

# Telephone Conversation Closing Structure across English and Persian

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## Abstract

Due to the lack of paralinguistic information, politeness gains a considerable significance in telephone conversations (TCs). The use of politeness strategies can help interlocutors promote and/or maintain social harmony in telephone interactions. Using the Rapport Management Model proposed by Spencer-Oatey (2008), this study intended to primarily investigate the fundamental closing structures of TCs in Persian and English. Furthermore, it examined the effect of two contextual variables and time availability on the closing patterns and length of TCs. To this aim, 30 English natives, 30 Persian natives, and 30 Persian EFL learners were selected. A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) of 12 scenarios was developed considering contextual variables and time limitation. The obtained results demonstrated that the CPT (closing implicative environment + preclosing + terminal components) closing pattern may not be applicable in every context. Furthermore, telephone conversers change the pattern and length of TC closing part to maintain their rapport based on the aforementioned variables. The findings of the present study can guide the researcher to follow more complete and perfect politeness models.

**Keywords:** Paralinguistic, Politeness, Rapport Management Model, Discourse Completion Test

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## **1. Introduction**

As communicative competence has achieved dominance in the goals of L2 pedagogy, attention to learners' ability of appropriately using the communicative norms of the target language in target situations both in terms of instruction and assessment has increased. Many researchers have tried to demonstrate the importance and learning difficulty of pragmatic competence in language pedagogy (e.g., Harlow, 1990; Holmes & Brown, 1987; Kasper, 1998; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Scollon & Scollon, 1995; Turner, 1996). Kasper (1997) affirms that "without some form of instruction, many aspects of pragmatic competence do not develop sufficiently" (p. 3).

Along with the attention to pragmatic competence as the second facet of language competence, speech acts as functional subcomponent of pragmatic competence have been also accented. Researchers have since been led to investigate communication in terms of effects that utterances are managed to achieve. They have also shown that there are cross-cultural differences with regards to either production or the realization of various speech acts. Speech act knowledge does not only comprise a language user's sociocultural knowledge (applying speech act strategies properly concerning social factors such as age, gender, social class and status of interlocutors) but also his/her sociolinguistic knowledge (referring to context awareness ability in order to appropriately apply vocabulary, linguistic forms, register and politeness). One of the common causes of communication breakdown is that interlocutors from heterogeneous backgrounds do not apply speech acts contextually appropriately, even though they are familiar with the existing relation between forms and functions.

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Telephone communication is an essential aspect of everyday life in which sociolinguistic knowledge has paramount importance. Due to the lack of paralinguistic information, the telephone interlocutors have to resort to linguistic and pragmatic knowledge to maintain and promote smooth and harmonious relationships. Politeness theories can guide language users to use appropriate closing strategies to combat the rapport threats in the closing part of telephone conversations (Coppock, 2005). Although there are some studies (e.g. Button, 1987; Liddicoat, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) investigating the sequences followed by telephone conversers in the closing part, there seems to be only one study by Khadem and EslamiRasekh (2012) which examined the TC closing part in Persian context. Therefore, we analyzed the closing patterns of telephone calls across two languages of English and Persian through politeness vantage point. Three groups of participants were selected for this study, namely Persian natives, English natives, and Persian EFL learners. Therefore, the importance of this study can be evaluated from three different contexts. This study aimed to provide a new window for Persian speakers, English speakers, and Persian EFL learners, and least but not last for the researchers to look at telephone closing part structures from different angle. This study also paved the way for other researchers by going through a more comprehensive and rarely attended politeness model in which the strong points of previous models are highlighted and the weak points of the models are removed. The politeness model selected for the present study is Spencer-Oatey's (2008) Rapport Manage Model. Spencer-Oatey's (2008) model seems to be an improvement over the preceding politeness models in that it considers almost all variables, namely rapport orientation, contextual variables, influencing politeness strategies. Rapport management views politeness as 1) management of face, 2) management of sociality rights and obligations, 3) management of interactional

goals. Building the knowledge of rapport management is among the ways to help language users to develop their sociolinguistic competence. This can be achieved through introduction and instruction of politeness strategies in various contexts and the way to build them up in real context.

