom of action for the addressee are considered a threat for their negative face. For instance, speech acts of request, suggestion and even thank are deemed threats to the negative face since the acceptance of them entails indebtedness and humility on the part of the speaker. On the other hand, activities that require kind of disagreement of their wants are threatening their positive face, such as apology. Brown and Levinson (1987) maintained some social variables necessary to investigate the seriousness of an FTA. These variables are universal, but the assessment and perception of each varies inter-culturally and every society interprets them according to the rules and conventions embedded in it. Speakers tend to use some strategies to minimize or decrease FTAs, in fact, they decide to be polite. Brown and Levinson identified five strategies to appear politeness, including do not do FTA at all, do it off-record, do it on record-baldly, do it on record with positive politeness, and do it on record with negative politeness.

As far as politeness phenomenon is concerned, the study of Chen (1993) can be mentioned for his investigation of politeness strategies used by English and Chinese speakers for making compliments. His study

revealed that the two cultures largely differ in their use of politeness strategy. These differences, he claimed, are rooted in social and cultural varieties in value. Garcia (1989) made a comparison between politeness strategies used by English and Venezuelan speakers. The results indicated that American speakers employed negative politeness strategy while Venezuelan speakers used positive politeness strategy while talking to the offended host. The researchers presumed these differences the source of cross-cultural misunderstanding and suggested for a common modified style to improve communication.

## 3. Purpose of the Study

Pragmatics has been known as one of the aspects of language that is significantly culture-specific (Chen, 2010). In this regard, the rules of politeness which signify appropriate behavior and their specific choice of strategies are, to a large extent, determined by cultural norms. Moreover, in their study of interrelation between CQ and pragmatic comprehension, Rafieyan et al. (2015) asserted the existence of positive relationship between CQ and pragmatic comprehension attesting to the fact that CQ is accounted effective in cross-cultural communications. Therefore, specific dimensions of cultural intelligence may be related to politeness strategies. Given the proven role of L1 cultural identity in apposite adaptations in cross-cultural contexts (Peng et al., 2015), it might be that the activation of L1 cultural identity may vitiate the possible influence of CQ on politeness strategies. As such, this study intended to analyze the interaction effect of cultural identity and cultural intelligence on politeness strategies through the following research questions:

1. Do levels of cultural intelligence and cultural identity have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' use of politeness strategies?
2. Is there any relationship between each of the four factors of cultural intelligence and Iranian EFL learners' use of politeness strategies?

## 4. Method

### *4.1. Participants*
Participants included 52 Iranian undergraduate students of English as a foreign language at the University of Qom. They were heterogeneous regarding their gender, including 31 female and 21 male, within the approximate age range of 19-28 that were chosen through convenient sampling. They all enjoyed intermediate level of proficiency, as approved by Oxford Quick Proficiency Test (OQPT), thus homogeneous in this respect. As one of the variables of the study was cultural identity and the extent to which it influences dependent variables is of paramount significance, it was assured that the participants were originally Iranian.

### *4.2. Instruments*

In the present study, the participants were arrayed homogeneous using Oxford Quick Proficiency Test (OQPT) designed by the collaboration of Oxford University Press and the University of Cambridge (2004). It comprises 60 contextualized, multiple-choice questions which are developed to test vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension ability of the participants.

To examine the cultural intelligence of the participants, the questionnaire of cultural intelligence which was developed and validated by Ang et al (2007) was used. It comprises four sub-categories of cultural intelligence. Items 1-4 are designed to measure metacognitive CQ, the conscious cultural awareness during interaction in cross-cultural setting; 5-10 cognitive CQ, knowledge of values, rules, assumptions and conventions of other cultures; 11-15 motivational CQ, the driving force to make effort in order to behave appropriately in cross-cultural contexts; and 16-20 behavioral CQ, the ability to exhibit proper verbal and non-verbal behaviors. The items are measured on a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with the scores of 7-1 assigned, respectively (Rafieyan et al., 2015).

