SAEED SAFARI

Universtiy of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology

saeed.safari@fil.bg.ac.rs

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9559-4179

Language, Conceptualization, and Cultural Linguistics. The Role of Culture in the Formation of Cognitive Schemas in Languages

The relationship between language, culture, and cognition is a key aspect within the interdisciplinary feild of cultural linguistics research. It attempts to describe how language reflects and shows cultural norms, values, and beliefs, throught cognitive frameworks like conceptualization, schema, and categorization. Meanwhile, studies in cognitive linguistics also have shown that language is formed based on conceptualizations and schemas directly influenced by culture. This paper, in its theoretical section, reviews the key concepts of cultural linguistics and its background. Additionally, it presents a case study on the Persian language, aiming to examine the cultural conceptualizations of "politeness" and the cultural schema of Iranian compliment Ta'arof by reviewing and analysing various examples. The analysis indicates that selecting and using specific language features can serve as indicators of conceptualizations or of specific cognitive schemas rooted in culture, consequently confirming the notion that culture significantly shapes language.

Key words: language, conceptualization, cultural linguistics, Persian language, Ta'arof (Persian politeness)

Језик, концептуализација и културолошка лингвистика. Улога културе у формирању когнитивних шема у језицима

Веза између језика, културе и когниције кључни је аспекат у интердисциплинарном пољу истраживања културне лингвистике. Лингвисти овог усмерења настоје да опишу како језик одражава и приказује културне норме, вредности и уверења кроз когнитивне оквире попут концептуализације, шематизације и категоризације. С друге стране, истраживања у когнитивној лингвистици такође су показала да језик настаје на основу концептуализације и шема на које је култура непосредно утицала. Циљ овог рада је да у теоријском делу сагледа кључне концепте културне лингвистике и њихову позадину. Такође, у раду представљамо студију случаја из персијског језика, која за циљ има испитивање културних концептуализација „пристојности“, односно „учтивости“ и културне шеме иранске љубазности Та’ароф уз анализу различитих примера. Анализа указује на то да одабир и коришћење одређених језичких облика могу служити као показатељи концептуализација или специфичних когнитивних шема укорењених у култури, чиме се потврђује тврдња да култура значајно утиче на обликовање језика.

Кључне речи: језик, концептуализација, културна лингвистика, персијски језик, Та’ароф (персијска учтивост)

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language and culture has always been the subject of discussion and research from various aspects due to its multifaceted and extensive nature. As the topic is quite broad and has been discussed by many scholars, it is not only about the fundamental nature of language but also about the role of culture in shaping the use of language in practical situations. However, the intersection can be viewed in the cultural linguistics framework, which focuses on understanding the cognitive processes that underlie communication today. The origin of the term "cultural linguistics" is believed to be Ronald Langacker, a cognitive linguistics pioneer, who used the term to emphasize the connection between cultural knowledge and grammar (Sharifian, 2014, 100). He claimed that "the emergence of cognitive linguistics can be heralded as a return to cultural linguistics. Cognitive linguistic theories recognize

cultural knowledge not only as the basis of the lexicon but also as central aspects of grammar" (Langacker 1994, 31). As cited by Sharifian (2015), Langacker believed that "while meaning is identified as conceptualization, cognition is both embodied and culturally embedded at all levels" (Langacker 2014, 28).

The publication of Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics (1996) by Gary B. Palmer is the first serious attempt to establish a new branch of interdisciplinary studies, now called cultural linguistics. Palmer argued that cognitive linguistics can be directly applied to the study of language and culture (Sharifian, 2014, 100). Central to Palmer's proposal is the idea that "language is the play of verbal symbols based on images" (Palmer 1996, 3), and that these images are culturally constructed. Palmer then argued that culturally defined images determine narrative, figurative language, semantics, grammar, discourse, and even phonology (Sharifian, 2014, 100; 2016, 34). According to Palmer (1996) and Sharifian (2014, 99; 2016, 34), "cultural linguistics is a sub-discipline of linguistics with multidisciplinary origins that explores the interface between language, culture, and conceptualization". This paper aims to review the relationship between language and culture, focusing on cognitive perspectives within the conceptual framework of cultural linguistics. Moreover, this study presents a case study in the Persian language to illustrate how cultural schemas and conceptualization work in practice.