## **2. Background to the Study**

The regularity which governs conversation practices is especially observable in TCs and it is concealed in shared knowledge possessed by interlocutors which enable them to accomplish their communication goals appropriately. TC is examined according to its structure of opening (Schegloff, 1972, 1979; Ventola, 1979) and closing part (Liddicoat, 2007). For instance, Schegloff (1972, 1979) investigated the general conventions of conversation parts across different languages and divided the speech act of opening into four parts: 1) a summon-answer sequence, 2) an identification-recognition sequence, 3) a greeting sequence, and 4) the how are you sequence. He (1994) further breaks down the closing part of TC into three following sections: 1) the pre-closing sequences, 2) the closing sequence and 3) the terminal sequence.

Other researchers such as Clark and French (1981) embarked on finding the cultural differences across various TCs. Taleghani-Nikazm (2002) contrasted ritual routines in TC openings in Persian and German. The sequences that she discovered in opening part of Persian TCs were the same as those in the speech act of TC opening in English. She particularly focused on the fourth sequence (i.e., how are you) in both cultures and discovered that Iranians ask about other family members after inquiring about one another's well-being.

Liddicoat (2007), in agreement with Schegloff's findings (1973), identified the same four sequences in the speech act of TC opening. Concerning the

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closing, Liddicoat (2007) asserted the collaborative nature of this part of TC and broke it into three steps: 1) a closing implicative environment, 2) pre-closing tokens such as *Ok* and *alright* and 3) terminal component such as *goodbye*. Liddicoat (2007) believed that:

“The term closing implicative environment refers to sets of actions after which closing may be a relevant next activity and after which closure is a common activity, but it does not imply that closure will necessarily happen after such an action” (Liddicoat 2007, p. 259).

Based on Liddicoat’s (2007) findings, in closing implicative environment people use some strategies in order to make preparations for closing their calls. These strategies consist of announcing closure by referring to some external circumstances, (e.g., *I have to prepare myself for tomorrow’s exam*), arrangements (e.g., *See you at the party*), formulating summaries, appreciations for the call, sequence-closing sequences (e.g., *yeah, ok*), and back references; i.e., arrangements or reasons for the call. Telephone conversers resort to the strategy of back reference to indicate that the mentionables have been talked about and there is no new material to mention.

Khadem and EslamiRasekh (2012) contrasted the structure and strategies of TCs’ closing implicative environment across Persian and English based on Liddicoat’s (2007) categorization. They concluded that Iranian native speakers like English native speakers apply some conventions to end their conversations. In addition, Persian speakers use the three steps of closing implicative environment, pre closing and terminal component in the closing part of their TCs.

A study was done by Harren and Raitaniemi (2008) considering the TC closing part in German context. They investigated the closing part of German phone calls among friends and relatives. In contrast to the previous literature,

Harren and Raitaniemi (2008) found that not only pre-closing and terminal components are necessary steps in closing a TC, but also TC involves at least two negotiation steps: in the first sequence, the conversers negotiate whether they are ready to leave the call, and to do so they resort to lexical items such as “*gut*” and constructions such as “*danna sehen wir uns morgen*” (*then we will see each other tomorrow*). In the second sequence, the telephone conversers negotiate after terminal greeting and use utterances such as “*okay- bisdann-tschüss*” (okay- till then- bye).

Considering the prominence of TC in developing and maintaining social relationships, the previous studies only paved the way for further research. For instance, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that participants consider two parameters of power and distance when selecting among different options for conveying a given speech act. In addition, several empirical studies have presented ample evidence for an association between language use and the variables of power and distance. For example, many linguists have found the significance of power and distance in their studies of the speech acts wording, such as requests (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al. 1985; Lim & Bowers, 1991), apologies (e.g., Holmes, 1990; Olshtain, 1989), directives (e.g., Holtgraves et al., 1989) and disagreement (e.g., Beebe & Takahashi, 1989a). In pragmatic and sociolinguistic research, power is usually operationalized in terms of unequal role relations, such as employer-employee, doctor-patient. The variable of distance can be labeled as solidarity, closeness, familiarity and relational intimacy. The present study intends to reinvestigate those TC closing patterns in more controlled situations by delimiting the variables, which affect the sequences used to terminate the phone calls, including rapport orientation and contextual variables. In addition, up to the knowledge of the researchers, no other study has compared the TC closing patterns used by three groups of

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Persian natives, English natives, and Persian EFL learners. Analyzing the TC closing patterns in the three groups of participants, this study tries to address the following questions:

1. What sequences are followed by English native speakers to end their TCs?
2. What sequences are followed by Persian native speakers to end their TCs?
3. What sequences are followed by Persian EFL learners to end their TCs?
4. Are there any significant differences among the three groups to end their TCs?

