A Comparative Sociopragmatic Study of Ostensible Invitations in English and Farsi

Muhammad Ali Salmani-Nodoushan

University of Zanjan, English Department

e-mail: masnodushan@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present study was carried out with the aim of examining Farsi ostensible invitations in terms of the universals of pragmatics. To this end, 45 field workers observed and reported 566 ostensible and 607 genuine invitations. In addition, 34 undergraduate students were interviewed and afforded 68 ostensible and 68 genuine invitations. 41 pairs of friends were also interviewed and afforded 41 ostensible invitations. The results of the data analysis revealed that Farsi ostensible invitations go by the universal norms that affect language use.

Key words: Ostensible Invitations; Politeness; Speech Act Theory; Pragmatics; Face Threatening Acts.

1. Introduction

Very often, linguists claim that communication is capable of being dismantled into a series of speech acts, or communicative acts, which are used in a systematic way to accomplish certain purposes. As such, a number of research projects have focused on the study of conversations. These investigations have sought to fathom the depths of communicative events to arrive at the unspoken purposes that lie at the heart of each. The present paper reports the results, and discusses the findings, of the research done to investigate the probable similarities and differences in the use of ostensible invitations by native speakers of English and Persian.

2. Background of the Study

Brown and Levinson (1978) are famous for their work on politeness which is usually viewed as a powerful constraint on linguistic expression. According to Brown and Levinson, there is an "economy" of politeness in which there exists a finite quantity of the principle medium of linguistic exchange referred to as "face." They argue that the notion of face is derived from the ideas of Goffman (1971). Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced. There are three important factors that determine the distribution of face among interlocutors: (1) solidarity or the horizontal social distance between participants (D), (2) power relation or the vertical social distance (P), and (3) the weightiness of the imposition negotiated by interlocutors (R).

Social distance is a "symmetric dimension of similarity/difference ... based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of materials or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S(peaker) and H(earer)" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 76). Power, however,

is an "asymmetric social dimension of relative power" which involves the degree to which "H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation" or vice versa (P. 76). The third factor (i.e. the weightiness of imposition) involves the degree to which impositions are considered to interfere with an agent's want of "self-determination or of approval" (P.77). Impositions are ranked on the basis of the "expenditure of services (including provision of time) and of goods" (non-material goods like information, expression of regard and other payments included) (P.77). Brown and Levinson contend that any speech act has the potential of threatening either the face of the speaker or that of the hearer. They believe that conversation is much more concerned with observing politeness expectations designed to ensure the "redress of face than with the exchange of information." They have proposed a direct relationship between social distance and politeness in such a way as to indicate that an increase in social distance will bring about an increase in the degree of politeness and vice versa.

The notion of politeness finds meaning when it is studied in the context of face-threatening acts (or FTAs) which include positive and negative ones. In other words, some FTAs threaten negative face while some others threaten positive face. The former includes directives such as commands, requests, advice, *invitations*, etc. The latter, on the other hand, includes criticisms, insults, disagreements, and corrections.

A definition of the term "face" seems to be necessary here. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), two aspects of people's feelings are involved in face. The first is the desire of the individual not to be imposed on—which they called negative face. The second (i.e. positive face) is the desire of the individual to be liked or approved of. Wolfson (1989) stated that:

In deciding how much to take another person's feelings into account, we have three factors to consider. First, people are usually more polite to others when they are of higher status or perceived of as being powerful; second, people are generally more polite to others who are socially distant; and third, we are usually more polite in relation to the gravity of the threat we are about to make to others' face. (p. 67)

Politeness is then the manifestation, through speech, of respect for another individual's face. An example of positive politeness is our positive evaluation of our interlocutor's accomplishments, appearance, etc. Positive politeness also includes hints and signals that show the listener he or she is considered a friend and member of the speaker's "in-group." This may be accomplished through such strategies as giving gifts, showing interest in the other, extending invitations towards the other, etc. Negative politeness, however, involves a show of deference. The speaker, through negative politeness, usually tries to show the listener that he does not wish to disturb or to interfere with the other's freedom. Apologies, indirect requests, and other forms of remedial work usually appear in this category.

