



The Language of Satire: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Politeness and Impoliteness through Culpeper's Strategies in Persian Satire

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Abstract: Studying verbal violence and linguistic impoliteness, particularly in satirical discourse, constitutes a significant area of linguistic and discourse analysis research. Despite theoretical advancements in the field of impoliteness, a systematic analysis of this phenomenon in Persian satirical texts, based on Culpeper's theoretical framework, has received insufficient attention. The present study aims to fill this academic gap by examining impoliteness strategies in four prominent Persian satirical works from different historical periods including those by Obeyd Zakani (1301), Dehkhoda (2016), Pezeshkzad (1958), and Aydin Sayar Saree (2019) to identify the most and least frequently used impoliteness strategies in these works and thereby illustrate the evolutionary trend of employing these strategies in Persian satire from the past to the present. Each of these works holds an established place in Iran's cultural memory and has been extensively referenced in academic, media, and public discourses. According to Culpeper's (1996, 2005, 2011) theoretical framework of impoliteness, impoliteness is conceptualized as an interactive, context-dependent, and relative phenomenon. It is analyzed based on three components: the speaker's intention, the hearer's perception, and the socio-cultural context, through the application of six strategies: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness. In this study, through an integrated methodology combining qualitative (discourse analysis) and quantitative (frequency analysis) approaches, the study identifies and categorizes impoliteness strategies including face-threatening acts and social norm-threatening acts across a corpus of satirical texts comprising over 663 pages. The data indicate that negative and indirect impoliteness strategies, as face-threatening acts, exhibited the highest frequency in the examined works. The least frequent instances fall within the domain of social norm-threatening acts. The predominance of negative impoliteness which targets the negative face of the

audience, here referring to formal structures, power institutions, or established norms demonstrates that Persian satirical language has consistently served as a deliberate and purposeful instrument for social, political, and cultural critique across all periods. Iranian satirists have employed strategies such as disparagement, ridicule, and sarcasm to challenge power structures while avoiding direct confrontation with associated risks. This language has been utilized for exposure, protest, and subverting the symbolic order. In contrast, the strategy of "accidental or unintentional offense" demonstrates the lowest frequency, as Persian satire is fundamentally based on intentionality and awareness. The Iranian satirist engages in impoliteness deliberately to challenge power structures, rather than committing verbal violence through linguistic error or inadvertence.

Keywords: Culpepper, Discourse Analysis, Impoliteness Strategies, Persian Satire.

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1. Introduction

Verbal violence, as a form of violence, often conflicts with individuals' social and identity-related expectations and is rooted in the mental structures and cultural discourse of society. Linguistic impoliteness, as one manifestation of verbal violence, is recognized as a negative act in social interactions (Culpeper, 2011). Examining it in literary works is of particular importance, since such works especially satirical literary texts reflect the cultural and mental structures of society. Analyzing verbal violence and impoliteness in these texts can lead to a deeper understanding of the methods of exercising violence and social critique (Ghader and Rezaee, 2025).

Previous Persian studies have primarily focused on the impact of verbal violence on individual identity within confined family-oriented contexts or educational settings (Solomon & Serres, 1999), while the influence of this phenomenon in satirical works has not received enough attention. Since satire, through its depiction of social anomalies, provides a fertile ground for the emergence of linguistic impoliteness, the present study employs Culpeper's (1996, 2005, 2011) impoliteness strategies to analyze five prominent Persian satirical works from different historical periods including *Resale-ye Delgoshā* and *Mouse and Cat* by Obeyd Zakani (pre-modern era), *Charand-o Parand* by Dehkhoda (Constitutional era), *Mashallah Khan in the Court of Harun al-Rashid* by Pezeshkzad (modern pre-revolution era), and *Chartoopia* by Sayar Saree (modern post-revolution era). Each of these works holds an established place in Iran's cultural memory and has been frequently referenced in academic, media, and public discourses. In general, this selection is based on the principles of historical representation, stylistic diversity, analytical potential, and cultural significance, enabling the research to delineate an evolutionary pattern of verbal violence in Persian satire

The present study seeks to answer research questions concerning the types, frequency, and evolution of linguistic impoliteness strategies in these texts across different historical periods in Iran. The main research questions are as follows: 1) Which of Culpeper's impoliteness strategies (1996, 2005, 2011) are employed in each of the selected works? 2) Which of these strategies demonstrate the highest overall frequency across the analyzed corpus, and which show the lowest prevalence? Furthermore, the hypotheses of the

present study, in relation to the research questions, are as follows: First, it is possible that none of the selected satirical works utilize the impoliteness strategies from Culpeper's theory (1996, 2005, 2011). Second, no significant difference may be observed in the application rates of different strategy types among the examined works.

To address the research questions, this study employs a mixed-methods approach (qualitative-quantitative). In the qualitative phase, using qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis, impoliteness strategies within Culpeper's theoretical framework are identified, classified, and interpreted. In the quantitative phase, through quantitative content analysis, the frequency and distribution of these strategies are measured and compared. This methodological integration enables the simultaneous addressing of analytical questions concerning "how and why" and comparative questions regarding "extent and distribution," thereby yielding more profound and objective findings.

Preliminary results indicate that negative impoliteness strategies, particularly in texts with a critical orientation, demonstrate a higher frequency. Furthermore, Persian satire across diverse historical contexts has utilized these strategies to critique power structures, social anomalies, and cultural contradictions. These findings not only address a significant gap in the linguistic study of satire but also delineate an evolutionary pattern of verbal impoliteness functions throughout the history of Persian satire from Obeyd Zakani's allegorical language (a response to severe censorship) to Dehkhoda's explicit tone (a product of the relative freedom of the Constitutional era), and finally, to the diminished directness in critiquing power structures and a shifted focus towards criticizing individual behaviors and everyday issues in the contemporary post-revolution period (a consequence of ideological oversight).

2. Culpeper's Theoretical Framework and Types of Impoliteness Strategies

Jonathan Culpeper, a prominent linguist, conceptualizes impoliteness as an interactive behavior shaped by context. In his view, impoliteness arises when an individual's actions conflict with the social norms and expectations of a given situation. His theory identifies three core components for analyzing impoliteness: the

speaker's intention, the listener's perception, and the socio-cultural context in which the interaction takes place.

Culpeper's (2011) framework treats impoliteness not as a fixed or universal phenomenon, but as a relative behavior that gains meaning through social interaction. A linguistic act is considered impolite when it violates situational norms, causes emotional harm, to one or more participants, and threatens their social face—essentially their public image and dignity.

To explore how impoliteness functions in communication, Culpeper introduced five main strategies in 1996, later expanding the model to include a sixth in 2005. These strategies provide a structured way to identify and interpret impolite speech acts across different contexts and cultures.

The six strategies are as follows: (1) Bald-on-record impoliteness, which delivers direct attacks without softening; (2) Positive impoliteness, targeting social needs through exclusion or insults; (3) Negative impoliteness, which invades personal boundaries via threats or mockery; (4) Withholding politeness, where expected courteous acts are deliberately omitted; (5) Sarcasm, using seemingly polite language to convey biting criticism; and (6) Indirect impoliteness, where offensive messages are masked through irony or metaphor.

Culpeper's theory stands apart from earlier models by emphasizing the dynamic interplay between speaker, listener, and context. It also highlights the influence of power relations and cultural norms in shaping how impoliteness is expressed and interpreted. Importantly, the theory recognizes that what is deemed impolite in one culture may be acceptable—or even polite—in another, underscoring its adaptability across diverse settings.

By accounting for the emotional, cultural, and relational layers of communication, Culpeper's framework offers researchers a powerful tool for identifying, categorizing, and analyzing impoliteness. Its application extends from everyday conversations to literary texts, making it a valuable resource for understanding how language can both reflect and challenge social norms.

2.1 Components Influencing the Interpretation of Impoliteness Strategies

Culpeper (2011) identifies several key factors that shape the perception of impoliteness, including face, social norms,

intentionality, emotions, context, power, and gender. Building on Goffman (1967), Brown and Levinson (1987), and Culpeper (2011), the concept of face is divided into positive face (the need for social belonging) and negative face (the need for autonomy). Face-threatening acts (FTAs), such as orders or criticism, challenge these needs, with their severity influenced by power relations, social distance, and cultural ranking. Social norms, as defined by Culpeper (2011) and Anderson (2000), are shared behavioral expectations, and impoliteness typically arises when these norms are violated often driven by emotions like anger or hatred.

Intentionality plays a crucial role in how impoliteness is interpreted. Culpeper (2011) and Gibbs (1999) argue that deliberate offenses provoke stronger reactions, although impoliteness may also result from misjudgment or lack of awareness. Emotions further shape impolite behavior, with Culpeper (2011) introducing “affective impoliteness,” which refers to emotionally charged acts such as those driven by anger or contempt. Emotional schemas like anger (linked to perceived injustice) or distress (associated with loss of power) influence both the expression and reception of impoliteness. Additionally, the social and situational context highlighted by Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2008) determines whether a behavior is perceived as impolite, depending on factors like repetition, novelty, and setting.