## **3. Method**

### **3.1. Participants**

The data to be analyzed for this study came from a total of 90 participants who had been categorized into three groups. These participants were divided as Persian native speakers, Iranian EFL learners, and English native speakers. They were 48 females and 42 males with the age range of 19 to 40. The participants in the first group were 30 adult English native speakers. Some of whom were undergraduate students while other graduate students from the Edinburg University. The second group involved 30 Persian native speakers, including 13 females and 17 males who were students of Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical sciences. The participants selected randomly. The recruited participants averaged about 19-25 years of age.

An Oxford Quick Placement Test was administered to a group of fifty Iranian EFL learners who had never lived abroad. They had been studying English for 4 years at a language institute in Yazd. 30 upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners were selected from among the candidates scoring between 40 to 45.

### **3.2. Instrumentation**

A 12-item DCT was developed for the present study. Even though DCTs are not able to represent the natural speech, they are useful for assessing social and psychological factors affecting speech and performance (Beeb & Cummings, 1996). In addition, they help the researcher devote less time and budget for evaluating the performance of the participants. Moreover, they can provide the researcher with the opportunity of having a larger sample under investigation. The last but not least advantage of DCTs is their potency in controlling the number and type of the variables a researcher tries to measure.

For the current study two versions of a DCT (Persian in Appendix I, English in Appendix II) were developed. For verifying the authenticity of both DCTs, 2 Persian and 2 English native speakers were asked to revise all the 12 TC scenarios. The ideas which could help to enhance the naturalness of the scenarios were implemented. Moreover, the revised tasks were piloted in order to find out the potential problems which could raise detrimental shortcomings. Three test takers were selected from each group in order to take the test as a pilot.

The demographic information involving age, gender (male/female) and nationality were sought at the outset of DCTs. Twelve TC scenarios were provided based on 3 criteria of the social distance, status, and availability of time. The situations were developed so that the participants were approaching the closing part of their TC and they wanted or needed to terminate their calls based on the availability of time.

In each scenario, the status of the participants (higher, equal, and lower) and the social distance (far and close) in relation to the other conversers were clarified. In addition, the participants were notified about the availability of the time. Half of the scenarios were designed based on the shortage of time in the

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TCs. Shortage of time means the lack of enough time which results in inability in achieving the communication goals. The other half of the scenarios was developed in a way that the interlocutors could obtain their goals in the conversation, and now they would have sufficient time for ending the call.

At the beginning of the DCT, the participants were asked to write the exact words they would use in each situation. As a result, the filling space allocated to every scenario was sufficient. Table 1 represents the details about the variables which were considered for each scenario.

**Table 1. Classification of DCT Items Based on Social Distance, Relative Power, and Time Availability/Limitation**

Scenario	Contextual Variables						
	Status			Distance		Time limitation	
	High	Equal	Low	Far	Close	Yes	No
1	✓			✓			✓
2	✓				✓	✓	
3	✓			✓			✓
4	✓				✓	✓	
5		✓		✓		✓	
6		✓			✓		✓
7		✓			✓	✓	
8		✓		✓			✓
9			✓	✓		✓	
10			✓		✓		✓
11			✓		✓	✓	
12			✓	✓			✓

### **3.3. Procedures**

The Persian DCT was distributed to 50 native Persian speakers from different genders, ages, and educational backgrounds. Out of the gathered DCTs, 30 DCTs were sorted out which were completely answered and the participants had got the concept of each scenario thoroughly. The unanswered DCTs were due to the moral treatment of some participants, i.e., they left some scenarios unanswered because they could not imagine the specific situations correctly. For example, some of the participants did not answer scenario 9 by saying “I never talk on the phone while driving” while the researchers meant to depict the emergency situation in which one of the telephone conversers had time limitation. This phenomenon also occurred among English native speakers. So, we tried to overcome this problem by maximizing the number of participants and adding a notice at the top of the paper that “we are interested in how you terminate your phone calls in each situation”. Moreover, the term ‘terminate’ was underlined.

In order to have English native speakers fill out the DCTs, the researchers sent the DCT through email to several university professors abroad. They kindly distributed the DCTs among English native university students with different genders and educational backgrounds. Out of 60 received DCTs, 30 DCTs were selected which were in line with the variables intended in this study.

In addition, sixty upper intermediate Persian learners of English at a language institute filled out the English version of DCT. Out of the available filled DCTs, thirty which were in line with the variables intended in this study were selected.