As such, the term "invitation" finds occasion in the contexts of "politeness" and "face." It is, therefore, necessary to define the term here. Wolfson (1989: 119) says:

According to popular wisdom, social commitments are normally arrived at through unambiguous invitations. Our operational definition of such a speech act is that it contains reference to time and/or mention of place or activity, and most important, a request for response. A simple example would be the following:

Do you want	**to have lunch**	**Tomorrow?**
(request for response)	**(activity)**	**(time)**

Invitations are usually viewed as arrangements for a social commitment. There are, however, a number of cases in which an invitation is extended but is not necessarily followed by the conclusion of the arrangement under discussion. In other words, one can never be sure whether such "ostensible" invitations were ever intended to be completed. However, the utterance (i.e. the commitment) itself embraces a number of features that make it recognizable to the interlocutors that the invitation is not a real one. These features include the following:

time is always left indefinite;

a response is not required (i.e. there is no yes/no question); and

a modal auxiliary such as "must" or "should" is almost always used.

Along the same lines, Clark and Isaacs (1990) carried out a research project on Ostensible Invitations. According to them, people sometimes extend invitations they do not intend to be taken seriously. They argued that the aim of such exchanges is not to establish invitations but to accomplish some other, unstated purpose. They have pointed out that ostensible invitations seem patently designed as face-saving devices.

According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), ostensible invitations possess five defining properties. Take the following example:

It was Saturday morning. The students had to go to the university in order to attend their classes. Maryam (a senior student majoring in English) got on the bus. It was crowded. There was no empty seat for her. Shohreh (another student and Maryam's friend) was also in the bus.

Shohre: boland sham benshini?

(Would you like to take my seat?)

Maryam: na, na. raahat baash.

(No, be comfortable.)

In the above example, Shohre seems to have extended a genuine invitation. Analyzed in terms of the following five features, however, her utterance should be considered as an instance of ostensible invitations (native speakers' judgment also supported this claim).

Pretense: The inviter, in ostensible invitations, is only pretending to extend a sincere invitation. Shohre, in the above example, is only pretending to invite Maryam to take the seat;

Mutual Recognition: Inviters intend their pretense to be vividly recognized by them and their addressee. This is called mutual recognition. Shohre intended Maryam and herself to mutually believe they both recognize that she was only pretending to make a sincere invitation. Mutual recognition is highly significant in that it distinguishes ostensible invitations from genuine but insincere ones;

Collusion: Invitees are intended to collude with the inviters on the pretense by responding in kind. In other words, they are intended to respond in a way which is appropriate to the pretense. In the above example, the response is appropriate to the pretense. The invitee may sometimes offer ostensible excuses, or reasons why s/he supposedly could not make it. The reply uttered by Maryam in the above example is an attempt at colluding with Shohre on the pretense of her invitation;

Ambivalence: If inviters were asked, "Do you really mean it?" they could not honestly answer either yes or no. This is a paradoxical point in relation to ostensible invitations. Ambivalence usually differentiates between ostensible speech acts and other forms of non-serious speech uses like joking, irony, etc.;

Off-record Purpose: Ostensible invitations are extended as a way of expressing certain intentions off-record. Any given utterance has a set of

vivid implications which the speaker can be held accountable for. These implications are said to be on record. There are, on the other hand, certain other plausible but not necessary implications for which the speaker cannot be held accountable. These are referred to as off-record (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1978; Thomas, 1983). An ostensible invitation in this case may be a means of testing the waters to see how the invitee might react.

Clark and Isaacs also listed seven defining features for ostensible invitations. These features clearly manifest the strategies employed by the inviters to signal to the invitees that the invitation is an ostensible one. According to Clark and Isaacs, whenever the inviter (A) *ostensibly* invites the invitee (B) to event (E), the inviter may do one or more of the following:

A makes B's presence at E implausible;

A extends invitations only after they have been solicited;

A doesn't motivate invitation beyond social courtesy;

A is vague about arrangements for E;

A doesn't persist or insist on the invitation;

A hedges the invitation to B; And

A delivers the invitation with inappropriate cues (verbal, vocal, and facial).