Power and gender also significantly affect impoliteness. Bousfield (2008) shows that impoliteness often occurs in asymmetrical power relationships, where dominant individuals have more freedom to express rudeness. Gender stereotypes further shape expectations: women are generally perceived as more polite, while men are seen as more confrontational (Mills, 2005; Holmes, Marra & Schnurr, 2008). In sum, the interpretation of impoliteness is a dynamic process influenced by multiple interacting factors, offering a nuanced framework for analyzing social behavior and communication.

2.2 The Connection between Culpeper's Theory and Social Satire

Culpeper's theory of impoliteness (1996, 2005, 2011) offers a valuable framework for analyzing the critical functions of social satire, showing how linguistic strategies of impoliteness can be used to challenge norms and provoke reflection. In literary works such as

Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1913), impoliteness is employed to expose class divisions through character speech patterns (Zolfagharkhani & Ghorban Sabbagh, 2023). Cross-cultural studies further emphasize that the impact of impolite language in satire varies depending on cultural context; as Li and Sun (2025) argue, what is humorous in one society may be offensive in another, highlighting the importance of social and cultural sensitivity in satirical discourse.

Contemporary political satire programs like *The Daily Show* exemplify the deliberate use of impoliteness to blend entertainment with critique. These shows use humor to engage audiences while simultaneously encouraging critical thought about political and social issues (Maslo, 2019). The strategic use of impoliteness allows satirists to navigate sensitive topics, often bypassing direct confrontation while still delivering pointed commentary.

Barum Chattoo (2019) identifies three core functions of satire that rely on impoliteness: simplifying complex social issues for public understanding, fostering constructive dialogue, and prompting audiences to question dominant norms. This dual role being both entertaining and critical makes impolite satire a powerful tool for social critique and reform, capable of engaging diverse audiences while challenging entrenched structures.

2.3 Literature Review

Numerous domestic and international studies have examined verbal violence and impoliteness in various contexts. In Iran, research such as those by Bazargan, Sadeghi and Gholamali (2003) and Majlesi (2007) has addressed verbal violence in schools. Findings indicate that verbal violence is a prevalent phenomenon, manifesting in forms such as swearing, mockery, threats, and labeling among students and even in teachers' speech. This violence has primarily been attributed to intra-school factors, including an unsuitable environment and poor teacher-student communication.

Heidari (2010), in a study of academic verbal interactions, concluded that impoliteness is often indirect and unintentional, with men employing impolite strategies more frequently than women. Hajimohammadi (2010), using Culpeper's (2005) framework, demonstrated that impoliteness in Tehrani speech is influenced by age, gender, and social factors. Maghami et al. (2013), in a study of emergency medical workplaces, found that public unawareness and poor anger management are the primary causes of verbal violence.

In the field of literary analysis, studies such as Mahmoudi Bakhtiari and Salimian (2016) and Namvar (2019) have employed Culpeper's framework to analyze plays and television series. Findings revealed that positive impoliteness constitutes one of the most prevalent types in dramatic texts and plays a significant role in characterization and theme conveyance. In television series, concepts such as money and social distance have been associated with increased verbal violence.

Further research such as Rahmani (2014) and Sohrabzadeh & Ravandi. (2017) has demonstrated that verbal violence has become normalized within family and peer group settings, with women exhibiting stronger reactions to verbal aggression. Findings from Ahmadi's (2017) study in Marivan schools revealed that school intimacy and parental supervision can reduce verbal violence, while Khaghani-Avar et al. (2016) confirmed the relationship between sensation-seeking, group affiliation, and verbal violence among football fans.

In applied linguistics research, Khatib and Lotfi (2015) found that the relationship between power and impoliteness is more pronounced in Persian than in English, a phenomenon attributable to cultural differences. Mirhosseini et al. (2017), in their analysis of the film *Mother* using Culpeper's model, demonstrated that men employ impoliteness strategies more frequently than women, with impoliteness being linked to masculine verbal dominance in Iran's patriarchal society.

Naqshbandi, Razavian and Ariaeefar (2024) analyzed impoliteness strategies employed by users of the Sahamyab website, applying Culpeper's (1996a, 2011b) impoliteness theory. Their study of 3,600 comments (100,000 words) revealed that bald-on-record impoliteness (34%) was the most frequent strategy, reflecting users' preference for direct insults, while sarcasm/irony (26.4%) ranked second, demonstrating face-maintenance while attacking others. Negative impoliteness and withholding politeness were least common (12.6%). The findings suggest online anonymity enables users to preserve their own face while damaging others' without real-world consequences. Razavian et al (2025) also examines patterns of impoliteness strategies in Persian satire, focusing on the works of Obeyd Zakani and Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda. Analysis demonstrated that while strategies of disparagement and mockery

predominated in all works of this article exhibited a higher prevalence of off-record impoliteness. While Zakani directly critiqued Mongol rule via humiliation and mockery (36 instances), Dehkhoda's critique of Qajar rule relied on indirect strategies: off-record impoliteness (157), sarcasm (70), and implicational impoliteness (19), reflecting an ironic, populist tone.

At the international level, Culpeper demonstrated that impoliteness is not only prevalent but functional in environments such as the military or literary dramas. Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003) further emphasized that a complete understanding of impoliteness requires careful consideration of the social context of speech.

Mills (2005) analyzed the role of gender in impoliteness, revealing that tendencies toward politeness or impoliteness reflect the social identities of women and men. Geiger and Fischer (2006) and Fares et al., (2011) also demonstrated that in educational settings, verbal violence is strongly associated with individual factors such as appearance, race, and gender, with adolescents exhibiting a greater propensity for verbal violence than children.

A review of the aforementioned studies reveals that while numerous investigations have analyzed violence and impoliteness in speech, social behaviors, dramatic works, and everyday conversations, most have employed diverse theoretical frameworks, leaving the systematic application of Culpeper's theory—particularly in analyzing social satire—largely unexplored. Consequently, the present study aims to address this theoretical and practical gap in Persian literature by examining social satire in literary works through the lens of Culpeper's impoliteness theory.

This research seeks to demonstrate how satire, through the strategic deployment of impoliteness, functions as a powerful instrument for social critique, exposing inequalities and reflecting power dynamics in literary discourse— an aspect that has received insufficient attention in prior scholarship.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. In the qualitative phase, Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness framework and discourse analysis were applied to identify and interpret impoliteness strategies in

selected Persian satirical texts. The quantitative phase then measured how often these strategies appeared across the full corpus.

To ensure broad historical coverage, texts were chosen from four key periods: classical, Constitutional, and contemporary (both before and after the Islamic Revolution). This allowed the study to explore how major social and political changes have shaped the development of satirical language.

Five well-known satirical works were purposefully selected based on their historical relevance, stylistic variety, compatibility with Culpeper's theory, and cultural significance in Persian literature.

Data analysis followed three steps. First, impolite speech acts were identified and categorized across all 663 pages of text. Then, statistical tools were used to calculate the frequency and distribution of each strategy. Finally, the results were interpreted in light of their historical and cultural context.

The unit of analysis was defined as any impolite speech act, whether at the level of a word, sentence, or broader discourse. To ensure reliability, two independent coders analyzed the data. Validity was supported through triangulation of both methods and data sources.

4. Examples of Impoliteness Strategies in the Texts

a. Face-Threatening Acts

Bald-on-record impoliteness (The speaker possesses the power to express impolite remarks directly and explicitly (Culpeper, 2005))

➤ **Mashallah Khan:**

"Shut up! Ill-mannered! Were you raised in a stable? 'Hajji Stable-Education'?" (p. 115)

➤ **Chertopia:**

"Have some shame, you wretch! Don't you have any honor?" (p.35)¹

Positive Impoliteness (This type of impoliteness occurs when a reasonable request from the addressee is met with rejection. Ignoring, blaming, and using offensive terms are manifestations of this type of impoliteness (Culpeper, 2005)).

Page numbers for this book are based on the electronic version accessed via the ¹ Taghche application.

Positive Impoliteness (Labeling the addressee)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"Now Hajji Mas'um and Mehdi the Ox-Slayer each fancied himself as an Atabegs." (p.36)

➤ **Mashallah Khan:**

"Now what kind of dirt are you putting on your head, Mashallah Khan? If you fall into this old hag's hands..." (p. 428)

Positive Impoliteness (Use of incomprehensible coded language)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"This gentleman here is... well... you know him. And this one... yes... well no... this one certainly needs no introduction from me. That one... ah ah... yes, no. As for the others... you surely know how to properly address them yourself." (p.31)

Positive Impoliteness (Use of offensive/derogatory terms)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"Before you demonstrate your idiocy and imbecility to the Minister of War, at least accept this black Russian dog from me." (p.27)

➤ **Chertopia:**

"Who let this imbecile in?" (p.123)

Positive Impoliteness (Contrarian Behavior)

➤ **Resaleh-ye Delgosha:**

"They prescribed seven-year-old vinegar for the sick man. He asked a friend, who replied: 'I have it, but I won't give it to you...'" (p.276)¹

Positive Impoliteness (Use of Taboo Words)

➤ **Resaleh-ye Delgosha:**

A person wanted to blow on the fire when suddenly wind burst from his... [rectum]. He immediately turned his back to the fireplace... and said: "If you're in a hurry, go ahead." (p.276)

➤ **Chertopia:**

"I will service your mouth [vulgar idiom meaning violent assault]." (p. 143)

¹. Page numbers for this book are based on the electronic version accessed via the Taghche application.