Cultural identity of the participants was analyzed through a questionnaire adapted from Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) designed by Roberts et al. (1999). The original questionnaire was developed by Phinney (1992) which consists of 14 items. Later, in 1999, it was revised and turned into 12 items. The adapted version was designed and used by Peng et al. (2015) in their study to analyze the moderating role of cultural identity on motivational CQ. This questionnaire was designed in order to assess the importance of home culture. It comprised 6 items about identity and cultural background and the other six items which weren't directly related to cultural identity were dropped by the researchers.

Discourse completion tasks (DCTs) consisting of 8 situations were employed to highlight the application of politeness strategies among Iranian EFL learners. There were 4 situations requiring participants to perform speech acts with people from high status and 4 situations of equal status regarding power and social distance. Six of the situations required the speech act of request, one the speech act of apology and one required the participants to do greeting.

### 4.3. Data Collection Procedure

To conduct the current study, the researcher invited a number of EFL undergraduate learners studying English Literature at the University of Qom to take part in the research as the participants. The whole procedure was administered in two steps. As the first step, the test of proficiency was administered among them so that the individuals who had different proficiency levels were excluded from the study. The students specified homogeneous in terms of proficiency level were required to cooperate for the administration of other questionnaires. The second step was

administered in a few days to prevent feelings of fatigue and boredom on the part of the respondents. Since the first research question intended to investigate the effects of the levels of cultural intelligence and cultural identity on Iranian EFL learners' use of politeness strategies, the participants were divided into two groups of high and low cultural intelligence and cultural identity based on their median scores. That is, the participants who had a score of 22 and lower on cultural identity were considered the low group and the rest of the students formed the high cultural identity group, and likewise the participant who had a score of 98 and lower on cultural intelligence were regarded as the low group and the rest of the students formed the high cultural intelligence group. The questionnaires of cultural intelligence and cultural identity along with the discourse completion tests were distributed simultaneously among them. The questionnaires took about 30 minutes to be answered in their entirety. The participants were given a short explanation about the way they were required to answer the DCTs. They filled out the questionnaires in their class time by the permission of teachers. A short interval was considered for the administration of the two steps to prevent any possible change in the students' proficiency level or their cultural mentality. For the purpose of moral standards, they were assured that their demographic information and responses to the questionnaires would be kept private and would be just used for the research purposes. Finally, a detailed content analysis was administered on the respondents' use of politeness strategies employing Brown and Levinson's (1987) proposed strategies. Since this study intended to analyze cognizance of politeness strategies took by Iranian EFL learners, the entirety of strategies was summed up, irrespective of being positive or negative. Afterwards, the data were collected to be analyzed.

## 4.4. Data Analysis

Having collected the data, the researcher employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) to provide answer for the research questions according to the design of the study. To investigate the first research question of the study, two-way ANOVA was employed and for the second question, Pearson correlation was administered to determine the degree of association between the variables.

## 5.Results

The general concern of the present research was to study the interaction effect of cultural intelligence and cultural identity on the use of politeness strategies by Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, the probable relationships between each of the four factors of cultural intelligence, metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral, and the use of politeness strategies were investigated.

Two-way ANOVA was run to analyze the raw scores obtained from the two independent variables of cultural intelligence and cultural identity

and one dependent variable, namely politeness strategy. Before discussing the results, it should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. The results displayed in Table 1, represents the non-significance of the Levene's test (F (3, 48) = .163, p = .921) indicating that there were not significant differences between the groups' variances. That is to say, the groups enjoyed homogenous variances on politeness strategies.

**Table 1**

*Levene's test of equality of error variances of politeness strategies by levels of cultural identity and cultural intelligence*

|  |  | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Politeness Strategies | Based on Mean | .163 | 3 | 48 | .921 |
|  | Based on Median | .172 | 3 | 48 | .915 |
|  | Based on Median and with adjusted df | .172 | 3 | 44.712 | .915 |
|  | Based on trimmed mean | .153 | 3 | 48 | .927 |