ISSUES REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language and culture are complex systems basically linked to social groups. While social dynamics significantly shape both language and culture, there are differing views on the relationship between them. According to Kramsch (1998, 79), "the relationship of language and culture in linguistics is one of the most hotly debated issues at present time". For a long time, researchers have been studying various aspects of the relationship between language and culture in different disciplines, including psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and cognitive science. From one perspective, scholars such as Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985, 13) argue that "every act of language, be it written or spoken, is a statement about the position of its author within the social structure in a given culture" and many others, including Brown (1994), Nida (1998) and Jiang (2000), have attempted to demonstrate the link between language and culture in their research. However, there were and still are scholars who are not convinced by this idea. In particular, Franz Uri Boas (1858 – 1942), a

German American anthropologist and one of the most prominent cultural relativists (Tilley 2017), pointed out that there is no compelling relationship between language and culture, and that people with very different cultures speak languages that share many of the same structural characteristics and that people who speak languages with very different structures often share much with the same culture (Wardhaugh 2015, 237).

The origins of the viewpoint first mentioned trace back to the subject of the connection between language and thought, which was once renowned following the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, sometimes the Whorf hypothesis (see Lee 1996). It involves two principles: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. Linguistic determinism suggests that language strongly determines our thinking, while linguistic relativity states that speakers of different languages perceive and think about the world differently. In its stronger deterministic form Sapir-Worf hypothesis is mostly contested (see Wardhaugh 2015, 230-238), but in the form of linguistic relativity it still inspires research that implies that language and culture are interconnected and that even the unconscious patterns of grammar influence a speaker's view of the world. The linguistic relativity hypothesis can be applied to various categories, including cognitive differences and linguistic habits shaped by cultural patterns of representing, acting, feeling, interpreting, and experiencing social events. The selective use of different linguistic categories by different cultures provides insight into how language shapes cognition. Differences in cultural practices are, therefore, likely to lead to variations in recurrent features of speech. For example, variations in how the person is culturally constructed are likely to entail different constructions of emotion since emotional events primarily characterize the quality of relationships between a person and his or her social world (Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

A) Culture and Cognition: Cultural Schemas

Since cognition is central to the topic under discussion, this paper examines the concept of cognition in the context of culture and language. Within a cultural group, certain cognitive structures describe the shared knowledge. One of these cognitive structures is schema, which refers to the mental framework that governs thought processes and facilitates information organization, processing, and storage. In other words, according to the classical definition by H. G. Widdowson (1983) and within the broader framework of Schema Theory (Shen, 2008), schemas or schemata are regarded as cognitive constructs that we employ to organize information within our long-term memory (Widdowson 1983, 34-35).

Schemas can refer to various domains, including those of people, entities, scenarios, events, and temporal sequences. This gives rise to the Cultural Schema Theory, which assumes that shared schemas enable individuals within a given culture to process information more efficiently and coherently because they assume that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (Anderson et al. 1977, 369). Roy D'Andrade, a cognitive anthropologist, further developed the notion of Cultural Schemas, which consist of clusters or patterns of basic schemas that make up the meaning system of a cultural group (Sharifian 2014, 106).

The concept of schema has proven crucial in cultural linguistics which considers cultural schemas as a key concept for capturing the culturally constructed encyclopaedic meaning of many lexical items in human languages. Palmer (1996, 63) claims that "probably all native knowledge of language and culture belongs to cultural schemas, and the life of culture and the speaking of language consist of schemas in action". Finally, it is essential to recognise that the concept of cultural schemas goes beyond the scope of linguistics, which is the focus of this research and is relevant in various other humanities disciplines such as sociology. According to Boutyline & Soter cultural schemas serve as a fundamental cognitive mechanism by which culture influences behavior (2021, 729). This definition underscores the idea that cultural schemas play a pivotal role in guiding actions, a principle that applies equally to language.

B) Language and Cognition: Main Theoretical Perspectives

Although the interrelation between language and cognition is a topic of scholarly interest, along with culture, this question is constantly discussed and developed in cognitive linguistics. The study of the relationship between language and cognition has evolved considerably over time, and contemporary research explores the multifaceted and complicated nature of this relationship. Historically, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus was on the effects of grammatical structure and vocabulary on thought processes. It was the time when the concept of linguistic relativity was introduced, and the thesis suggested that a person's language could influence cognitive processes such as thought and experience. This led to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, as mentioned before. Later, after the 1950s, new issues emerged and focused on whether language and cognition are similar or distinct human capacities. Chomsky was a pioneer in developing this new movement by exploring the concepts of language and mind. During

the 1980s and 1990s, some interdisciplinary studies were developed within psychology and linguistics. Harris (2006) summarized different theoretical perspectives on the relationship between language and cognition in Table 1, which briefly lists the major connections between the two.