Positive Impoliteness (Depriving Others of Participation)➤ **Haj Mashallah:**

The manager: "I won't permit anyone to read books, magazines or newspapers during office hours. Understood?" (p. 10)

Positive Impoliteness (Ignoring/Disregarding)➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

They said: "Don't eat honey and melon together - they don't mix." He didn't listen and ate them anyway. (p.168)

➤ **Haj Mashallah:**

"Excuse me sir, didn't you see where this girl went?" The man gave no response and just stared at him. (p.43)

Negative Impoliteness (Infringing upon the addressee's freedom of action constitutes negative impoliteness. Intimidation, mockery, blame, and reproach are manifestations of negative impoliteness (Culpeper, 2005)).

Negative Impoliteness (Intimidation)➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

The king declared: "O my dear subjects, I shall take revenge upon the cat!" (p.323)

➤ **Haj Mashallah:**

Mashallah Khan shouted loudly: "Take one step forward and you'll be counted among the dead!" (p. 392)

Negative Impoliteness (Humiliation and Mockery)➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

*A little mouse kicked the cat's horse,
Causing the cat to tumble headfirst from the saddle. (p.325)*

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"Because I was common folk, because common folk are blind." (p.30)

Negative Impoliteness (Humiliation and Mockery)➤ **Chertopia:**

"Staminofenus said: 'In my opinion, wait a little - either their stomachs will turn, or like those insipid TV series, they'll vomit themselves and the matter will become clear.'" (p.115)

Negative Impoliteness (Association with Negative Attributes)➤ **Resaleh-ye Delgosha:**

"The extremely ugly one appeared at Yazid's banquet in the most humiliating manner..." (p.264)

➤ **Mashallah Khan:**

"These cowardly and incompetent guards of ours dared not confront this lion." (p.92)

Negative Impoliteness (Infringement of the Addressee's Autonomy)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"Hey! Move! Hurry up! Turn around! The tiger-lord is coming." (p.37)

➤ **Mashallah Khan:**

"Sir, where is your attention? ... You nearly crushed the fruits ... Go sing 'Ya Habibi' in your own house ..." (p.17)

Negative Impoliteness (Reproach/Blame)

➤ **Resaleh-ye Delgoshah:**

A gypsy (Luli) was arguing with her son: "You don't do anything worthwhile..." (p.255)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"Go attend to your work, focus on your trade, earn your bread - what good comes of this constitutionalism playacting?" (p. 163)

Sarcasm (Mock Politeness: Superficially polite but fundamentally artificial strategies)

➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

"After this he said: 'Come forth, Take a few steps, O companion.'" (p.322)

➤ **Chertopia:**

"Do tell me, what pearls of wisdom has this Madame Uranus deigned to bestow upon us now?!!" (p. 38)

Withholding Politeness (Absence of expected polite behavior in normative contexts)

➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

"When the mice saw him reciting: 'Your sustenance is in heaven by right!...' (p. 322)

Indirect Impoliteness (Through implicit, indirect speech or metaphorical expressions)

➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

"Why sit idle, O mice? May dust be upon your heads, O youths!" (p. 323)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"I laughed at my mother's response as she said: 'May you laugh on the washer's board when dead.' You'd think this child is a demon - I can't bear to look at him." (p.22)

B. Norm-Threatening Acts

Implied Impoliteness (Quoting someone while mimicking their accent and bodily gestures)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"The Marshal of the Eastern Army, His Excellency the Minister of War, was eating an orange between two prayers at Sepahsalar Mosque on the 21st night of Ramadan when he heard a tremendous noise and cried: 'Oh no! Where did the bullet hit me?' before fainting. Later it became clear the mosque door had slammed shut from the wind, and the noise wasn't gunfire at all." (p. 177)

Institutional Impoliteness: (Institutional impoliteness refers to impolite behavior that is accepted within the framework of power and formal organizational structures and typically goes unchallenged (Culpeper, 2005).

➤ **Chertopia:**

"Democracy be damned!" (p.110)

Self-Interest Preservation and Violation of Mutual Face (Failure to Maintain Reciprocal Face)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

I said: "Say 'you die!'" He replied: "You die." I said: "No, you die yourself." (p.26)

Social Rights Violation (Failed Politeness: Attempts at politeness perceived as impolite due to cultural differences or misunderstandings (Culpeper, 2005))

➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

The mouse said: "I am your servant - forgive me these sins." (p. 321)

Context (Unrestricted Emotional Expression in Contextually Inappropriate Settings)

➤ **Chertopia:**

"I know only one thing - that I know nothing. Was my father in the war? Or my mother? What do I know? What should be done?!" (p. 48)

Power (Interrupting the Addressee's Speech)

➤ **Mashallah Khan:**

Ja'far al-Barmaki suddenly shouted with a pale face: "Enough!" (p. 74)

Power (License for Impoliteness Through Authority)

➤ **Mouse and Cat:**

"Either come to the capital in service, Or prepare yourself for battle." (p. 324)

Power (Compelling the Addressee to Speak)

➤ **Chertopia:**

"His Majesty flew into a rage and said: 'Father! What's happened? Tell me too!!'" (p. 18)

Norm-Threatening Impoliteness (Violation of Social Conventions)

➤ **Charand-o Parand:**

"This remark agitated them so much that they left without saying goodbye, muttering along the way: 'This is one of those troublemakers and sedition-mongers.' (p.40)

Violation of Social Rights (Accidental or Unintentional Offense)

➤ **Mashallah Khan:**

"Akbar Aghajoon, grant us your forgiveness - I don't think we'll survive this. If they kill us, recite a Fatiha for our souls."

"Rest assured, master - every Thursday night I'll recite a Fatiha for your soul." (p. 331)

5. Content Analysis of Verbal Violence in the Examined Works

Based on existing definitions (Derya & Kaya, 2025), the four terms verbal abuse, verbal aggression, verbal harassment, and verbal violence differ in terms of intensity, intention, and social context. Verbal abuse refers to a repetitive and humiliating pattern of speech aimed at psychological control and the destruction of a person's self-esteem through constant threats, criticism, or insults. Verbal aggression means a direct verbal attack on someone's personality or emotions, usually driven by anger or the desire to dominate, and it can escalate into physical violence if not managed. Verbal harassment is a repeated and distressing verbal behavior that manifests through disrespect or humiliation in social or workplace settings, with the goal of intimidating or devaluing the other person. However, verbal violence is a broader concept that encompasses all these forms of harmful language, including words used to hurt, threaten, humiliate, or even express severe impoliteness. Therefore, in translating the Persian term "خشونت کلامی" (khoshunat-e kalami) which also includes verbal impoliteness — the most accurate and comprehensive English equivalent is verbal violence.

5.1 Resaleh-ye Delgoshia and Mouse and Cat

In *Resaleh-ye Delgosha*, Obeyd Zakani (2016) employs biting language and sharp satire to critique the social and cultural structures of his era. In the examined example – "A Qazvini went to the physician and said: 'My beard hair aches.' The doctor asked: 'What have you eaten?' He replied: 'Bread and ice.' The doctor said: 'Go die! Neither your pain resembles human pain, nor your food [resembles] human food.'" (p. 275)– applying Culpeper's (2011) theory, this exchange can be clearly identified as an instance of Bald-on-record Impoliteness.

Here, the physician employs a direct, derogatory expression devoid of any linguistic mitigation ("Go die"), explicitly threatening the positive face of the addressee (the Qazvini man). From Culpeper's perspective, this type of impoliteness lacks compensatory face-saving actions and demonstrates clear intentionality in its verbal attack: the destruction of the interlocutor's status and credibility through mockery and rejection. Obeyd, through this hyperbolic narrative, simultaneously evokes laughter and critiques structural inequality and institutionalized ignorance. This form of satire serves as an instrument for critiquing situations where individuals are readily subjected to rejection and humiliation.

In this verse from Obeyd Zakani's *Mouse and Cat* (2016): ("*By fate's decree there lived a cat / Like a dragon in Kerman's land*"), (p. 320)

the cat, symbolizing deceitful power, is compared to a "dragon" – a dangerous and fearsome creature. This simile exemplifies negative impoliteness within Culpeper's (2011) theoretical framework, specifically the attribution of extreme negative traits to another with the intent to damage their face. Through this hyperbolic analogy, Obeyd dismantles the cat's hypocritical piety and exposes its predatory nature.

Such a strategy not only threatens the cat's individual face but also critiques the hidden power structures behind it. This satirical method combines negative impoliteness with socio-political irony.