3. Aims of the Study

The present study concerned itself with a descriptive survey of ostensible invitations in Farsi. It tried to establish a cross-linguistic analysis of ostensible invitations in English and Farsi. This study, as its title suggests, was concerned with determining the sociopragmatic features of ostensible invitations in Farsi. It specifically addressed the following hypotheses:

1. Inviter (A) makes invitee's (B's) presence at event (E) implausible.

2. Inviter (A) invites invitee (B) only after (B) has solicited the invitation.

3. Inviter (A) does not motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy.

4. Inviter (A) does not persist or insist on the invitation.

5. Inviter (A) is vague about the arrangements.

6. Inviter (A) hedges the invitation to invitee (B).

7. Inviter (A) delivers the invitation with inappropriate cues.

A repertoire of terms and concepts have been used which served the purpose of clarifying the study and quantifying the data. It is necessary to provide the definitions of key terms and concepts here.

The term "invitation" has been used in two different senses in this study: Some invitations have been termed "genuine invitations." Yet, some others have been referred to as "ostensible invitations." The former corresponds to the Persian term /dævæt/ and the latter to the Persian term /ta:rof/. For purposes of the present study, my operational definition of the term "genuine invitation" is:

A speaker (A) invites a hearer (B) to receive something or to perform some task the primary aim of which is to benefit the hearer himself/herself.

The strength of this definition is that it distinguishes between invitations and imperatives. It is easily perceivable that the primary aim of imperatives is to benefit the speaker not the hearer.

Ostensible invitations in Farsi have been defined by the same definition as was used by Clark and Isaacs (1990) in their study of English ostensible invitations. This is significant in that it not only makes the data of this study readily quantifiable, but it also relates the study to the "linguistic universals of pragmatics." As such, ostensible invitations in Farsi are defined as:

A speaker (A) invites a hearer (B) to an event (E) the aim of which is not to establish the invitation but to accomplish some other, unstated purpose.

In the analysis of the data of this study, those examples of invitations that would correspond to all the five features of ostensible invitations in English (pretense, ambivalence, mutual recognition, collusion, and off-record purpose) were treated as ostensible. Other instances of invitations which did not go with these five features were treated as genuine invitations (no matter sincere or insincere).

4. Method

Data

This study aimed at exploring the probable universal aspects of ostensible invitations. It, therefore, drew on the materials which are in consonance with this end. In order to find the probable sociopragmatic universals that control human speech behavior in terms of invitations, I made sure to carry out this study in such a way as to ensure maximum consonance with the study of English ostensible invitations by Clark and Isaacs (1990).

One set of 1282 examples was collected by 45 field workers. They were asked to record any instance of sincere and/or insincere invitations or offers they witnessed and also to report the purpose behind the exchange. They were asked to describe enough of the context to make the conversation comprehensible and to quote, as best as they could, exactly what was said, including just before and just after the invitation. The advantage of the examples collected this way is that they reflect a range of people observing spontaneous instances in a variety of naturalistic settings. Of this set of 1282 examples, 109 instances were discarded either because they were not invitations, or because they did not provide enough context or descriptions. The rest of the instances included 566 ostensible and 607 genuine

exchanges.

A second set of 136 examples was gathered from face-to-face interviews with 34 undergraduates. Each student was asked to recall two sincere and two insincere invitations extended towards him/her. One was to involve a friend and the other an acquaintance or a stranger. These students were then asked to describe the context, to reenact the dialogue as best as they could, and then to explain why they believed the act had been sincere or not. These interviews were designed to afford more details of the incidents, especially on the issue of sincerity versus insincerity. This process afforded 68 ostensible and 68 genuine exchanges.

A third set of 41 examples was also gathered in face-to-face interviews with 41 pairs of friends at Yazd University. They were asked to recall a time when one had extended an ostensible invitation to the other. After they had agreed on the incident but before they had discussed it in any detail, they were individually interviewed in isolation. Each of them gave their version of the context and reenacted the dialogue as best as they could. Then they were asked to rate their confidence that they mutually believed the invitation was not intended to be taken seriously, with (1) being low confidence and (7) high. These subjects described what they thought had been expressed through the invitation and rated their confidence that this interpretation had been mutually understood. The accuracy of this method is higher than other methods because each interactant recalls his/her words (*cf.* Goody, 1978; Milroy, 1980). This method afforded 41 examples of ostensible invitations.