## **4. Data Analysis**

In the present study, the corpus of TC closing patterns was coded based on the model offered by Liddicoat (2007). According to Liddicoat, telephone conversers go through three sequences when there is nothing else to talk about and ending the call would be the next relevant step. These three sequences include: a) preparing a closing implicative environment (C) by resorting to various strategies such as appreciation, arrangement, summary of the call, reasons for the call, and excuse, b) pre closing tokens (P), and c) terminal components (T).

Following the analysis of the DCTs, it was noticed that there are TC closing patterns not to be placed in the model suggested by Liddicoat (2007). In some scenarios, the number of Cs and Ps were multiplied or even there were situations in which C, P or both of them were omitted. Therefore, to account for the variability of the data, the researcher proposed eleven main categories. The following paragraphs will deal with these patterns. Examples show their applications across the examined DCTs (NE: native English speakers, NP: native Persian speakers, EFL: Persian learners of English).

### **1. PT (pre closing + terminal component)**

NE: *Well. Bye*

EFL: *A kiss for you. Bye*

NP: *Kaari nadaari khodaahaafez*

### **2. CPT (closing implicative environment + pre closing + terminal component)**

NE: None of the participants used this structure.

EFL: *Come see you in the evening. Take good care of yourself. Bye.*

NP: *Fardaa ye sar behetoon mizanam. sallam beresoonid. khodaahaafez*

**3. PCPT (pre closing + closing implicative environment + pre closing + terminal component)**

NE: None of the participants used this structure.

EFL: None of the participants used this structure.

NP: *Khob. khoshhaal shodam sedaatoon raa shenidam. kaari nadaarid dige. khodaahaafez.*

**4. PCT (pre closing + closing implicative environment + terminal component)**

NE: *Ok. I think we have done enough planning for now. Bye*

EFL: Well sir. Thanks ever much for answering my questions. Bye.

NP: *Khob fardaa baahaat tamaas migiram. khodaahaafez*

**5. PCC (C) T (pre closing + 3closing implicative environment + terminal component)**

NE: *Alright. I am sorry kiddo, but I will be right back. I gotta go for a minute. Hold your thought. Bye*

EFL: *Ok honey. I have to go. It was really great talking to you. We will talk more later. Bye*

NP: *Khob. dastet dard nakone yadi az maa kardi.alaan kaar daaram dige baayad beram. Ishaalaa behet zang mizanam. khodaahaafez.*

**6. CT (closing implicative environment + terminal component)**

NE: *Oh. Just spotted a cop on the street. Bye*

EFL: *Somebody is knocking at the door. Bye*

NP: *Ostaa polis! khodaahaafez.*

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**7. CCT (2closing implicative environment + terminal component)**

NE: *Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions professor. I really appreciate it. See you in the class.*

EFL: *I have to call my manager. I call you back in a few minute. Bye*

NP: *Baraam kaari pish oomada. dar avalin forsath baahaat tamaas migiram. khodaahaafez.*

**8. MCT (Multiple closing implicative environment + terminal component)**

NE: *It was really nice to talk to you, hope to catch up again but have to go now. See ya!*

EFL: *Sorry honey. I really enjoy talking to you but I gotta go now. I hope you understand it. I will call you as soon as I get a chance. Bye*

NP: *Nasim joon bebakhshid maamaanam dare sedaam mikone.baayad beram.fardaa too madrese mibinamet dar moredesh bishtar sohbat mikonim.fealan khodahafez.*

**9. MCPT (Multiple closing implicative environment + pre closing + terminal component)**

NE: *Do you think you can tell me your story a little later? I really want to hear it, but I have to go do something. Okay, I love you and I will see you soon.*

EFL: *I am sorry but it seems someone is at the door. Gotta go. I will call you as soon as possible. Take care. Bye.*

NP: *Azizam emrooz miam khoonatoon hamasho baraam taerif kon.alaan zoodi baayad beram kar daaram. bashe golam. khodaahaafez.*

**10. CPCCT (closing implicative environment + pre closing + 2closing implicative environment + terminal component)**

NE: *I cannot talk real long. Alright, I have to go. Good talk to you. Later man.*

EFL: None of the participants used this structure.

NP: None of the participants used this structure.

**11. CTT (closing implicative environment +2 terminal component)**

NE: None of the participants used this structure.

EFL: *I don't keep you then. See you later. Bye.*

NP: None of the participants used this structure.

.... You should explain how you analyzed the answers to the scenarios in order to elicit patterns for TCs. Also, you should include a sample of your data for each of the patterns you have extracted. How many coders?