5.2 Charand-o Parand

In one of the satirical dialogues from *Charand-o Parand*, Dehkhoda (2016) employs colloquial language to portray the condition of Iranian women on the threshold of modernity—women who are superstitious, lacking formal education, and caught between tradition and modernity. In a simple exchange between a

mother and her child, the mother provides superstitious and imprecise answers about the structure of the universe ("*The earth rests on a bull's horn, the bull on a fish, the fish on water*" (p. 168)) and ultimately resorts to verbal violence: "*Woe is me, may the river sweep you away! Must you talk so much?*" This statement exemplifies instrumental impoliteness, which Culpeper (2011) defines as an attempt to reclaim lost face in tense interactions.

The son's address to his mother using the term "*naneh*" (a colloquial and often derogatory term for an elderly woman) reflects the patriarchal attitudes prevalent at the time. The mother's sharp retort, meanwhile, underscores the psychological strain of constant communicative demands (repeated questioning) and the absence of genuine intimacy between the two. This seemingly simple dialogue reveals layers of verbal violence, emotional distance, and the dominance of traditional discourse within the structure of the Iranian family during the Constitutional era.

5.3 Mashallah Khan dar Darbar-e Harun al-Rashid

In the novel *Mashallah Khan dar Darbar-e Harun al-Rashid*, the protagonist Mashallah's disillusionment and frustration become the source of his verbal and behavioral violence. Dreaming of traveling back in time and attaining a high position in Harun al-Rashid's court, he not only fails to achieve his goals after realizing this fantasy but also encounters situations that leave him deeply embittered. This bitterness manifests as overt verbal aggression.

For instance, upon seeing the face of his supposed savior, he remarks with an insulting tone:

"A nose as large as an orange was the first thing one noticed about Samiya's face... Her gaping mouth stretched all the way to her ears." (p.36) Elsewhere, he vents his suppressed rage with lines like: *"If Mahmoud Agha were here, I'd have him castrated... then make him the chief eunuch of my personal harem." (p.101)* Similarly, in response to an ordinary conversation, his unrestrained impoliteness is evident in phrases such as: *"Get lost, Hajji Firuz! Don't you understand shame? Anta fahm al-namus? Are you truly al-himar (the donkey)?" (p.53)*

These reactions align with Culpeper's (2011) theory, falling under the categories of "bald-on-record impoliteness" and "negative impoliteness," as the protagonist directly associates others with negative attributes and deliberately insults them. Even in a simple

conversation with his colleague, he remarks: "*What an ill-mannered man! He nearly got me killed!*" (p.25) or, when addressing Akbar: "*You plague, you venomous snake, you daughter of Sakina—have you no shame calling me thick-necked?*" (p. 284). All these examples demonstrate how the frustration of unfulfilled aspirations manifests as verbal violence in Mashallah's speech, shaping power dynamics and humiliation in interpersonal relationships. These instances further confirm that verbal aggression in the work stems from psychological tensions and the conflict between desire and reality.

5.4 Chertopia

"The sole hopeful aspect of football in Chert is that the chants are perfectly aligned with philosophical principles—chants like: 'So-and-so, have some shame / Abandon philosophy!' or 'Our city hosts banquets / Even democrats get captured here.'" (p. 51)

In *Chertopia*, football fan chants such as "*Have some shame / Abandon philosophy!*" and "*Our city hosts banquets / Even democrats get captured*" exemplify a form of impoliteness that transcends individual interactions, assuming a socio-ideological function. As Culpeper (2011) argues, a core foundation of impoliteness lies in threatening accepted social norms. Here, impoliteness is not merely personal insult but a tool to reinforce dominant discourse and suppress dissent.

The depicted society is built on anti-democratic ideologies promoting Platonic philosophy; thus, the football chants reflect power structures that legitimize specific modes of thought while rejecting others. In this context, the impoliteness strategy employed can be termed institutional impoliteness—a type supported by hegemonic discourse and often internalized in language and behavior without full individual awareness. The use of "*democrat*" as a pejorative demonstrates how words in *Chertopia* acquire negative connotations to ridicule views opposing the regime.

6.Data Analysis

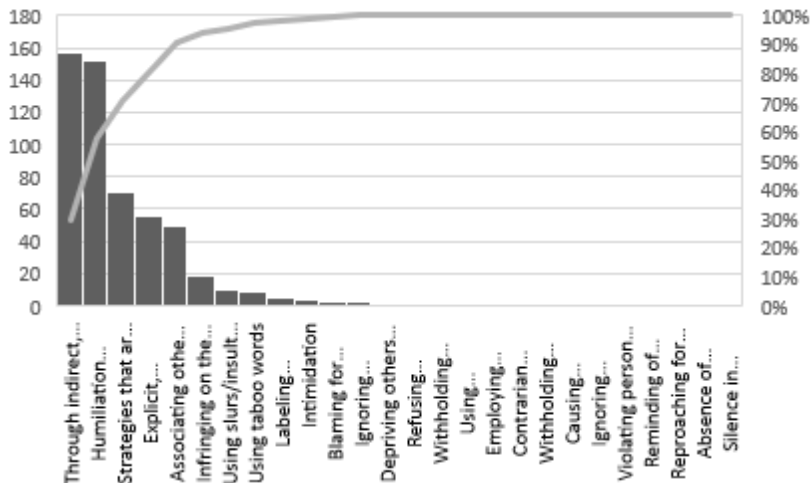
Table1: The Frequency of all Impoliteness Strategies among Face-Threatening Acts in Selected Literary Works

| Types of Impoliteness Strategies Face-Threatening Acts (Culpeper 1996, 2005) | | Title of Works | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| | | Resaleh -ye Delgos ha & Mouse and Cat | <i>Charan d-o Parand</i> | <i>Mashall ah Khan dar Darbar- e Harun al- Rashid</i> | <i>Chertop ia</i> |
| Bald-on-record impolitene ss | Explicit, unequivocal, and maximally unambiguous face threat. | 11 | 56 | 60 | 42 |
| Positive Impolitene ss | Ignoring/disregarding | | 2 | 7 | 3 |
| | Depriving others of participation | | | 4 | |
| | Refusing association | | | 12 | 5 |
| | Withholding attention interest/empathy | 2 | | 13 | 2 |
| | Using inappropriate identity markers | 2 | | 3 | |
| | Employing incomprehensible coded language | | | 4 | |
| | Contrarian behavior | | | 19 | 5 |
| | Withholding agreement | | | 2 | 9 |
| | Causing discomfort/distres s | | | 5 | 4 |
| | Use of taboo words | 5 | 9 | 21 | 9 |
| | Labeling/addressi ng pejoratively | 1 | 5 | 31 | 10 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------|------------|----|----|
| | Ignoring reasonable requests (2005) | | | 1 | |
| | Blaming for reasonable requests (2005) | 4 | 3 | | 2 |
| | Using slurs/insults in response to reasonable requests (2005) | 2 | 10 | 39 | 13 |
| Negative Impoliteness | Intimidation | 9 | 4 | 36 | 30 |
| | Humiliation/mockery | 36 | 152 | 54 | 56 |
| | Violating personal boundaries | | | 18 | 3 |
| | Associating others with negative attributes | 10 | 49 | 62 | 27 |
| | Reminding of indebtedness | | | | 2 |
| | Infringing on the addressee's autonomy (2005) | 5 | 19 | 28 | 16 |
| | Reproaching for asserting autonomy (2005) | 8 | | | 3 |
| Indirect Impoliteness | Through indirect, implicit speech or metaphorical expressions (2005) | 33 | 157 | 59 | 33 |
| Sarcasm | Strategies that are superficially polite but fundamentally artificial in nature | 1 | 70 | 18 | 19 |
| Withholding Politeness | Absence of expected polite behavior in normative contexts | 3 | | 5 | 6 |
| | Silence in situations requiring verbal | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | politeness conventions | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|--|

Table 2: The Frequency of Impoliteness Strategies in Resaleh-ye Delgosha and Mouse and Cat



The current chart illustrates the types of impoliteness strategies employed in two prominent works by Obeyd Zakani, namely *Resāla-ye Delgosha* and *Mouse and Cat*. Based on Culpeper’s (1996, 2005, 2011) theoretical framework and his classification of hearer-face-threatening acts, the strategies of "derision and ridicule" and "indirect impoliteness" exhibit the highest frequency in these two works.

The strategy of "derision and ridicule" falls under the category of "negative impoliteness" in Culpeper’s theory. Negative impoliteness refers to linguistic acts that threaten an individual’s autonomy by restricting their freedom of action, imposing demands, or violating their personal boundaries. In his satirical works, including *Resāla-ye Delgosha* and *Mouse and Cat*, Obeyd Zakani employs derision and ridicule to critique the social, cultural, and political systems of the 14th century (8th century Hijri)—a period marked by widespread corruption, moral decay, and the dominance of religious hypocrisy (Beh Afarid, Mofakhkari, & Mohammadi, 2023; Pasalari & Nikdar Asl, 2015). Through his sharp and biting satirical language, he exposed societal dysfunctions, particularly targeting the conduct of religious authorities and oppressive rulers (Monazzam & Azarnia, 2016; Bigzadeh & Khoshhesab, 2016).