Subjects

The subjects of this study belonged to three different groups. The first group consisted of people who have been observed to extend invitations.

Field workers helped me collect this set of data. This group included 1282 pairs of interlocutors belonging in different jobs, age-groups, economical and social backgrounds, etc. In the analysis of the data, however, 109 pairs of these people were excluded because their utterances did not have genuine/ostensible counterparts.

The second group of subjects consisted of people who had been interviewed. This group, in turn, was composed of two sub-groups. 34 randomly chosen undergraduate students at Yazd University were asked to recall two sincere and two insincere invitations from their own experience. One was to involve a friend and the other an acquaintance or a stranger. All these subjects were the invitees in the exchanges they recalled. Along the same lines, 41 pairs of friends at the same university were asked (in face-to-face interviews) to recall a time when one had made an ostensible invitation to the other.

Data analysis

The data suggested that ostensible invitations constitute a coherent class of speech acts. These speech acts are identifiable by a small number of properties. In the analysis of the data, any exchange which went by all the five features or properties of ostensible invitations was treated as ostensible.

In order to quantify the data for purposes of comparing the two classes of invitations, it was necessary to draw on an objective and exact method of quantification and analysis. Therefore, exactly the same method as was used by Clark and Isaacs (1990) was applied to the tabulation of the data in this study. This method had to do with the frequencies of the seven interrelated features that speakers exploit in the process of extending ostensible invitations. These features are ones that appear predominantly in insincere as

opposed to genuine invitations. The percentages and the results reported in this study are all based on 675 ostensible and 675 genuine invitations collected from the observations and the interviews.

In order to interpret the data in terms of such variables as sex, age, and economical status (since it was argued by many scholars in the field that these variables affect human speech behavior), it was necessary that the subjects of this study be equal in number in terms of these variables. In other words, any interpretation based on two non-homogeneous groups of subjects would be faulty. To this end, the following steps were taken:

Some instances were discarded from the data. Those exchanges which did not go by the defining features and properties of their English counterparts were excluded. Some other examples were also discarded because they did not provide enough context;

Carrying out such statistical measures as the chi-square test calls for the same total number of subjects in all the subgroups. Therefore, interview was used as the method of data collection. This was specifically useful in that it would not only make the study similar to the one carried out by Clark and Isaacs, but it would also make up for the dirth of subjects in terms of the variables under study;

Only the inviter (in any exchange) was viewed as the subject of the study.

Those instances of the data which did not comply with the five defining properties of ostensible invitations would probably belong in either the "genuine invitation" class or some other speech act. In order to determine in which class these utterances belonged, they were put to native speakers' judgment. Those instances which were identified as genuine invitations were retained in a category with the same name. The rest of the instances which were labeled (by native speakers) as some other speech act were excluded.

In the analysis of the data for the present study, 1459 exchanges were compared against the five properties of ostensible invitations. Of this set, 109 exchanges were discarded because they did not provide enough context. Of the remaining repertoire of 1350 exchanges, a set of 675 exchanges qualified as ostensible. The rest of the exchanges were categorized into a set of 675 genuine exchanges.

5. Discussion

The basic idea in designing an ostensible invitation is to make its pretense at sincerity obvious enough so that the addressee will recognize that it was intended to be seen as obvious. In order to make the pretense at sincerity vivid, there are a number of strategies that may be used in extending invitations. According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), the strategies that the inviters draw on in order to make their pretense at sincerity clear could be categorized into seven classes. In consonance with the work of Clark and Isaacs on ostensible invitations in English, and for purposes of quantifying the data, all the exchanges gathered as the data for this study were checked against the following seven features. To analyze the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z statistic was conducted. The results reported below are all based on the 675 ostensible and 675 genuine invitations collected through observations and the individual interviews (See Appendix 1).