Table 1
A short list of the main relationships between language and cognition (Harris, 2006)

Timeline	Movement	Main source of constraints	Language /cognition
1957- present	Chomskyan linguistics	Innate	Language unique, unlike cognition
1960s-1990	Artificial Intelligence	Learned	Subject to the same principles
1980s-1990	Connectionism	Learned	Subject to the same principles
1980s-present	Modularity of Mind	Innate	Language unique, unlike cognition
1990s-present	Cognitive neuroscience	Dynamical interaction	Complex similarities and differences

The study of the relationship between language and cognition has evolved considerably with the advent of cognitive science and cognitive linguistics. The complexity of this relationship has become more apparent, and researchers have recognised that interaction is not determined by genetic factors alone. Instead, the interplay of environmental influences, cultural background and language use is also crucial in shaping cognitive processes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper employs the theoretical framework of cultural conceptualization to conduct a detailed analysis of specific language samples from Persian. Cultural conceptualizations, as defined by Sharifian (2011, 5), are "cultural schemas (or, in the case of complex conceptualizations, cultural models), categories, metaphors, etc., that emerge at the level of cultural cognition". Sharifian (2011, 5) presents a theoretical framework for cultural conceptualizations in language and discusses the main views on cultural conceptualizations as follows:
a) Language is firmly grounded in a group-level cognition that emerges from interactions among cultural group members.
b) Language serves as a collective memory bank in cultural cognition.

c) Language can be a tool for transferring cultural cognition among generations.

On the other hand, the field of conceptualization is mainly represented by cognitive semantics, and cognitive semantics assumes that language is part of a more general cognitive capacity of humans. The cognitive-linguistic approach to analysis the language is guided by three main hypotheses, described by Croft & Cruse (2004, 1) as follows:

a) Language does not function as an independent cognitive module: According to this hypothesis, language is not an independent module of the mind, but rather it is integrated with other cognitive systems such as perception, memory, and motor control. In other words, language is grounded in and emerges from our experience of the world.

b) Grammar involves conceptualization: This hypothesis states that grammar is not just a set of abstract rules for generating sentences but intimately connected to how we conceptualize the world. Thus, grammar reflects the way we categorize and make sense of our experiences.

c) Knowledge of language arises from language use: This hypothesis states that our knowledge of language is not innate but arises from our experience of using language in communicative contexts. In other words, we learn language through social interaction and by observing and participating in language use.

According to Gonzalez-Marquez et al. (2007, 14), a second hypothesis recognizes that semantics is not the only area of such a relationship: lexicon, morphology, and syntax form a continuum of symbolic elements that provide linguistic structuring and construction of conceptual content. Sharifian (2012, 95) summarizes the major tenets of cognitive linguistic research in two main parts: 1) meanings are conceptualizations of experiences, and 2) grammar reflects these conceptualizations. In cognitive linguistics, language diversity is viewed as the result of discrepancies in how speakers of different languages conceptualize experience. As Langacker (1994, 31) describes, "the advent of cognitive linguistics can be heralded as a return to cultural linguistics. Cognitive linguistic theories recognize cultural knowledge as the basis not only of the lexicon but also of central aspects of grammar". Thus, cognitive linguistics recognizes the cultural construction of conceptualizations deeply embedded in various linguistic structures.

It can be concluded that cultural conceptualizations within a cultural group are not evenly distributed among individuals. They are rather

shared by members to varying degrees, resulting in heterogeneity within the group. Sharifian (2011, 29) uses the term "heterogeneity of cultural conceptualizations" and explains that cultural conceptualizations are not equally held in the minds of each member of a cultural group but are shared to varying degrees by members of the group. The cultural conceptualization framework suggests that cultural schemas emerge through interactions between members of a cultural group. In other words, these schemas emerge as a collective cognitive structure shaped by the shared experiences and practices of the group. According to Pishwa (2009, 10), the cognitive structures (which are themselves cognitive schemas) that lead to an emergent schema are heterogeneously distributed across minds in a cultural group. It should also be noted that to gain a comprehensive understanding of cultural schemas within a cultural group, in this case, the Persian-speaking community, it is essential to conduct a descriptive analysis based on empirical data. According to Gumperz (1983), understanding the communicative patterns of a speech community requires a thorough investigation of the language used, the context in which it is used, and the social and cultural norms that influence communication.