Obeyd employed satire not merely for entertainment, but as a reformist instrument for raising awareness and combating corruption. In *Mouse and Cat*, he utilizes allegory to portray the visage of flattery and hypocrisy, while in *Resāla-ye Delgosha*, he employs narrative satire to critique power structures (Bagheri & Khatami, 2022). His realist perspective on morality, religion, and politics underscores the imperative connection between social justice and human wisdom (Bigzadeh & Khoshhesab, 2016; Monazzam & Azarnia, 2016). Ultimately, Obeyd's satire serves as a vehicle for defending individual identity and social protest, cementing his distinguished position in the history of Persian literary criticism.

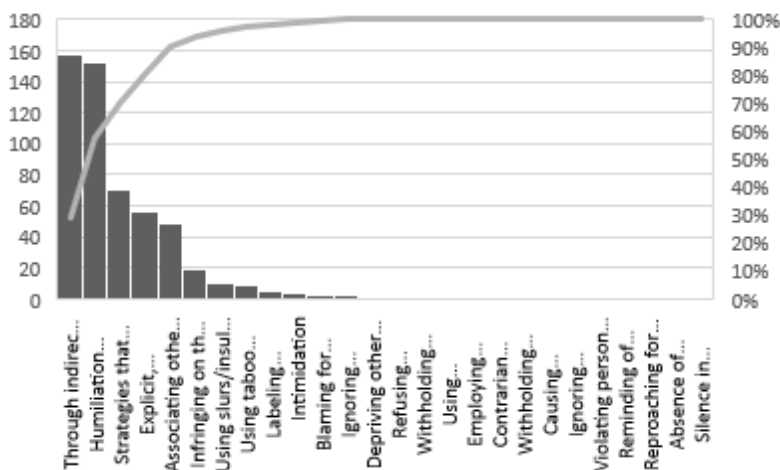
"Indirect impoliteness, as the second most prevalent strategy in these works, refers to a form of impoliteness where the speaker, without explicit face-threat, employs devices such as sarcasm, irony, humor, and metaphorical language to offend the addressee. In this type of impoliteness, the speaker conveys dissatisfaction in a covert, informal, and often humorous manner, such that the underlying negative message is only discernible through consideration of the social context and communicative situation."

Obeyd Zakani (1301), in his works *Resāla-ye Delgosha* and *Mouse and Cat*, employs implicit language, symbolism, and metaphor to deliver profound yet indirect critiques of the social, political, and religious conditions of his time. The 14th century (8th century Hijri), the era in which he lived, was a turbulent period rife with corruption, violence, and the hypocrisy of rulers and religious authorities. In such an environment, the use of indirect language served as a means of expressing dissent while avoiding direct confrontation and danger.

Obeyd's satire is, on one level, entertaining, yet it simultaneously contains layers of social protest conveyed through ambiguity, symbolism, and elements drawn from ancient Persian culture. By employing symbols such as the *cat* (representing oppressive rulers) and the *mouse* (symbolizing the oppressed masses), he articulates complex ideas under the guise of humorous narratives. Furthermore, his use of biting and ironic language exposes the moral decay and systemic failures of his era. Ultimately, Obeyd's satire was not merely a tool for entertainment but also a means of awakening society and conveying reformist messages within a safe and

artistically crafted framework (Manazzam & Azarnia, 2016; Nikdar Asl & Pasalari, 2015; Bigzadeh & Khoshhesab, 2016; Akbari & Baqeri, 2023; Jafari & Karami, 2023).

Table 3: The Frequency of Impoliteness Strategies in the Work of Charand-o Parand



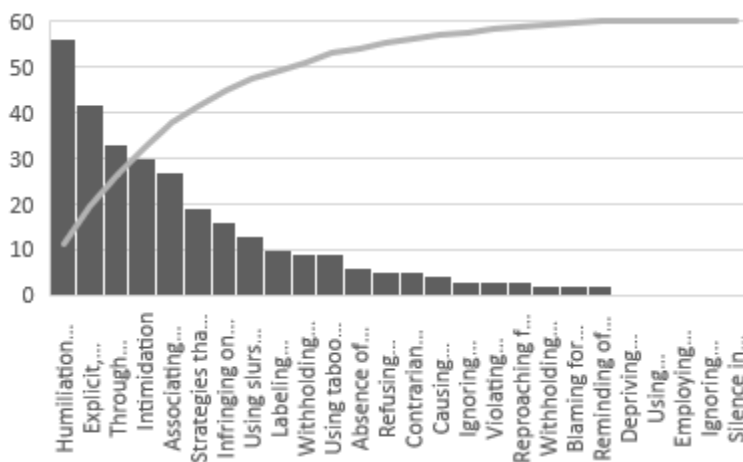
The current chart illustrates the types of impoliteness strategies employed in *Charand-o Parand*, authored by Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda (2016). Among the various face-threatening acts categorized by Culpeper (1996, 2005, 2011), the strategies of using metaphors, implicit language, indirect speech, derision and ridicule, followed by sarcasm and mock politeness, exhibit the highest frequency in this work.

Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda (2016) consciously employed irony, innuendo, metaphor, and implicit language to develop an expressive style that not only demonstrated linguistic prominence but also provided an effective platform for articulating social, political, and cultural critiques of his era. Irony and innuendo, by creating semantic duality and subverting reality, enable the concise conveyance of complex ideas while engaging the audience with the textual layers of meaning. Operating in an environment rife with repression and a lack of free expression, Dehkhoda utilized these rhetorical devices to communicate his critical messages without direct confrontation with authority. Irony, as a tool of exposure, allowed him to depict social corruption and structural injustices through incisive yet indirect language.

In this regard, innuendos also played a pivotal role in protesting, satirizing, and mocking the status quo. From a linguistic perspective, Dehkhoda employed formulaic expressions to align his satirical language with common speech, infusing his prose with a colloquial and tangible quality. These expressions enabled him to convey meaning swiftly and profoundly within a condensed and elliptical framework particularly suitable for journalistic contexts requiring brevity. Collectively, this writing style not only reflects Dehkhoda's creative intellect and literary audacity but also epitomizes his critical and reformist approach toward the shortcomings of the Constitutional Era.

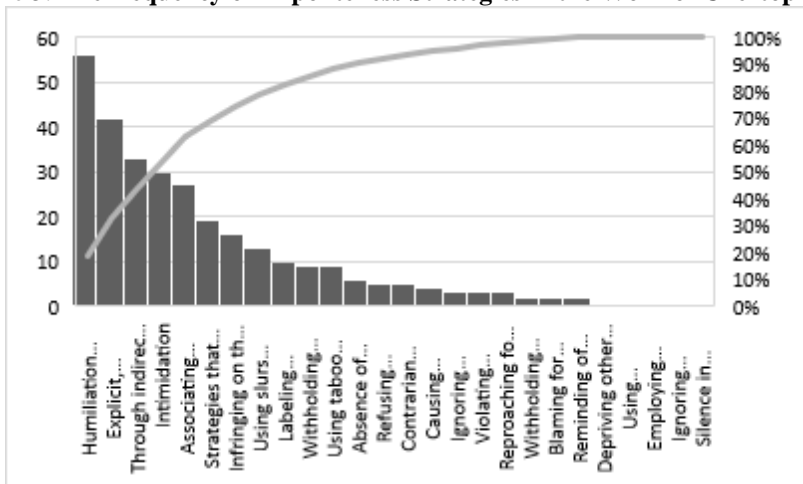
On the other hand, Dehkhoda's use of the *derision and ridicule* strategy a subset of negative impoliteness reflects his endeavor for the freedom and independence of a nation wounded by foreign interference. Mock politeness or sarcasm, another pivotal impoliteness strategy in *Charand-o Parand*, exploits ambiguity and polysemy to evade censorship. The satirical language employing this strategy maintains a superficially polite and formal tone while conveying a biting message, which may stem from the Iranian societal dichotomy of outward appearance versus inner reality. Sarcasm, as a distinct form of indirect impoliteness, typically manifests through vocal tone and sentence intonation, requiring implicit authorial understanding (Namvar, 2019). In total, Dehkhoda employs 27 distinct types of impoliteness strategies.

Table 4: **The Frequency of Impoliteness Strategies in the Work of Mashallah Khan at the court of Harun al-Rashid**



In the work *Mashallah Khan in the Court of Harun al-Rashid*, Pezeshkzad (1958) employs the strategy of "associating others with negative traits" (a subset of negative impoliteness) due to the restrictive socio-political environment and the need to convey effective criticism. This approach is utilized with the aim of damaging the social image of individuals and provoking critical reflection in the audience regarding power structures and injustices. The character of Mashallah Khan, as a cultural observer and critic, reinforces his moral stance by observing and narrating these negative behaviors, and through linguistic distancing, he distinguishes himself from the dominant discourse. This strategy amplifies his critical role. Simultaneously, the extensive use of "explicit impoliteness" reflects a more direct and aggressive approach to exposing corruption and ignorance, which aligns with the work's satirical and humorous style. This combination of strategies demonstrates the author's astuteness in adapting critical language to the political context and the artistic objectives of the work.