1) A makes B's presence at event E implausible. To do so, the inviter usually sets out to violate the felicity conditions needed for establishing genuine invitations (*cf.* Hymes, 1967; Labov, 1972; Keenan, 1976; Miller & Swift, 1976; Edelsky, 1981; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; and Savignon, 1983). For example, if A invites B to an event when they mutually believe that B has other unbreakable plans, B would have some reason to believe

that the invitation was ostensible. Take the following example:

It was Monday afternoon. Mr. Qoreishi was going to Yazd. He wanted to get off the bus in Nodoushan. The driver, Mr. Sanobar, however, had to continue his journey for another fifty kilometers to reach Yazd. When he wanted to get off, Mr. Qoreishi said:

Mr. Qoreishi: tashrif biyaarid berim manzel shaam xedmatetun baashim.

(Come over to our house for dinner!)

Mr. Sanobar: xeyli mamnun. zahmat midim.

(Thank you. We will bother you some time.)

In my corpus, the preparatory conditions were defective in 85.18% (575) of the ostensible invitations, but in only 28% (189) of the genuine ones. The result of the comparison of ratios supported the hypothesis that:

There is a meaningful difference between the preparatory conditions that affect ostensible and genuine invitations.

Table 1. Plausibility of invitation.

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
A makes E implausible.	575	189
B can't come	445	35
B isn't interested	15	103
A can't provide	115	51
A makes E plausible.	100	486
Observed Z= 21.15		
Sig. = 0.000		

In 445 of these ostensible exchanges, A knew that B could not come to event E. In another 15, A knew that B would have almost no interest in coming. And in 115 others, A could not practically provide what had been offered.

2) A invites B only after B has solicited the invitation. B can solicit invitations in two ways: through the context or directly. For instance, in Iranian culture, it is always impolite to exclude some members of a group from an event. B, if excluded, can ask a question which will highlight B's exclusion. In the latter case, B explicitly requests an invitation if s/he believes that A cannot or will not anticipate B's desire to be present at event E. Take the following example:

Mr. Naqibi is the principal of a high school. One day, during the break, Mr. Jafari, one of the teachers, enters Mr. Naqibi's office. After greeting other people in the office, he says (using a mock expression in Farsi):

Mr. Jafari: bebaxshid ?aaqaay-e Naqibi ke hich vaqt maa raa davat nemikonid naahaar.

(Excuse us, Mr. Naqibi, for not inviting us to lunch!)

Mr. Naqibi: ?emruz hamegi tashrif biyaarid.

(Come over today, all of you!)

In the sample, 60.59% (409) of the ostensible invitations were extended only after they were solicited. However, only 2.37% (16) of the genuine invitations were solicited. The result of the comparison of ratios supported the hypothesis that:

There is a meaningful difference between ostensible and genuine invitations in terms of solicitation.

Table 2. Invitee's solicitation of invitation

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
B solicits invitation	409	16
By context	120	4
Indirectly	250	12
Directly	39	0
B doesn't solicit invitation	266	659
Observed Z= 23.28		
Sig. = 0.000		

3) A does not motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy. If the invitation is genuine, A usually uses utterances to make the invitation more attractive. With ostensible invitations, however, A does not motivate the invitation, whereby making the pretense vivid. In my corpus, 73.62% (497) of the ostensible invitations were not motivated beyond social courtesy. However, 2.96% (20) of the genuine invitations were not motivated. Here again the comparison of ratios supported the hypothesis that:

There is a meaningful difference between the degree of motivating for ostensible and genuine invitations.

Table 3. Inviter's motivating of the invitation

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
A doesn't motivate invitation	497	20
A motivates invitation	178	655
Observed Z= 27.19		
Sig. = 0.000		

4) A does not persist or insist on the invitation. In genuine invitations, A usually repeats the invitation several times. With ostensible invitations, A usually fails to pursue the invitation upon B's very first refusal to accept. In my corpus, in 618 (91.55%) of ostensible and 3 (0.44%) of genuine invitations A fails to issue a second invitation.

There is a meaningful difference between the degree of persistence for ostensible and genuine invitations.