**5. Results**

The analysis of DCTs revealed different patterns for closing TCs. C, closing implicative environment, was implemented through different strategies including: ap (appreciation), ar (arrangement), e (excuse), r (reason for the call), s (summary). Table 2 demonstrates different manifestations of TC closing patterns.

**Table 2. Patterns of Telephone Conversation Closing Part**

(P)T	CPT	PCPT	PCT	PCC@T	CT	CCT	MCT	MCPT	CPCCT	CTT
T	e P T	P e ar PT	Pap T	Pap e T	eT	e ar t	ar e ar T	ap ar PT	e p e ap T	ap TT
PT	ar PT	PapPT	PeT	Pap ar T	arT	2ap T	ap ar e T	e ar PT		ar TT
	ap PT		ParT	P e ar T	apT	2ar T	ar ap e ar T	ap e PT		e TT
	r PT		PsT	P e a par T		e ap T	2ap ar T	e ap TPT		
				P e 2apT		s ar T	e ap ar T			
						ap ar T	ap e ar T			

Note: P (pre-closing), T (terminate component), C (closing implicative environment). M (multiple)

As it is clear in Table 2, we divided the closing pattern into 11 main sequences. Then each sequence was subdivided to different categories. Since

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the goal of this study was to reinvestigate the suggested model by Liddicoat (2007), merely the main patterns were examined.

The results of the pattern analysis for the three groups are depicted in the following section.

**Table 3. Frequency of Telephone Closing Patterns Used by the Three Groups of Participants**

Patterns	(P)T	CPT	PCPT	PCT	PCCT	CT	CCT	MCT	MCPT	CPCCT	CTT
Lang.*											
Persian	29	26	4	66	6	66	112	24	19	0	0
English	4	0	0	17	98	59	109	50	14	2	0
EFL	36	9	0	76	5	95	104	17	2	0	14

\*Note: Lang. stands for language.

As you can see, in addition to CPT sequence suggested by previous studies (Button, 1987; Khadem, & EslamiRasekh, 2012; Liddicoat, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), other orders are followed by the native Persian speakers to terminate their TCs. The frequency of CPT is 26, while CCT allocates the highest frequency (112) to itself. The next frequent sequences in Persian context are related to CT and PCT with the same frequency (66). PT (29) stands in the third place. CPCCT and CTT patterns are not used by this group.

Considering the English natives, the prominence of CCT sequence (109) is also evident. Surprisingly, CPT was not used by English native speakers (0). In contrast to Persian native speakers, PCCT (98) and CT (59) orders have the second and third ranks, respectively. In addition to CPT sequence, the native English speakers have not applied PCPT and CTT patterns to end their phone calls.

Regarding the Persian EFL learners, the CTT pattern (104), similar to native Persian speakers has the highest frequency among other patterns. The next rank belongs to CT pattern (95). Moreover, PCT sequence has the third rank with frequency of (76). Finally, the least frequent patterns are PCPT and CPCCT which have not been used by Persian EFLs.

**The extent of difference in the use of TC closing patterns across the three groups of Participants**

Concerning the extent of difference in the use of TC closing patterns, a series of Chi-square non-parametric statistical tests were run to assess the significance of such difference among three groups. Following the frequencies mentioned in the previous chapter and this one, the tendency differences for each category of TC closing patterns are investigated in this part.

**Table 4. *The Chi-square Results of TC Closing Patterns among the Three Groups***

TC Closing Patterns	Df	Chi-Square	Sig.
PT	4	138.0	.000
CPT	4	35.0	.000
PCT	4	3.180	.000
PCCT	4	2.180	.000
CT	4	4.400	.000
CCT	1	2.210	.000
MCT	4	1.820	.000
MCPT	4	70.000	.000

As Table 4 clearly reveals, there are significant differences among English, Persian, and EFL contexts in terms of the frequency of the employed TC closing pattern. One of the sequences which was only followed by English natives was CPCCT, although its frequency was very low. In the same vein, the PCPT was used merely by Persian participants with the frequency of 4. EFL

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participants employed CTT sequence which none of the other groups used in the TC closing part.

## **6. Discussion**

Responding to the first research question, the researchers expected that the CPT sequence proposed by Liddicoat (2007) gains the highest frequency but the results stated in Table 3 show that CCT(F=109) sequence has been used more frequently by English native speakers. The PCCT (F=98) and CT (F=59) patterns have obtained the second and third ranks, respectively. In contrast to Liddicoat's (2007) model and other studies (e.g., Schegloff, 1973), CPT order has been used by none of the English speakers. These findings may be due to the more controlled and miscellaneous situations provided by a DCT which includes 12 various scenarios.