The research methodology employed in this study is an empirically based descriptive analysis, which identifies and analyses unique linguistic and cultural practices within the Persian-speaking community in Iran. This type of analysis involves observing and documenting the language use of speech community members in naturalistic settings. The present data were gathered through observation and participation in a variety of spontaneously occurring speech situations. By examining how cultural concepts and values are encoded in language, this paper aims to shed light on the complex relationships between Persian culture and language to develop a deeper understanding of how cultural factors shape language and how language reflects cultural norms and values. Through this research methodology, the investigation centers on the relationship between linguistic forms and conceptualization in Persian, focusing on how sentence structures convey "politeness." The methodology is grounded in a theoretical framework of cultural conceptualization and involves an in-depth analysis of how linguistic forms are used to express conceptual meanings within the Persian language. This is achieved through a comprehensive analysis of Persian language sample texts, which is examined using a qualitative research approach. In addition, the study introduces the unique cultural schema of "Ta'arof" which is a type of politeness common in the Iranian society and examines its expression through language. Since the expression of respect in Persian is closely linked to the choice of linguistic forms,

this analysis of the collected examples aims to deepen our understanding of how Persian speakers use their language, including the choice of pronouns, verbs and verb endings known as ad clitics. The linguistic analysis illustrates how these grammatical elements are employed to convey social status and respect within the framework of the cultural concept of politeness.

STUDY, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Persian, also called Farsi, is an Iranian language that belongs to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. In Iran, Persian is the official language. However, various other languages such as Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Lori, Gilaki, Mazani, and Baluchi are also spoken due to the country's diverse ethnic groups. This linguistic diversity contributes to the unique multicultural fabric of Iranian society. Despite this diversity, Persian plays an essential role in unifying the nation by serving as a common language among various ethnic and cultural groups. This section presents and discusses the findings related to the cultural conceptualization of politeness in Persian. The section begins with an examination and analysis of the cultural conceptualization of politeness in Iranian culture, with particular attention to the grammatical nuances and choice of verbs. It then examines and discusses the cultural schema of the Iranian compliment commonly referred to as Ta'arof, providing insights into its meaning and implications within the framework of politeness in Persian.

A) The cultural conceptualizations of "politeness"

The cultural conceptualizations of "politeness" in Persian have been the subject of numerous studies. Tayebi (2020) studied the concept of "cultural conceptualization" and its impact on individuals' assessments of (im)politeness. The research posits that different cultural groups, belonging to various backgrounds, hold distinct norms and values concerning politeness. Similarly, Yaqubi et al. (2019) explore the functions of polite speech acts in Persian, underlining that these acts can convey both genuine and ostensible meanings. They stress the significance of considering the context when distinguishing between overt and actual functions of politeness. This paper reviews the concept of cultural conceptualization of politeness by examining the grammatical constructions in the use of pronouns and the choice of verbs. In Persian, the selection of specific pronouns, verbs, and verb endings, which often function as ad clitics, can convey a sense of respect and politeness. Persian has six pronouns, which include three singular pronouns: "man" (I), "to" (you), "u" (he/she), and three plural pronouns: "mâ" (we), "šomâ" (you), and "ânhâ" (they). In addition to the

six main pronouns, a variety of additional pronouns are often employed in formal styles of speech and writing to convey respect and politeness. For instance, in the first person, alternatives such as "bande", "in jâneb," or "hiqir" might be employed, while for the second person, choices like "jenâb âli," "hazrat-e âli," or "sarkâr" are common. Regrading the third person singular, pronouns like "hazrateshân," "mo'azzam-o leh," or "ân jenâb" could be used, typically accompanied by plural verb conjugation. It's worth noting that "sarkar" can also function as a feminine pronoun in Farsi. Acknowledging this, it needs to be emphasized that the research does not aim to comprehensively cover the system of Persian pronouns combined with specific verbs.

Typically, to express respect and politeness, similar to English and Serbian, the second person singular pronoun "to" is substituted with the second person plural pronoun "šomâ", resulting in verb agreement. Native speakers blend pronouns and verb endings to communicate politeness, even when the sentence structure is grammatically correct. In the following four examples, the speaker uses pronouns and verb endings to convey different levels of respect. Example number 1 represents a standard sentence in informal and friendly contexts. Example number 2 combines respect through the use of the plural pronoun "šomâ" with a friendly tone through the singular verb. Example number 3 provides an alternative where modifying the pronoun and incorporating a specific verb ending can convey a higher degree of respect.