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the high and low cultural intelligence and cultural identity groups on politeness strategies. The results showed that the cultural intelligence low (M = 11.02, SE = .890) and high (M = 10.47, SE = .962) groups, and cultural identity low (M = 10.71, SE = .890) and high (M = 10.78, SE = .962) groups had almost the same means on the politeness strategies.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of Politeness Strategies by Levels of Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Identity*

| Levels | Mean | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Low intelligence | 11.026 | .890 | 9.237 | 12.814 |
| High intelligence | 10.476 | .962 | 8.542 | 12.409 |
| Low identity | 10.718 | .890 | 8.929 | 12.507 |
| High identity | 10.783 | .962 | 8.849 | 12.717 |

The two-way interaction means of high and low levels of cultural intelligence and cultural identity are presented in table 3 signifying that there was a negligible interaction between the two variables which was not statistically significant.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Politeness Strategies by Levels of Cultural Intelligence and Levels of Cultural Identity*
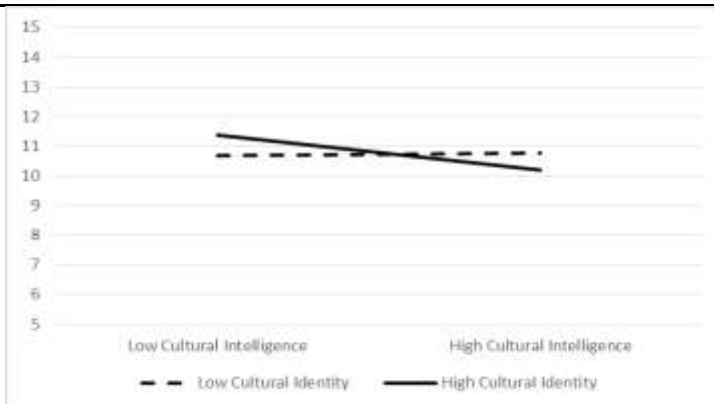
| Cultural Intelligence | Cultural Identity | Mean | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Low | Low | 10.667 | 1.212 | 8.229 | 13.104 |
|  | High | 11.385 | 1.302 | 8.766 | 14.003 |
| High | Low | 10.769 | 1.302 | 8.151 | 13.388 |
|  | High | 10.182 | 1.416 | 7.335 | 13.028 |

The results of the two-way ANOVA (Table 4) indicated that there was not any significant difference between the high and low cultural intelligence (F (1, 48) = .176, p = .676, partial $\eta^2$ = .004 representing a weak effect size), and cultural identity (F (1, 48) = .002, p = .960, partial $\eta^2$ = .004 representing a weak effect size) groups' means on the politeness strategies. Furthermore, the results displayed in Table 4, (F (1, 48) = .248, p = .621, partial $\eta^2$ = .005 representing a weak effect size) also indicated that there was not any significant interaction between the levels of cultural identity and levels of cultural intelligence. Based on the results displayed in Table 4 and Figure 1, it can be claimed that there was a negligible interaction effect between cultural identity and cultural intelligence which was not statistically significant.

Table 4

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Politeness Strategies by Levels of Cultural Intelligence and Levels of Cultural Identity*

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intelligence Level | 3.887 | 1 | 3.887 | .176 | .676 | .004 |
| Identity Levels | .055 | 1 | .055 | .002 | .960 | .000 |
| Intelligence Levels* Identity Levels | 5.472 | 1 | 5.472 | .248 | .621 | .005 |
| Error | 1058.354 | 48 | 22.049 | | | |
| Total | 7098.000 | 52 | | | | |



*Figure 1.* Interaction between levels of cultural identity and cultural intelligence on politeness strategies

To investigate the second research question, Pearson correlation was run to probe any significant relationships between each of the four factors of cultural intelligence and Iranian EFL learners' use of politeness strategies. The results (Table 5) indicated that there were not any significant relationships between politeness strategies and

-Metacognitive strategy (r (50) = -.073 representing a weak effect size, p = .611),

-Cognitive strategy (r (50) = .109 representing a weak effect size, p = .447),

-Motivational strategy (r (50) = -.118 representing a weak effect size, p = .410), and

-Behavioral strategy (r (50) = .060 representing a weak effect size, p = .676).

Thus it can be concluded that no relationship exists between politeness strategies and elements of cultural intelligence.