The CPT sequence is not applicable in all situations because there is a possibility that P can be omitted in scenarios where is time limitation (scenarios 2, 4, 7, 9, & 11). However, in the seventh scenario the importance of close distance prevails over the impact of time limitation. Therefore, the English participants mostly lengthened the TC closing part and followed the MCT pattern in this scenario, in contrast to the fifth scenario in which time limitation dominates far distance and the English participants largely used CT sequence.

The number of C is doubled in most of the situations (scenarios 1, 8, 12, 9, 6, 10, 5, 9, & 6) regardless of status and time expansion. In two cases, namely scenarios 7 and 11, the English participants applied more than two Cs to terminate their calls. In these two scenarios, the bilateral effects of time limitation and close distance made the participants resort to multiple Cs to end their calls politely.

Considering the second research question, similar to our first group, the CPT sequence did not gain prominence among Persian native speakers though it was applied by a low frequency ( $F=26$ ). In this group, CCT (112) pattern was the most frequently used one. CT and PCT orders with the same frequency of 66 had the second rank. The findings of the present study are not in line with the TC closing sequence proposed by Khadem and EslamiRasekh (2012).

According to Khadem and EslamiRasekh (2012), the CPT sequence suggested by Liddicoat (2007) is the only pattern applied to end the phone calls by Persian native speakers. Nevertheless, this study has found other various sequences which are more frequent such as CCT, CT, and PCT.

One of the factors that can affect the sequence followed by Persian conversers to terminate their TCs is time expand. Similar to native English group, P is omitted and the number of C is maximized in situations where is lack of time. According to Spencer-Oatey's (2008) politeness model, we can assume that the occurrence of this phenomenon can be due to three reasons: to end the call appropriately and politely, to compensate the non-achievement of TC goals, and to avoid the deviation of the other converser's sociality rights and obligations.

In supporting Spencer-Oatey's (2008) suggested model, the telephone conversers follow the usual steps to approach the closing part of their TC. In other words, they have enough time to manage their calls, by using PCT or CPT sequences regardless of the distance and status variables. In only one situation, i.e., scenario 12, P is omitted. It may be due to providing the opportunity for the other converser who has the higher status to end the call, thus respecting him/her.

Answering the third research question, the results of this study show the dominance of CCT sequence with the frequency of 104 in the Persian EFL

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group. The two other more frequent patterns in this group are CT (F=95) and PCT (F=76). Presumably the behavior of EFL learners is similar to Persian speakers' behavior. In other words, in both groups the order of the applied sequences is the same. The findings demonstrate that EFL learners transfer the Persian TC closing conventions into English.

Concerning the extent of differences among the three groups, it was expected to come across CPT sequence by English speakers based on the findings of the previous studies (e.g., Liddicoat, 2007) on TC closing pattern in English context. Although unexpectedly, the researcher found 9 other various sequences ((p)T, PCT, PCCT,CT, CCT, MCT, MCPT, & CPCCT) among almost 360 (12 Scenarios × 30 participants) applied by English native speakers to end their calls. Among all the data collected from English native speakers, none of the participants followed the CPT pattern to close the calls. The most frequent sequences used by this group are CCT (109), PCCT (98), and CT (59), respectively. In six scenarios where there was time limitation, English native speakers shortened the closing part by omitting P. On the one hand, in the third and ninth scenarios where the distance is far and the status is high and low, respectively, they doubled the C. On the other hand, in the seventh and eleventh scenarios in which the distance is close and the status are equal and low, respectively, these participants applied multiple C.

In the second group, i.e., Persian native speakers, the CPT pattern did not get high frequency. Nine different patterns ((P) T, CPT, PCPT, PCT, PCCT, CT, CCT, MCT, & MCPT) were used by such participants to leave their calls. P is omitted in six scenarios where there was time limitation. Persian speakers also doubled the number of C to compensate one of the closing part omissions. In this group the only decisive factor for the order and number of TC closing part steps is time limitation.