1)
to be man gofti
to   be   man   goft=i
you-1SG   to-PREP   me-IO   told-TR- PST-2SG
'You told me'

2)
šomâ be man gofti
šomâ   be   man   gofti
You-1PL   to-PREP   me-IO   told-TR- PST-2SG
'You told me'

3) šomâ be man goftid
šomâ   be   man   gofti=id
You-1PL   to-PREP   me-IO   told-TR-PST-3PL
'You told me'

4) šomâ be man farmudid

šomâ	be	man	farmud=id
You-1PL	to-PREP	me-IO	told-TR-PST-3PL

'You told me'

In example number 4, not only does the pronoun remain in the second person plural, but the verb is completely changed to signify a higher degree of respect.

Similarly, within the third-person singular context, respect is expressed through the plural forms both in the pronoun and the verb. This is a linguistic-cultural feature uniquely found in Persian, which is absent in both English and Serbian. While the third-person single pronoun is "u" which remains the same for both males and females and the third-person plural pronoun is "ânhâ," which is accompanied by the plural verb, there is an additional, the distinct pronoun "išun" (he/she) is used only to express respect and courtesy towards the third person. This linguistic distinction emphasizes the close connection between language and cultural conventions, where the choice of pronoun, verb endings, and the verb itself constructs a system conveying different levels of respect within a sentence. This unique feature is presented in the following example (in Persian spoken form):

umad (he/she came)
 un   umad
 išun umad
 išun umadand
 išun tašrif âvordand

1)
umad
came-PST-3SG
'he/she came'
2)
un umad [umadeš]
he/she-3SNG came-PST-3SG
'he/she came'
3)
išun   umad
he/she-3PL   came-PST-3SG
'he/she came'

4)
išun   umad=and
he/she-3PL   came-PST-3PL
'he/she came'
5)
išun   tašrif avord=and
he/she-3PL   came-PST-3PL
'he/she came'

In the fifth example, not only is the pronoun maintained in the third person plural, but the verb has also been completely changed to convey a higher degree of respect. Another example of how Persian expresses different levels of respect and emphasis using different constructions, can be seen in the sentence 'gofti man mitunam beram' (You told me I can go). By choosing certain combinations of pronouns, verb endings, and particular expressions in addition to the basic phrase, the sentence can convey meaning with different levels of respect. In the following examples, the degree of respect increases gradually.

1. gofti man mitunam beram.
2. to gofti man mitunam beram.
3. šomâ gofti man mitunam beram.
4. šomâ goftid man mitunam beram.
5. šomâ farmudid man mitunam moraxasšam.

1)
gofti man mitunam beram.
goft=i   man   mituna=am   ber=am
said-PST-2SG I-1SG   can-AUX-1SG   go- SBJV-1SG
You told me that I can go'

2)
to gofti man mitunam beram.
to   goft=i   man   mitun=am.   ber=am
you-FOC-A-2SG   said-PST-2SG   I-1SG   can-AUX-1SG   go-SBJV-1SG
'You told me that I can go'

3)
šomâ gofti man mitunam beram.
šomâ   goft=i   man   mitun=am.   ber=am

| you-FOC-A-2PL | said-PST-3PL | I-1SG | can-AUX-1SG | go-SBJV-1SG |
'You told me that I can go'

4)
šomâ goftid man mittunam beram.

| šomâ | goft=id | man | mitun=am | ber=am |
| you-FOC-A-2PL | said-PST-3PL | I-1SG | can-AUX-1SG | go-SBJV-1SG |

'You told me that I can go'

5)
šomâ farmudid man mitunam moraxasšam.

| šomâ | farmud=id | man | mitun=am | moraxasšam |
| you-FOC-A-2PL. | said-PST-3PL. | I-1SG | can-AUX-1SG | go-FOC-SBJV-1SG |

'You told me that I can go'