Table 5: The frequency of Impoliteness Strategies in the Work of Chertopia



In the work *Chertopia*, Sayar Sari (2019) employs a satirical approach to critique political and social structures, utilizing strategies of humiliation and mockery as primary tools of impoliteness. This strategy undermines the legitimacy of the dominant discourse by diminishing the status of the criticized individuals and institutions and portraying them in absurd

situations, thereby facilitating the transmission of critical messages. The use of degrading characterization through comparisons to animals or lowly objects, offensive epithets, and comedic situational framing targets the social standing of the subjects.

From a psychological perspective, humiliation carries profound impact in a culture where face-saving is paramount, amplifying the potential for social ostracization of the target. This strategy also affords the author greater security, as criticism can be delivered under the guise of humor, allowing evasion of potential political repercussions.

Within the framework of critical discourse analysis, humiliation and mockery contribute to the delegitimization of dominant discourse and the reproduction of counter-discourse, while normalizing criticism in the audience's perception. Ultimately, the extensive use of humiliation and mockery enables the articulation of the most complex critiques in a simple, effective, and engaging form, reflecting the author's profound understanding of the social and psychological conditions of their era.

Table 6: **The Frequency of Impoliteness Strategies Involving Norm-Threatening Acts across Selected Works**

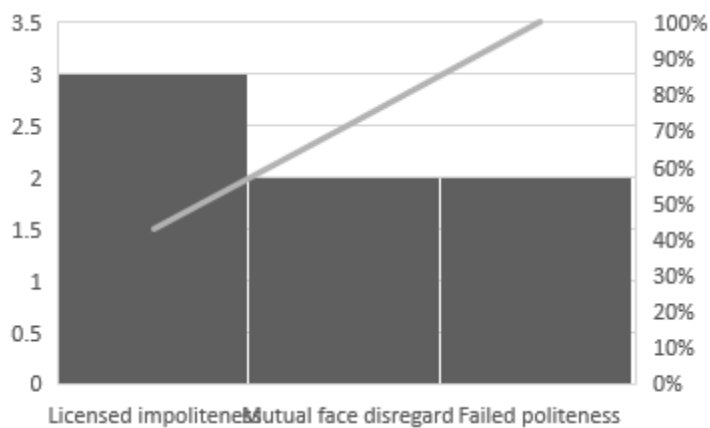
| Norm-threatening Acts (2011, 2015) | | Titles of the selected works | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| | | Resaleh -ye Delgos ha & Mouse and Cat | <i>Charan d-o Parand</i> | <i>Mashall ah Khan dar Darbar- e Harun al- Rashid</i> | <i>Chertop ia</i> |
| Tension between individual face wants and social rationality | Violation of social norms/conventi ons | | | | |
| | Mutual face disregard | 2 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| | Emotion-driven impoliteness | | | | |
| Breach of social norms | Systematic face- aggravating acts | | 2 | | 2 |

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| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|-----------|----|
| Violation of social oughts | Breach of taken-for-granted norms | | | 4 | 5 |
| Infringement of social entitlements | Expectation mismanagement | | | | |
| | Accidental impoliteness | | | 3 | |
| | Failed politeness | 2 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| Emotional consequences | Affective impoliteness | | 1 | | 3 |
| Contextual factors | Context-inappropriate emotional leakage | | | 5 | 4 |
| | Habitual impoliteness | | 4 | | 1 |
| | Retaliatory impoliteness | | | | |
| | Institutionalized impoliteness | | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Power asymmetry | Coercive impoliteness | | | | 1 |
| | Interactional dominance | | | | |
| | Enforced elicitation | | 3 | 15 | 5 |
| | Interactional silencing: Turn-denial | | 1 | 23 | |
| | Licensed impoliteness | 3 | 3 | 12 | 10 |
| | Power-marked politeness: <i>display of dominance</i> | | 2 | | 1 |
| Gender and impoliteness | Collaborative (F) vs. | | | | 3 |

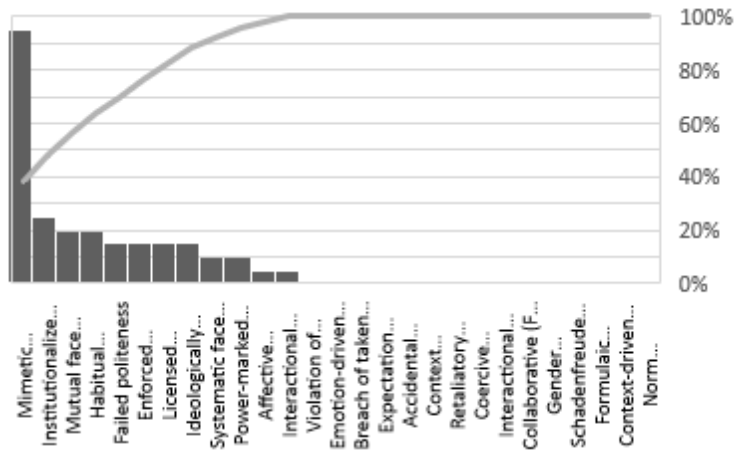
| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|----|--|----|
| | competitive (M) impoliteness | | | | |
| | Gender-differentiated impoliteness styles | | | | |
| Ludic impoliteness | Schadenfreude-based impoliteness: Superiority pleasure, Aesthetic pleasure, Voyeuristic pleasure, Emotional catharsis, Security reinforcement | | | | |
| Off-record impoliteness | Mimetic impoliteness, Parodic Stylization, Othering, Identity Mockery | | 19 | | |
| Formulaic impoliteness | Formulaic impoliteness | | | | |
| | Context-driven impoliteness | | | | |
| | Norm-exploitative impoliteness | | | | |
| Institutionalized impoliteness | Ideologically structured impoliteness | | 3 | | 17 |

Table 7: Social Face-threatening Acts in Resaleh-ye Delgosha and Mouse and cat



Since impoliteness strategies are broadly categorized into face-threatening acts and social norm-threatening acts, the 'licence to be impolite through power' strategy demonstrated the highest frequency among social norm-threatening acts. The use of this strategy reflects Obeyd's authoritative position as both author and satirist—he challenges unwritten social rules and compels the audience to reflect on justice, ethics, and social structures. In Obeyd's works, the 'licence to be impolite through power' strategy not only signifies his verbal superiority and satirical prowess but also legitimizes his critical acts. With his mastery of language, literary traditions, and the intellectual currents of his time, Obeyd transforms impoliteness into a sanctioned tool for exposure. Contrary to common perception, rather than diminishing discourse, this form of impoliteness becomes an instrument for expanding justice and enlightenment. Leveraging his position as a 'master of the pen' and 'literary innovator,' Obeyd challenges entrenched norms and structural inequalities.

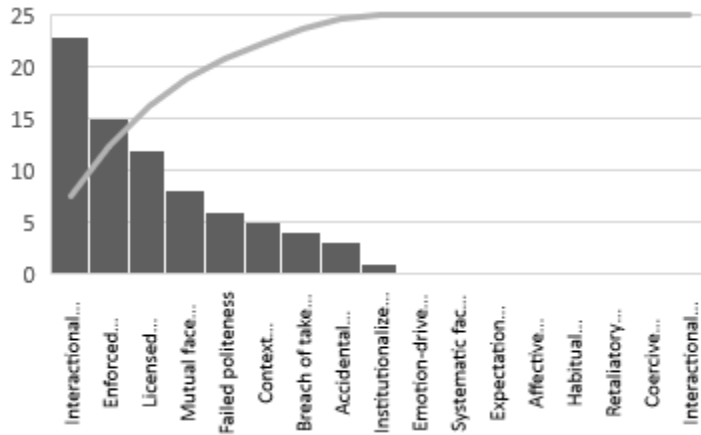
Table 8: Social Face-Threatening Acts in Charand-o parand



Impoliteness with mimicry holds the highest frequency among social face-threatening acts in *Charand-o Parand*. Culpeper defines this type of impoliteness as quoting someone while imitating their accent and body movements (Salimian, 2014). By employing this strategy, Dehkhoda (2016) has been able to make his satire more realistic, vivid, and tangible, bring his works closer to the everyday language and culture of society, and attract a wider audience. Imitating accents and body movements allows the audience to engage more easily with the subject matter and facilitates a more effective transmission of his critical message. Additionally, it highlights the contrast between appearance and reality, or between individuals' words and actions. Mimicking speech and behavioral acts enable better decoding of critical concepts and the reconstruction of dominant discourse by the audience.

By utilizing accent and gesture imitation, Dehkhoda (2016) creates a quasi-theatrical space within the text, as characters emerge as archetypes whose true nature is revealed at the moment of encountering the audience. Furthermore, the contrast between their formal speech and concealed conduct is represented in a dramatic structure, producing a critical laughter—not born of mere amusement, but rather arising from a deep understanding of inherent contradictions.