Table 4. Invitee's hesitating or refusing the invitation

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
B hesitates or refuses	642	388
A doesn't persist	618	3
A does persist	24	385
Observed Z= 16.39		
Sig. = 0.000		

5) A is vague about the arrangements. Unless they are established by the situation and the shared knowledge of the interactants, A must specify the time and place of the E for B. A common feature of ostensible invitations is the vagueness of such logistics. In my sample, in 36 (5.33%) of the ostensible invitations A is vague about the arrangements. However, in 8 (1.18%) of genuine invitations A is vague about the arrangements.

There is a meaningful difference between the way inviters make arrangements in ostensible as opposed to genuine invitations.

Table 5. Inviter's making arrangements for invitation.

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
A makes arrangements	42	621
A leaves arrangements vague	36	8
A makes arrangements specific	6	613
Observed Z= 42.85		
Sig. = 0.000		

6) A hedges the invitation to B. A can show that his/her heart is not really in it by hedging the invitation with such expressions as "?agar saretaan migirad." "?agar maayel hastid," etc. In the sample, in 61.03% (412) of ostensible invitations A hedges the invitation to B. However, in only 5.77% (39) of the genuine invitations does A hedge the invitation to B. Again, the result of the comparison of ratios supported the hypothesis that:

There is a meaningful difference in the amount of hedging between ostensible and genuine invitations.

Table 6. Inviter's hedging the invitation

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
A hedges invitation	412	39
?agar saretaan migirad	350	9
?agar maayel hastid	29	1
?agar qaabel midunid	64	9
?agar zahmati nist	19	20
Observed Z= 27.81		
Sig. = 0.000		

7) A delivers the invitation with inappropriate cues. Usually genuine invitations are very vivid and crystal clear. Ostensible invitations, however, are fraught with inappropriate cues such as hesitations, pauses, and other non-verbal signs that manifest the pretense of the invitation. In my corpus, 4.74% (32) of the ostensible exchanges were delivered with inappropriate cues. However, 0% (0) of the genuine invitations was delivered inappropriately. The result of the comparison of ratios supported the hypothesis that:

There is a meaningful difference between the inviters' use of inappropriate cues in ostensible and genuine invitations.

Table 7. Inviter's use of inappropriate cues.

Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ostensible	Genuine
A uses inappropriate cues	32	0
gaze avoidance	18	0
pausing	0	0
mumbling	0	0
posture	7	0
Intonation	7	0
Observed Z= 6.103		
Sig. = 0.000		

These seven features, of course, are not independent of each other. According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), making an event implausible and leaving the arrangements vague both work because the preparatory conditions for the invitation do not hold. Failing to motivate beyond social

courtesy, failing to persist, and hedging all show A's lack of commitment to the invitation. And so does an inappropriate delivery. Once any of these features is defective, B has reason to suspect the invitation is insincere. If the defective feature seems obvious enough that A would have to expect that they mutually recognize it, B has reason to believe the invitation is ostensible.

The comparison of Farsi and English ostensible invitations reveals that the apparent difference between the two languages is a matter of "parameter" rather than "principle." In other words, the nature of the strategies employed by the inviters in the process of extending ostensible invitations in Farsi does not differ from that of English. However, the extent to which one feature is present in Farsi ostensible invitations slightly differs from that of the English language. This, no doubt, is in consonance with the universals of pragmatics. The similarity between English and Farsi ostensible invitations is greater in terms of such features as solicitation, motivating, and hesitating. Appendix 2 compares English and Farsi invitations in terms of the seven features that control their use. The percentages of English ostensible and genuine invitations have been borrowed from Clark and Isaacs (1990).

6. Conclusion

A brief look at the analysis of the data shows that the defining properties of Farsi ostensible invitations are similar to those of the English language. Iranian inviters seem to take advantage of the same strategies in making the pretense of their invitations vivid as their English counterparts do. The difference is only a matter of degree. Table 8 compares English and Farsi in terms of the seven defining features of ostensible invitations.