Considering the third group, the Persian EFL learners used eight different patterns in the closing part of their TCs, including (PT, CPT, MCT, PCCT, CT, CCT, MCT, & CTT). The sequences that were more frequently used by these participants are CCT (104), CT (95), and PCT (76). However, the CPT pattern was observed 9 times among the collected data of this group. The same as the other two groups, the length of TC closing part is shortened by omitting P when there is time limitation though the frequency of the sequences applied by Persian EFL learners are more similar to their native language than the target language. The only difference that was evident is the less frequent use of CPT order (9) in this group. Regarding the extent of differences among the three groups, Chi-Square results revealed significant differences in terms of frequency of TC closing pattern. Moreover, some of the sequences were used just by one of the groups (CPCCT, PCPT, and CTT). As a result, we can consider the frequency of these three patterns as significant since we were not able to run Chi-Square test to assess their significance.

## **7. Conclusion**

Ending a phone call can cause communication breakdown and make the participants seem impolite. Based on Spencer-Oatey's (2008) model, to terminate a TC politely, the converser should end the call in an appropriate way, achieve the communication goal, and to observe the rights and obligations of other interactors. However, according to Spencer-Oatey (2008), there are various variables that affect the strategies used by participants to manage their rapport but among all those variables suggested by her, in this study merely two variables were investigated: distance and social status. Considering TC closing part, time variable was proposed by the researchers.

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The TC closing part of English and Persian contexts were selected for the reason of the lack of sufficient and comprehensive literature on this area. To investigate the issue of pragmatic transfer or development, Persian EFL context was also considered in this study. Three groups were contrasted from several aspects. One of these aspects is the kind of TC closing pattern used by the participants. On the whole, English natives used eight different TC closing patterns from the total of eleven patterns. None of them employed CPT, PCPT, and CTT. One of the least frequent patterns used by this group is CPCCT. Persian natives used nine TC closing patterns. None of them used CPCCT and CTT. The frequency of PCPT is very low ( $F=4$ ) in this group. Up to now from this angle, we can see that these two groups acted similarly to each other. Similar to English natives, EFL participants did not use PCPT. Moreover, like Persian natives, they did not use CPCCT at all. A clear difference between EFL participants and the other two groups is the use of CTT sequence. As mentioned in discussion part, using CTT pattern in TC closing part is a kind of transfer.

The second angle from which we compared and contrasted these groups is the three most frequent TC closing patterns. CCT, PCCT, and CT patterns attained the first, second, and third ranks among English participants. Persian natives used CCT pattern mostly the same as the first group. CT and PCT were in the second and third ranks in the second group. The order of the most frequently used TC closing patterns is the same as their first language for EFL learners.

The length of TC closing pattern is the third issue investigated in this study. Khadem and Eslami Rasekh (2012) believed that TC closing part of Persian natives are generally lengthier than English speakers. MCT and MCPT are the lengthiest sequences found among all the responses in the DCTs.

Considering these sequences, English participants employed them more frequently than Persian natives. The obtained result is in contrast with Khadem and Eslami Rasekh's (2012) findings. EFL participants got the third rank in terms of using lengthy sequences.

The extent of the differences regarding frequency of TC closing pattern among three groups was the last issue which was under question in this study. Based on the Chi-Square results, we found significant differences among three contexts of English, Persian, and EFL.

Considering the importance of pragmatic competence in developing and maintaining rapport management and lack of this knowledge among EFL learners, there is an essential need for pedagogical system to focus more on improving the sociolinguistic as well as sociocultural knowledge. This study may pave the way and act as a new guideline for other researchers to primarily consider the more comprehensive politeness models and secondly use various and more controlled ways of data collection in the field of conversation analysis. Furthermore, studies can investigate the effects of other variables suggested by Spencer-Oatey's (2008) politeness model on rapport management.

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*Telephone Conversation Closing Structure...*

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: English DCT

Surname:                      Gender:                      Age:                      Nationality:

Dear Participants,

Thank you all for your cooperation. This questionnaire is intended to collect data for my M.A thesis and comprises 12 scenarios. I am interested in how you will terminate your call in the following situations:

1. You are talking to one of your employees. She / he is reporting what she/ he has done in last week. Now her/ his reporting is done and you want to end the call:
2. You are talking to your employee who is your friend, too. He/ She is asking for his/her delayed wage. You prefer not to answer him/her. How do you attempt to terminate your call?
3. You are talking to one of your students. She/he is complaining about one of her/his classmates. After 10 minutes talking, you want to end the conversation:
4. You are on the phone with your 5 year old niece/nephew. She/he is telling a nice story. But you need to end your call to phone your manager:
5. You and your fiancé/fiancée are talking on the phone. You need to end your talk. How do you proceed?
6. You are talking to one of your cousins; she/he is the same age as you are. You are making plans for a birthday party. But after a long time you want to end your call:
7. One of your close friend calls you. She/he starts talking about her/his lover energetically. Although you are interested in her/his talk, you need to end your call:
8. You are on the phone with one of your new friend. This is the first time you are talking together. After 5 minutes talking; you have nothing more to say. How do you end your call?
9. You are driving and talking to one of your professors. You see a police officer on the street. You need to end your call:
10. You are talking to your mother/father on the phone. This is about 45 minutes that you are talking. You want to end your call:
11. Your grandfather/grandmother is sick. You call him to seek how he is feeling today. After 10 minutes you feel that he cannot talk anymore. How do you end your call:
12. You call one your professors to ask some questions. Now you have asked all your questions. How do you end your call?

