A Cross Linguistic Study of Refusal Speech Act: A Rapport Management Approach

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The present study aimed to recast the use of refusal speech act by Iranian EFL learners, exploring politeness strategies and the reasons perceived by them; In addition, how differently they are used by native speakers regarding Rapport Management Approach. To this end, one hundred Persian speaking learners (50 males and 50 females) of English who were randomly chosen were asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), consisting of 12 situations realizing the refusal of four types of eliciting acts. Additionally, 12 English native speakers (6 males and 6 females) also participated in the study. DCT consisted of two parts. a counter balance design was used in data collection. Each person was supposed to reply to 6 Persian and 6 English questions, regarding the fact that the Persian questions were not the translation of the English ones. Politeness model proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) adapted to show the differences between Iranian EFL and English native speakers (ENS) male and female participants in their employment of politeness strategies. For analyzing cognitive reasons of perceiving politeness strategy, a Likert scale questionnaire was used. The results indicated that in an interaction besides face, social rights and obligations can also be involved. The other finding of this study is that among politeness strategies 'negative' strategies are the most frequent ones. The results also indicated that English native speakers use negative politeness strategies more than Iranian EFL learners. Therefore, English native participants regard themselves as having a range of sociality rights and obligations in
relation to other people more than Iranian EFL learners. The findings of this study can shed further light on 
politeness issue, on the one hand, and provide EFL practitioners to manage more successful EFL classes