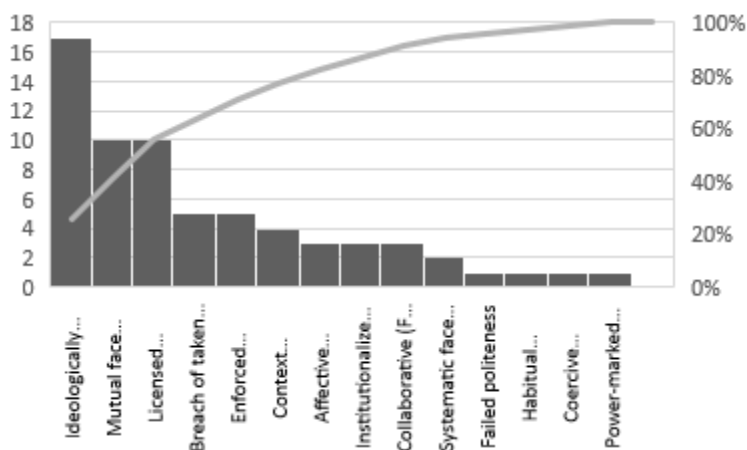
Table 9: Social Face-Threatening Acts in Mashallah Khan in the court of Harun al-Rashid



In the satirical novel *Mashallah Khan in the Court of Harun al-Rashid* by Iraj Pezeshkzad (1958), the act of interrupting others' speech by Mashallah Khan emerges as one of the most frequent norm-challenging behaviors. According to Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness theory, this constitutes a form of "power-holding impoliteness" - a strategy that not only violates conventional politeness norms but also serves to reinforce the speaker's superior social position. The theoretical framework suggests that exercising discourse dominance through interruption performs two key functions: constructing the interrupter's powerful identity while simultaneously diminishing the interlocutor's face, and establishing interactional control by using impoliteness as a tool to monopolize conversational space and dictate the terms of engagement. Mashallah Khan's elevated status within the narrative structure lends legitimacy to this behavior, framing interruptions as institutionalized displays of power. Significantly, Pezeshkzad's satirical approach transforms these aggressive acts into a multifaceted critique that challenges authoritarian hierarchies, subverts formalized power relations between superiors and subordinates, and exposes the performative nature of courtly etiquette. Through this strategic deployment of impoliteness, the text converts socially transgressive behaviors into potent socio-political commentary, where violations of interactional norms serve to unmask deeper systemic absurdities, all while maintaining

alignment with Culpeper's theoretical model of power-holding impoliteness, face threat, discourse dominance, and institutional legitimacy.

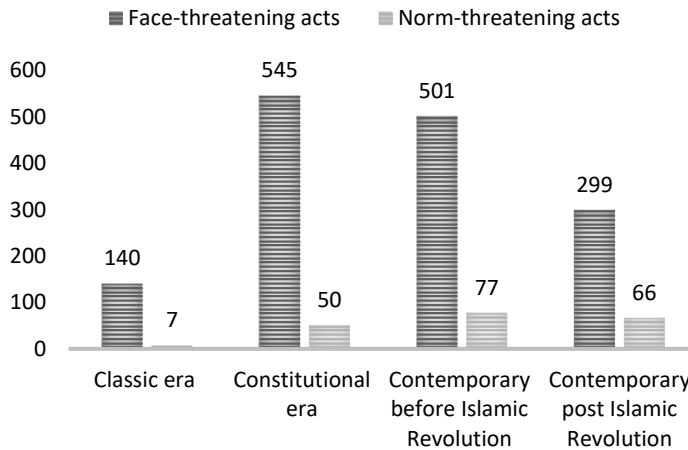
Table 10: Social Face-Threatening Acts in Charand-o parand



A defining characteristic of totalitarian societies and those promising a "utopian ideal" is their reliance on rigid ideologies and the redefinition of words with new meanings—a strategy that enables rulers to control citizens' thought processes through official, restricted cultural lexicons. "Institutional impoliteness," which holds the largest share in the aforementioned framework, represents a type of impoliteness marked by the use of these normalized terms and phrases imposed by power structures.

The high frequency of this strategy's application demonstrates that in authoritarian societies, norms, public expectations, and social obligations are significantly defined and imposed upon the collective consciousness by the ruling class. Any failure to adhere to these expectations is then interpreted as impoliteness. Culpeper (2011) similarly argues that people expect others to exhibit specific behaviors in particular contexts, and the violation of these expectations is perceived as impoliteness. Thus, the increased prevalence of institutional impoliteness reflects the societal mental framework and the expectations surrounding the concept of impoliteness in such societies.

Table 11: A Comparative Analysis of Norm-Threatening Acts and Face-threatening acts



According to Culpeper's framework (2005, 2011), impoliteness strategies are divided into two main categories: first, face-threatening acts directed at the addressee, such as mockery, humiliation, and personal insults; and second, norm-threatening acts that challenge social conventions, including the subversion of authority, social rights and obligations, or collective values. A historical examination of Persian satire, from classical examples like Obeyd Zakani to contemporary works, reveals a gradual increase—particularly during and after the Constitutional Revolution—in the proportion of impoliteness strategies targeting the addressee's face. In pre-Constitutional Iran, the systematic and extensive censorship of the Qajar era, which suppressed explicit critical discourse, fostered the development of symbolic, metaphorical, and often cryptic language in satirical works. However, with the advent of the Constitutional Movement and the emergence of relative freedom, satirists adopted a sharper, more direct tone, seeking to express historically repressed anger through revelatory and liberating means. In this context, impoliteness was not merely a linguistic transgression but a deliberate strategy aimed at dismantling the sanctified, authoritarian image of political and religious power. The satire of the Constitutional era can thus be understood as a linguistic response to decades of suppression—one that transgressed conventional politeness boundaries in pursuit of democratizing power discourse.

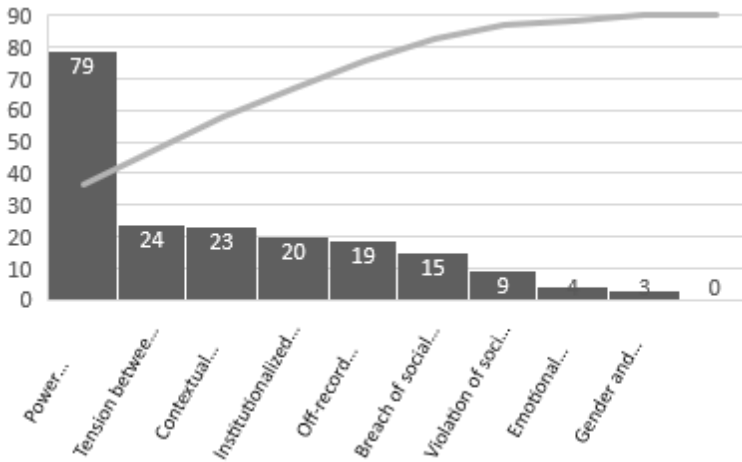
This shift can be attributed to structural transformations in Iran's public discourse, which can be explained through three primary dimensions: First, the growing emphasis on individualism in contemporary literature. With the advent of modernity, urbanization, and mass education, discourses have evolved from traditional collectivism toward a focus on individual psychological and personal characteristics. This transformation paved the way for contemporary satire to increasingly employ linguistic acts that directly target individuals, such as mocking personal flaws, lifestyles, appearances, or behaviors.

Second, the decline of opportunities for direct political criticism during periods of heightened political restrictions particularly after the 1953 coup and the Islamic Revolution led satire to shift from norm-threatening acts (which carried greater punitive risks) toward safer strategies like personal ridicule and low-risk social humor (such as family, cultural, or ethnic jokes).

Third, the rise of popular culture and media-driven satire, fueled by the expansion of audiovisual media and social networks, has pushed satirical language toward more accessible and often sharper styles. These predominantly focus on individual-centric humor—such as jokes about celebrities, politicians, or specific social groups—rather than structured critiques of power dynamics.

Thus, the increased prevalence of face-threatening acts in contemporary Persian satire reflects not merely political changes, but rather a transformation in the discursive system, the emergence of new media, and shifts in audience structure and cultural preferences. This analysis demonstrates that Persian satire has historically evolved from "power-oriented political satire" toward "individual-centric social satire" a transition that signifies the movement from a collective, reformist discourse to a personalized, critical discourse grounded in micro-level experiences within modern contexts.

Table 12: Norm-Threatening Acts in the Selected Corpus



Analysis of impoliteness strategies in four prominent works of Persian satire (*Resale-ye Delgoshā*, *The Mouse and the Cat*, *Charand-o Parand*, and *Mashallah Khan in the Court of Harun al-Rashid*) reveals that the linguistic act of "challenging power" exhibits the highest frequency among norm-threatening strategies. This characteristic can be interpreted as reflecting Iran's historical and social context, where satire has functioned as a vehicle for symbolic resistance and socio-political critique due to authoritarian structures and constraints on direct expression.

Building upon Culpeper's framework, linguistic impoliteness in Persian satire constitutes not merely a breach of politeness norms, but rather a deliberate act to undermine power structures and expose institutional inequalities a phenomenon that has persisted from the classical period through the post-Islamic Revolution era. This continuity underscores the enduring tension between popular discourse and official power structures within Persian satirical literature.