By examining the examples provided above, it is evident that there is a noticeable change in sentence structure and the utilization of lexical elements. It becomes apparent that sentences progressively lengthen from the first to the fifth example, suggesting a direct relationship between respectful expression and sentence length. Additionally, there are gradually significant changes from example number 1 to 5 in grammatical construction, particularly in the selection of pronouns, verbs, and tense suffixes for expressing a higher degree of respect. These changes provide valuable insights into the direct correlation between the expression of respect and the syntactic structures of sentences, as well as the underlying conceptualization in Persian. Therefore, the deliberate selection of pronouns, verbs, and present suffixes directly influences the discourse. While this phenomenon of changes in sentence construction to express politeness and respect is commonly observed in many languages, in the Persian language, distinct and culturally embedded structures are specifically designed for this purpose. Additionally, these examples can be considered part of the cultural schema of compliments, a topic that will be discussed in the next section. Although the phenomenon of selecting and combining linguistic elements and altering sentence construction to express politeness and respect is commonly observed in many languages, in Persian, there are distinct and culturally embedded structures specifically designed for this purpose. Moreover, these examples could be considered part of the cultural schema of Ta'arof, a subject that will be discussed in the following section.

B) The Cultural Schema of Iranian Compliment (Ta'arof)

The phenomenon of Ta'arof (Iranian ritual system of politeness) is a source of difficulty for both Iranians and non-Iranians to interpret or understand (Yaqubi, 2021). Eslami (2005, 456) charechrise Ta'arof, as "one of the most complicated aspects of Persian culture and language, is a central concept in Iranian interaction" and argues that "depending on the circumstance, it can mean any number of things: to offer, to compliment, to exchange pleasantries, and/or to invite". Koutlaki (2002, 1741) descibes it as a verbal behavours which discussion of Persian politeness will include much more than a passing reference to Ta'arof. According to dictionary definitions, the term "Ta'ârof" or "Târof" encompasses a range of concepts, including compliments, ceremonies, courtesy, and flattery (Aryanpour & Aryanpour, 1984) and warm welcoming, praising, and presenting (Dehkhoda Persian Dictionary, 1996). According to Koutlaki (2002, 1740), etymologically, tæ'arof is an Arabic word meaning ''mutual recognition'', thus indicating that tæ'arof functions as a tool for negotiating interactants' relationships. The cultural phenomenon of Ta'arof is a distinctive concept in Persian culture, which is rooted in social norms and behaviours guided by the principles of politeness and respect. This cultural skill involves the act of denying one's desire to please others and is commonly observed in various social settings such as gift-giving, hospitality, and everyday social interactions. Despite the potential for ambiguity or insincerity, Ta'arof plays a vital role in Persian culture by promoting positive social relationships and reinforcing the values of mutual respect and deference. Wilber (1967) states that Ta'arof includes not only the expression of exaggerated politeness and hospitality but also the use of deferential forms of address and other linguistic signs of deference and respect. The use of honorifics and forms of submission are part of the broader system of etiquette and politeness encompassed by the concept of Ta'arof. They reflect the cultural values of respect, humility, and deference that are highly valued in Persian culture. Sharifian (2007) proposed a schema for understanding the concept of Ta'arof in Persian culture, which emphasizes the importance of avoiding imposing on others and refraining from directness when making requests or seeking favours. The primary purpose of Ta'arof in Iranian society is to acknowledge and negotiate various social factors such as relationships, status, and personal character. This schema is expressed and can be seen in the communication behaviour of many Iranians, including repeated attempts to refuse offers and invitations, hesitation in asking for services and favours, hesitation in refusing requests, etc.

Based on the cultural schema of Ta'arof, the person presenting an offer is expected to persist in his/her offer to evaluate whether the initial refusal was sincere or merely an expression of politeness. The practice of Ta'arof can be divided into the actions of offering/inviting and accepting/refusing, with "insisting" being the principal action. However, it is nothing more than a verbal compliment that should not be taken literally. Typically, such insistence is reciprocated with expressions of appreciation. Below is an example of a recorded conversation that can be analysed to demonstrate the practice of Ta'arof's cultural schema. This type of Ta'arof usually occurs at the end of a typical conversation in a Persian-speaking community.