Table 5

*Pearson Correlations for the Relationship between Politeness Strategies and Components of Cultural Intelligence*

|  |  | *Politeness Strategies* |
|---|---|---|
| Metacognitive | Pearson Correlation | -.073 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .611 |
|  | N | 51 |
| Cognitive | Pearson Correlation | .109 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .447 |
|  | N | 51 |
| Motivational | Pearson Correlation | -.118 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .410 |
|  | N | 51 |
| Behavioral | Pearson Correlation | -.060 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .676 |
|  | N | 51 |

## 6. Discussion

This study aimed at studying the probable interaction effects of cultural intelligence and cultural identity, and the use of politeness strategies. That is, it intended to investigate how cultural intelligence and cultural identity, when conjoined, would react in relation to politeness strategies. The study also analyzed the correlations between the four aspects of cultural intelligence, and politeness strategies.

The results of the two-way ANOVA indicated an insignificant interaction effect between both levels of high and low cultural intelligence and cultural identity on the use of politeness strategies. The lack of interaction effect in the high level group can indicate that high cultural identity does not act to the detriment of the politeness strategies, and likewise insignificant interaction in the low level group may signify that students' low cultural identity is unlikely to affect the improvement of politeness strategy use. The findings may subscribe to the view opined by Aston (1993) who asserted that taking a critical stance towards the country of origin is one way of establishing comity and acceptance in cross-cultural interactions. He suggested that when communicating across cultures, transgressing the limits imposed by cultural schemas, students can show

solidarity and achieve satisfactory rapport with their interlocutors. In line with this, Fouge´re (2008) maintained that the construction of identities varies substantially among individuals; some tie strongly to home identity "while others liberate themselves from the founding myth of an essential cultural identity to develop an intercultural personhood and become strangers to themselves" (p. 213).

The findings of this study are in marked contrast with Ward and Searl's (1991) contention who asserted that strong L1 cultural identity impinge on sociocultural adjustment and Hong, Ip, Chiu, Morris and Menon (2001) who confirmed the role of L1 cultural identity in creating a sense of self when it is activated in diverse cultural settings. The study likewise is in converse with Abdi's (2009) findings who, in an analysis of Persian and English articles, claimed that L1 cultural identity of writer prevails in their employment of interactional metadiscourse. He noted that, while writing, cultural identities of Persian writers play much greater role than academic norms of writing. The findings likewise strikingly contrast with a study conducted by Peng et al. (2015). Peng et al. (2015) posited that strong L1 cultural identity precludes learners from working successfully abroad. They asserted that individuals with high L1 cultural identity and low motivational CQ are unlikely to be appropriate for overseas jobs.

The insignificant interaction effect of cultural identity and cultural intelligence could be explicated through some insights; it may apprise EFL learners and teachers of globalization phenomenon. Globalization has intensified through expansive growth of information and media technology and has likewise increased interest in the use of English worldwide which displays its manifestations through changes in local forms, status and functions. Moreover, Lee (1994) used the term 'global sociology' to emphasize how Western culture disseminates its methodologies and concepts to the Third World. The researcher also mentioned the role of educational system dominated by such First World ideologies in leaving deep imprints of Western culture.

In a hyperglobalist hypothesis, globalization is viewed as an inevitable force which can result in declining traditional structures. This issue can occasion cultural uniformity as one of its repercussions. It, in fact, culminates in steering the world towards cultural homogeneity. Moreover, EFL speakers, as one of the consequences of globalization, draw on a multiplicity of linguistic resources so that they can handle a successful communication (Omoniyi & Saxena, 2010).

Another justification to adduce research findings might account for the recently increased interaction between language and technology. Today, students are encountered with fairly multitudinous modes of communication which may culminate in the richness and betterment of students' interpretations of their interlocutors' feelings and thought (Kern, 2011). As put forward by Kramsch (2011), technology plays a significant role in the

emergence of a cyberculture which is accounted noteworthy in evolving culture, language and, hence, social interaction. It has engendered a sense of empowerment since the existence of technology in everyday life has blurred demarcations made so far through cultural conventions and schemes.