## Appendix 2: Persian DCT

- نام خانوادگی: جنسیت: سن:
- شرکت کنندگان گرمی
- از اینکه ما را در انجام ایت تحقیق یاری می فرمایید صمیمانه از شما تشکر می کنیم. پرسشنامه حاضر به منظور جمع آوری داده برای پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد طراحی گردیده است و شامل دوازده موقعیت می باشد. شیوه ی پایان دادن به مکالمه تلفنی در موقعیت های زیر مورد بررسی قرار خواهد گرفت.
۱. شما در حال مکالمه با یکی از کارمندان زن/مرد خود هستید. این خانم دارد گزارش کار هفتگی خود را برای شما شرح می دهد. اکنون گزارش او تمام شده است و شما می خواهید مکالمه را خاتمه دهید:
  ۲. در حال مکالمه با یکی از کارمندان مرد/زن خود هستید که دوست شما نیز می باشد. او در مورد حقوق عقب افتاده ی خود از شما سوا لاتی می پرسد ولی شما ترجیح می دهید به سوالات او جواب ندهید. چگونه این مکالمه را به پایان می رسانید؟
  ۳. یکی از دانشجویان دختر/پسر کلاستان با شما تماس می گیرد. در این مکالمه این دانشجو در حال غیبت کردن در مورد یکی از همکلاسی هایش می باشد. بعد از ۱۰ دقیقه در این مورد صحبت کردن شما می خواهید که مکالمه را تمام کنید.
  ۴. شما در حال صحبت کردن با دختر/پسر خواهرتان که ۵ ساله هست می باشید. او با اشتیاق فراوان داستانی را برای شما تعریف می کند. اما شما باید با رئیس خود تماس بگیرید. چگونه این مکالمه را خاتمه می دهید؟
  ۵. شما مشغول صحبت کردن با نامزد خود هستید. اما به دلیلی مجبورید مکالمه را به پایان برسانید. چگونه این کار را انجام می دهید؟
  ۶. در حال مکالمه با دختر/پسر خاله ی خود که هم سن شما نیز هست می باشید. با هم مشغول برنامه ریختن برای یک جشن تولد هستید. بعد از اینکه مدت زیادی با هم صحبت کردید اکنون می خواهید تلفن را قطع کنید:
  ۷. یکی از دوستان صمیمیتان با شما تماس گرفته است. او با اشتیاق تمام در حال تعریف و تمجید از معشوقه ی خود می باشد. هر چند شما علاقه ی زیادی به شنیدن حرف های او دارید ولی باید مکالمه را اتمام برسانید:
  ۸. شما در حال مکالمه با یکی از دوستان جدید خود هستید. دفعه ی اولی هست که شما هم صحبت شده اید. پس از چند دقیقه دیگر حرفی برای گفتن ندارید و شما مایلید مکالمه را به اتمام برسانید:
  ۹. شما مشغول رانندگی و صحبت با یکی از اساتید خود هستید. ناگهان متوجه حضور پلیس در خیابان می شوید. چگونه مکالمه را به پایان می رسانید؟
  ۱۰. با مادر/پدر خود مشغول مکالمه تلفنی هستید. بعد از مدتی نسبتاً طولانی حرفی برای گفتن ندارید و مایلید مکالمه را به اتمام برسانید:
  ۱۱. پدر/مادر بزرگ شما مریض است. شما با او تماس گرفته اید تا از احوال او با خبر شوید. بعد از چند دقیقه متوجه ناتوانی او برای ادامه صحبت می شوید. چگونه مکالمه را به پایان می رسانید؟
  ۱۲. شما با یکی از اساتید خود تماس گرفته اید تا اشکالات درسی خود را بپرسید. سوالات شما به اتمام رسیده است. چگونه مکالمه را به اتمام می رسانید؟