Table 13: A Comparative Analysis of Face-Threatening Acts Across Historical Periods

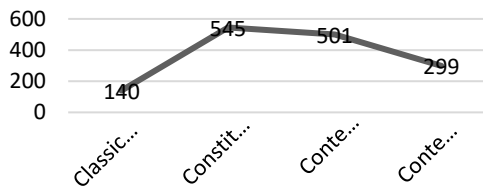
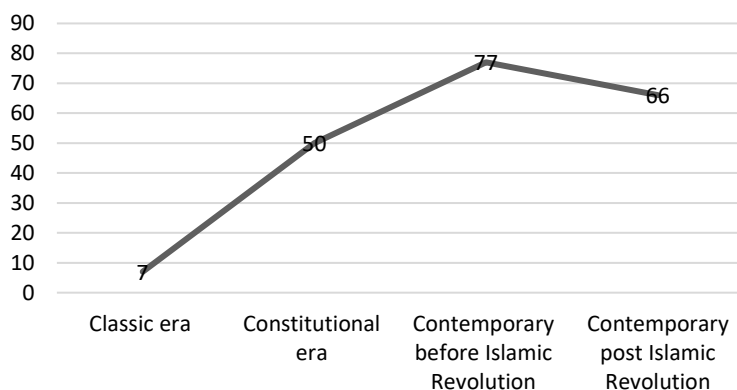


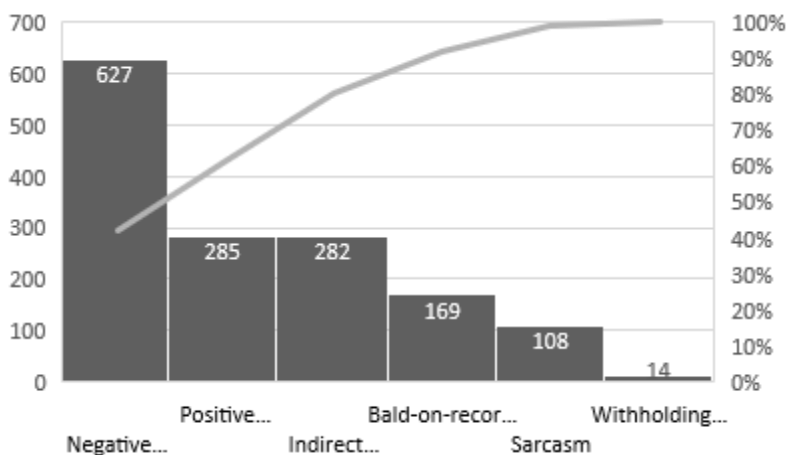
Table 14: A Comparative Analysis of Norm-Threatening Acts Across Historical Periods



In comparing pre- and post-revolution satirical works according to the charts, we observe that both categories of face-threatening acts and social norm-threatening acts have shown a declining trend. After Iran's Islamic Revolution, the political and social environment developed in such a way that opportunities for direct and explicit criticism of individuals and collective norms became restricted. Under these conditions, linguistic acts that might compromise individual autonomy, personal dignity, or social structures became subject to greater caution. Due to the prevailing institutional and cultural frameworks, more implicit and cautious methods of critical expression became prevalent to prevent potential reactions. This trend led to a reduction in both face-threatening and norm-threatening acts, resulting in a more measured and conservative application of satirical and critical language.

On the other hand, one might argue that the consolidation of new social norms and the reinforcement of official discourses in society have led to broader acceptance of existing values and rules by the majority. In such an environment, direct or even indirect criticism of norms or prominent figures becomes less feasible, and social actors often avoid contentious and provocative expressions to maintain social harmony and security. Consequently, the combination of these factors has resulted in the more cautious application of satirical and impolite language, adhering to cultural and social frameworks, while reducing direct threatening acts.

Table 15: The Total Frequency of Face-Threatening Acts across the Selected Corpus



According to Culpeper's (2005) theory, negative impoliteness constitutes a linguistic act aimed at damaging the addressee's "negative face" - that is, undermining their autonomy, agency, and private sphere - which demonstrates the highest frequency in the aforementioned chart. This type of impoliteness may include threats, insults, humiliation, disregard, imposition, or inducing feelings of insecurity in the addressee. An examination of Persian satire from the classical period to the present reveals that among individual face-threatening acts, negative impoliteness strategies occur with greater frequency. This predominance can be analyzed with reference to the cultural and discursive characteristics of Iranian society.

Negative impoliteness, through its structure based on humiliation or mockery, enhances the audience's sense of empathy while simultaneously creating "psychological distance" between the audience and the target of satire, thereby eliciting laughter. By laughing at the "ridiculed other," the audience perceives themselves as superior or more knowledgeable.

This psychological mechanism, addressed in humor theories such as Freud's relief theory (Christoff & Dauphin, 2017), and superiority theory, is active in many Persian satirical texts. It explains why strategies based on negative impoliteness such as teasing, belittling, and reproach are more appealing and frequent.

The language of respectful mockery and dignified humiliation has been institutionalized in the Persian satirical tradition. From Ubayd Zakani to Dehkhoda and Gol-Agha, Persian satire has been characterized by a linguistic approach that centers on respectful derision maintaining a humorous exterior while concealing sharp criticism within. This pattern has led to the predominance of negative impoliteness, often concealed through irony, mockery, and linguistic distancing, over more explicit or positive politeness strategies.

Consequently, this model has persisted from the classical to the contemporary period, demonstrating that negative impoliteness in Iranian culture serves not merely as a tool for eliciting laughter but as a means of "social criticism in permissible guise.

7. Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The present study, by analyzing verbal impoliteness strategies in five prominent works of Persian satire (*Charand-o Parand* by Dehkhoda, *Mashallah Khan dar Barghah-e Harun al-Rashid* by Pezeshkzad, *Resaleh-ye Delgoshah* and *Mouse and Cat* by Obeyd Zakani, and *Chertopia* by Aydin Sayar Saree), demonstrated that impoliteness primarily manifests in the form of face-threatening acts (88.9%, 1,475 out of 1,659 instances), employing negative impoliteness strategies particularly ridicule and mockery (298 instances), indirect impoliteness (282 instances), bald-on-record impoliteness (169 instances), negative other-labeling (148 instances), and mock politeness or sarcasm (108 instances). Threatening social norms (11.1%, 186 instances) was less frequent, with negative face-threatening impoliteness (620 instances) being the most dominant. This pattern aligns with Iran's collectivist culture, where social pressures for conformity have transformed satire into a medium for channeling suppressed criticisms against power structures, religion, and official morality.

In Dehkhoda's *Charand-o Parand*, out of 577 instances of impoliteness, 537 involve face-threatening acts and 40 target social norms, with predominant strategies of ridicule/mockery (152 instances), indirect impoliteness (157 instances), and mock politeness (70 instances). In Pezeshkzad's *Mashallah Khan*, among 578 cases, 501 constitute face threats while 77 threaten social norms, exhibiting high frequencies of negative other-labeling (62 instances), bald-on-record impoliteness (60 instances), and

ridicule/mockery (54 instances). Obeyd Zakani's works, with 147 total instances, primarily employ face threats (140 instances), with ridicule/mockery (36 instances) and metaphor (33 instances) as recurrent strategies. In Siyar Sarie's *Chertopia*, 299 of 365 instances involve face threats versus 66 targeting social norms, marked by prominent strategies of ridicule/mockery (56 instances) and bald-on-record impoliteness (42 instances).

In Persian satire, impoliteness often appears through *respectful ridicule* using irony and metaphor to criticize sharply while avoiding direct conflict with censorship. This style fits well within Iran's collectivist culture (Saboori et al., 2015), where values like group harmony and avoiding confrontation are central. In such a context, openly criticizing authority or social norms can be seen as risky or inappropriate. That's why satirists often rely on negative impoliteness like sarcasm, mockery, or subtle humiliation not to show off personal opinions, but to express shared frustration without breaking social unity. According to Culpeper's (1996) model, negative impoliteness threatens the hearer's negative face meaning their independence, freedom, and dignity. While this strategy may seem more common in individualistic cultures that value personal honesty and autonomy, Persian satire shows how it can be adapted to a collectivist setting, where impoliteness is more accepted in informal or literary spaces. This has allowed satire to become a clever and effective way to voice dissent under cultural and political limits.

A comparative analysis reveals a decline in social norm-threatening acts in post-revolutionary Persian satire (post-1979), primarily attributed to official censorship and the consolidation of ideological discourse. While pre-revolution satire served as a tool for critiquing power structures, subsequent political restrictions and censorship redirected satirical works toward individual behaviors and everyday matters. This shift from institutional to individual critique - though not absolute - has coincided with the growth of urban individualistic culture and new media platforms.

The findings highlight satire as a mirror of Iran's intricate cultural and historical landscape, where impoliteness functions as a deliberate tool for socio-political critique and resistance. The post-revolution shift toward individualistic impoliteness strategies has redefined the role of satire in Persian literature—from a vehicle for

social reform to a means of expressing the constraints of everyday life highlighting its adaptability to evolving socio-cultural dynamics.

The study encountered several limitations: its exclusive focus on written works, the limited selection of texts from each historical period, and insufficient analysis of psycholinguistic, gender, class, and ethnic factors. A more comprehensive examination encompassing diverse satirical forms (oral, visual, digital) along with these variables could yield a more nuanced understanding of impoliteness in Persian satire and enrich future scholarship.

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