Table 8. Comparison of English and Farsi invitations by feature

Features	English		Farsi	
	Ostensible	**Genuine**	**Ostensible**	**Genuine**
1	44.00%	07.00%	85.18%	28.00%
2	69.00%	19.00%	60.59%	02.37%
3	82.00%	47.00%	73.62%	02.96%
4	82.00%	26.00%	91.55%	00.44%
5	69.00%	08.00%	05.33%	01.18%
6	42.00%	19.00%	61.03%	05.77%
7	61.00%	01.00%	04.74%	00.00%

The analysis of the data revealed that all the seven hypotheses of the study were supported. This is significant because it distinguishes between ostensible and genuine invitations and places them in two different categories. While the former is usually used when speakers need to look polite, the latter is made when the speakers really want to invite the hearers to take part in an event. In that sense, ostensible invitations are part of the phatic use of language or phatic communion whereas genuine invitations belong to the class of speech acts that require the hearer to do something (i.e., they request for action on the part of the hearer).

Furthermore, it should be noticed that, according to Clark and Isaacs (1990), invitations have two expectable perlocutions:

P1:   **B** comes to believe that **A** wants **B** to attend **E**.

P2: B comes to feel that **A** likes or approves of **B** to an extent consistent with **P1**.

My corpus reveals that with genuine invitations, the situation makes both

P_1 and P_2 possible. With ostensible invitations, however, the situation generally makes P_1 impossible. It gives B reason to believe that A does not really want B to attend event E. The situation, however, does not preclude P_2.

As such, ostensible invitations seem patently designed as face-saving devices. I have already argued that politeness should be studied in the context of face-threatening acts (FTAs). It can, through analogy, be concluded that the purpose of ostensible invitations, for the most part, is politeness. Indeed, many of the invitations in the corpus were extended when they were socially expected, when their absence would have offended B.

In brief, ostensible invitations, my data suggest, could be used for a good number of purposes and in a variety of situations. They can be used as a means of joking, teasing other people, etc. Their most important function, however, is expressing politeness.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Analysis of invitations by feature

A invites B to E	Observation		Interview		Totals	
Strategies for making E Ostensible	Ost.	Gen.	Ost.	Gen.	Ost.	Gen.
A makes E implausible.	502	188	73	1	575	189
B can't come	394	34	51	1	445	35
B isn't interested	11	103	4	0	15	103
A can't provide	97	51	18	0	115	51
A makes E plausible.	64	419	36	67	100	486
B solicits invitation	342	13	67	3	409	16
By context	98	4	22	0	120	4
Indirectly	213	9	37	3	250	12
Directly	31	0	8	0	39	0
B doesn't solicit invitation	224	594	42	65	266	659
A doesn't motivate invitation	407	6	90	14	497	20
A motivates invitation	159	601	19	54	178	655
B hesitates or refuses	533	371	109	17	642	388
A doesn't persist	509	0	109	3	618	3
A does persist	24	371	0	14	24	385
A makes arrangements	34	593	8	28	42	621
A leaves arrangements vague	31	6	5	2	36	8
A makes arrangements specific	3	587	3	26	6	613
A hedges invitation	376	30	86	9	412	39
?agar saretaan migirad	303	7	47	2	350	9
?agar maayel hastid	3	0	26	1	29	1
?agar qaabel midunid	54	9	10	0	64	9
?agar zahmati nist	16	14	3	6	19	20
A uses inappropriate cues	31	0	1	0	32	0
gaze avoidance	18	0	0	0	18	0
pausing	0	0	0	0	0	0
mumbling	0	0	0	0	0	0
posture	6	0	1	0	7	0
intonation	7	0	0	0	7	0

Appendix 2. Guide to phonetic symbols used for reporting Farsi examples.

Symbol	Example	Symbol	Example	Symbol	Example
aa	arm	p	pen	t	Tea
o	saw	s	so	j	joke
u	too	ch	change	h	house
a	hat	x	xub	d	door
e	ten	z	zoo	r	red
i	sheep	zh	vision	sh	shoe
q	Qom	n	noon	f	foot
k	kill	y	yard	g	good
l	land	?	?al?an	m	moon
v	Voice	b	bad		

NOTES:

The /?/ symbol represents glottal stop, and is used at the beginning of Farsi syllables followed by a vowel.

The /q/ and /x/ symbols represent Farsi-specific consonants.

The Farsi sporadic feature tashdid is represented by the repetition of the phoneme that receives it.