A: befarmâid šâm manzel-e mâ.	B: xeyli mamnun, lotf darin!
[please come to our place for dinner]	*[thank you very much, very kind of you!]*
A: Ta'arof nemikonam! hatman biyâyid!	B: bozorgavârin! xejli motešakkeram.
[Not a compliment! Please come!]	*[you are noble! I appreciate it!]*
A: jeddi migam, tašrif biyârid, dar xedmatim.	B: na! xeyli mamnunam, hâlâ ye ruz dige hatman mozâhem mišam.
[I am serious, come please, I am at your service!]	*[No, thank you! Surely I will come another day.]*
A: be har hâl, eftexâr beidn, xošhal mišiam!	B: xâheš mikonam, šomâ hamiše lotf dârin.
[Anyway, it would be an honour if you accept!]	*[You welcome! You are always kind!]*

An analysis of the conversation could focus on the linguistic strategies used by speaker A as the communicator. Throughout the conversation and as shown in the following analysis, speaker A uses specific pronouns, verbs, and expressions to emphasize his/her urging, which could be taken as evidence of cultural politeness in the Persian context. This type of analysis could provide valuable insights into the influence of language and culture on interpersonal communication.

1)
befarmâ=id
come-IMP-2PL

2)
hatman   biyâ=id
should-AUX   come

IMP-2PL 'you should come'
3)
tašrif   biyâr=id
Presence/FOC   bring-IMP-2PL
'bring your presence'
4)
eftexâr   bedi=n
Honor-FOC give-IMP-2PL
'The honour/pleasure is mine'

Speaker A seems to be aware that his/her offer could be taken as a Ta'arof in which the polite refusal is disguised as an offer or invitation. The more persistent speaker A is in such a situation, the less likely his invitation will be accepted. Conversely, as shown in the following analysis, speaker B seems to know how to politely decline an offer or invitation without using indirect linguistic forms in his response while striving to maintain a high level of politeness.

1)
xeyli mamnun, lotf darin! (Refusing)
'Thank you very much! You are so kind!'

2)
bozorgavârin! xeyli motšakkeram! (Refusing)
'You are welcome! I do appreciate it!'

3)
mamnunam, ye ruz hatman mozâhem mišim. (Refusing)
'Thank you! I will definitely come by one day, and we will have dinner together'

4)
tašakor, šomâ hamiše lotf dârin! (Refusing)
'Thank you, you are always very kind and generous'

As shown in the examples, the cultural schema of Ta'arof, which is mainly based on a cycle of prompts and refusals, is formed through the use of grammatical elements of language and pattern expressions. In other words, the formation of this cultural schema takes place in the form of language. According to Eslami (2005), the act of offering invitations is an integral part of the practice of Ta'arof, which serves as a ritualized form of politeness in Persian culture. Above all, the scheme

enables individuals to fulfil social expectations and avoid damaging their reputations. Nevertheless, individuals unfamiliar with this cultural schema may have difficulty understanding such invitations, which can lead to misunderstandings. It is important to note that not all invitations extended by Persian speakers (mainly Iranians) are merely apparent. Even an invitation that begins as a Ta'arof can become a genuine invitation depending on the course of communication. Diagram 1 shows the components of Ta'arof actions as a uniquely Persian cultural schema.
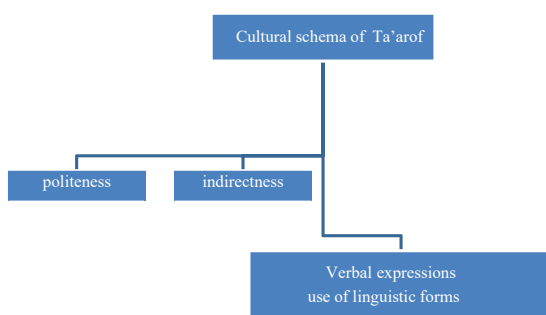
Diagram 1. Representing Ta'arof as a cultural schema

CONCLUSION

The study of the relationship between language, culture, and cognition is a complex and interdisciplinary effort that has attracted the attention of cognitive and anthropological linguists and psychologists. This paper provides a thorough overview of the theoretical perspectives on this relationship, focussing on the common aspects of cultural and cognitive linguistics. It also highlights the culturally constructed nature of conceptualizations. The research has shown that language, culture and cognition are inextricably linked and that certain language features can serve as indicators of conceptualizations and cognitive schemas. In particular, the study examined how cultural schemas can alter the linguistic structures of Persian and provided examples to support the analysis in the context of cultural conceptualization. In essence, the research emphasises the need to consider the interaction between language, culture and cognition in both theoretical and practical situations. It confirms the notion that culture significantly shapes language. In this way, researchers and practitioners can gain a deeper understanding of how language influences and shapes individual and collective conceptualiza-

tions of the world. This can have profound implications for areas such as education, language acquisition, intercultural communication and intercultural relations.

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