Inconspicuous cultural identities may also be attributable to Linguicism which denotes cultural renewal and exchange worldwide (Davies, 2007). Linguicism can be defined as ideologies or practices used to divide unequally power and resources between groups through language. It has marked English language with prestige and knowledgeableness to the extent that low proficiency could be equated with inferiority which implies lack of appropriate standing (Canagarajah & Ben Said, 2011). Phillipson (1992), in a similar vein, believed that language spread is rooted in English linguicism that is fostered when members of a community opt for education in the English world. According to Phillipson, when one language is prioritized in the educational plans such as teacher training and curriculum development, linguicism can occur. Relatively speaking, since conditions thereof exist in Iran, linguicism could be one of the causes of cultural identity ineffectiveness.

Finally, another explanation which should be attended to in future line of inquiries is the amount of mother tongue used in classrooms. According to Phillipson (1992), in classrooms where mother tongue is obliterated, students could be divested of their cultural identities. As a result, students may not draw on their cultural resources when interacting in diverse cultural milieus. Prima facie, it might seem of coming to significant fruition in intercultural interactions while other repercussions should be dealt with in further researches.

As with the second research question, the analysis of the results disclosed no relationship between metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral CQ and politeness strategies. To put it in another way, it was observed that enjoying strong degrees of each of the factors of cultural intelligence does not notably contribute to switching between various types of strategies in different situations or even in the same.

The findings of this part stands in contrast with the findings of Racicot and Ferry's study (2016) who asserted the noteworthy roles of motivational and metacognitive CQ in learners' interest to work abroad and their sociocultural adjustment, respectively. They likewise don't correspond with Li, Li, Mädche and Rau's (2012) study who remarked the noteworthy effect of behavioral CQ on the degree of trust gained in intercultural communication. Moreover, the findings are in line with Tajeddin and Momenian's (2012) study who found no relationship between cultural intelligence and the use of expressions of gratitude

The insignificant relationship might be attributable to the participants' intermediate proficiency level so that they may have already acquired sufficient competency to use politeness strategies, thus enjoying strong cultural intelligence could be of little account. Another explanation might be

that the participants were culturally attuned to the situations employed in DCTs since they could elicit similar constructions in both English and Persian language (Tajeddin & Momenian, 2012).

## 7. Conclusions and Implications

The general aim of this study was to look for the probable effects of Iranian EFL learners' cultural intelligence on the use of politeness strategies with the L1 cultural identity as a moderating factor. Moreover, the relationship between specific dimensions of cultural intelligence and politeness strategy was scrutinized.

The findings indicated no significant interaction effect between cultural intelligence and cultural identity on the various use of politeness strategies. The results obtained could be imputed to numerous reasons, namely, globalization, technology, linguicism and mother tongue use. Moreover, the findings marked no significant relationship between the specific dimensions of cultural intelligence and the use of politeness strategies. This suggests that the improvement of the four factors of cultural intelligence cannot be effective in mitigating the learning barriers prevailing as the result of pragmatic misunderstandings.

To address pedagogical implications, the present study brought the necessity of teaching politeness strategies to the fore. Having proved insignificant relationship between dimensions of cultural intelligence and politeness strategies, the study could apprise EFL teachers of the inadequate acquisition of politeness strategies indirectly since their putative high cultural intelligence is unlikely to lend much assistance with pragmatic comprehension. It, hence, lends support to Kasper and Rose's (2002) assertion that mere exposure to second language does not suffice, and pragmatic components have to be made perceptible for the students through instruction. Moreover, teachers would be sensitized to various factors influencing on learners' cultural identities. In their instruction, they should be mindful of the values ingrained in learners' traditional conventions and cultural schemas. Curriculum developers may benefit from the findings by including politeness strategies into the books of second language teaching with respect to their cultural identities. They, in fact, can strike a balance between learners' knowledge of politeness strategies and their L1 cultural identity by designing specific tasks and practices that introduce politeness strategies to the learners and at the same time, don't oppose with learners' L1 cultural identity. Bearing in mind the possible effects of mother tongue use in classrooms on the attenuation of cultural identity, future line of scholarship can address itself to the effects of mother tongue used in classroom on the EFL learners' cultural identity. Besides, the findings proffer a new line of inquiry investigating manifestations of globalization in younger generation.

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