Persian Cultural Pragmatic Schema Use Across Generations of Immigrants and Borders

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Language is a crucial component of culture and has traditionally been an essential instrument for conveying and expressing meanings (Mir-Djalali, 1992), especially for cultural nuances such as *cultural pragmatic schema* (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2011). Cultural pragmatic schemas are important tools for efficient interaction, which can significantly contribute to fluency or errors in communication (Nishida, 2005; Sharifian, 2008; Thomas, 1983). Notably, in the context of migration, considering its inherent fundamental changes experienced by immigrants, the dual cultural contact can create confusion and complexity in their cultural perception and practices following challenges in adapting to a new culture while preserving an ethnicity, which often affects their subsequent generations (Searle & Ward, 1990; Williams & Berry, 1991)

This study seeks to explore individuals' connection or reconnection to their roots by utilizing cultural-linguistic features, particularly cultural pragmatic schemas, within Iranian society, considering their migration background. We anticipate that migration influences the use of culturally specific linguistic features due to a lack of relevant social context. Several scholars have made valuable contributions to the study of Persian pragmatic schema in both Iranian community and immigrant populations, such as studies on Iranians in Canada (Haghighat, 2016), the United States (Mahdavi, 2012), and Australia (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2011). Given the existing gap in the diversity of Iranian populations studied, particularly the lack of literature on Iranians in different regions, this study aims to fill the gap by including Iranians in the Middle East and Europe and considering their value orientation and national identification. This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, including a recall paradigm and quantitative questionnaires aiming to understand the relationship between migration and culturally specified pragmatic schemas.

Immigrants

Throughout human history, migration has been a recurring trend and is not a newly established phenomenon. From the evolution of humans to religious stories, migration is continuous for various reasons. Migration is defined as a process in which people permanently leave their country of birth for another place due to a variety of reasons (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024). The United Nations reports an increasing trend in international migration, with

more than 281 million immigrants estimated in 2022. All of this highlights that society is shifting toward multiculturalism and globalization more than ever before (Maddux et al., 2021). According to the World Migration Report (2024), certain countries are common destinations for most immigrants, like the United States, and some countries have more immigrants than locals. For instance, in the United Arab Emirates, over 88% of the population comprises immigrants.

The generation of immigrants does not follow a consistent definition and varies based on literature and countries (Schneider, 2016). The American definition of immigrant generations categorizes people who left their country at school ages as "one-and-a-half generation," while native-born individuals of immigrant parents are classified as "second-generation" immigrants. In contrast, the European definition varies by country. Generally, "second-generation" immigrants refer to foreign-born children of immigrants, and in a less structured concept, a person who arrived in a host country between the ages of 0-4 is included in this category. Additionally, "one-and-a-half generation" immigrant is used for individuals who arrived in the host country during their adolescent years (Zhou, 2003). The "one-and-a-half generation" is more similar to first-generation immigrants, while second-generation immigrants are counted as immigrants without having experienced migration themselves (Schneider, 2016).

Exposure to different cultures can create confusion and difficulties for immigrants. When Immigrants leave their home country, they leave behind all that familiar and comfortable, facing major changes not only in their environment but also in their social, cultural, and psychological adjustments (Searle & Ward, 1990). This dual contact with cultures and languages can lead to acculturation and enculturation (Williams & Berry, 1991). Acculturation is the process of adapting to new cultures (Chae & Foley, 2010), progressing through several stages, including cultural resistance, cultural shift, cultural fusion, and cultural diversity (Padilla, 1980). In contrast, enculturation refers to a re-adjustment to one's own ethnic and heritage culture. All these points show that displacement for Immigrants is not just a change in physical space; it also contributes to various transformations.

Transformation in Language

Language plays a crucial role in migration, especially in cultural orientation (Berry et al., 2006), which may significantly influence acculturation and integration into a new culture (Shahim, 2007). At the same time, language can be vital in preserving a heritage culture and facilitating

identity as it internalizes culture and connects people with their roots (Guardado, 2002; Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2001). As a result of language contact, two possible outcomes may occur regarding the immigrant's mother tongue: language shift or maintenance (Turkistani & Almoaily, 2023; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). Language shift towards the host country's or dominant language usually occurs for practical reasons, such as educational, social, and economic advantages (Kiani et al., 2020). However, this shift can lead to extreme language death if the mother tongue is entirely lost and can result in identity change (Nishanthi, 2020; Pauwels, 2004). Guardado (2002) suggests that language loss occurs when the language has a low status or when a language shift occurs within the home. Considering the importance of perseverance of heritage language in the maintenance of connection to roots, Krashen (1996) reports less heritage language maintenance across immigrant generations.

Transformation in National Identity

National identity is a construct that helps individuals feel a sense of belonging and defines their position in relation to broader social contexts (Henderson & McEwen, 2005). Internalizing cultural elements shapes identity and fosters a shared sense of belonging (Anderson, 1991). Roccas et al. (2006) argue that national identity is composed of attachment, which refers to identification with the nation, and glorification, which refers to viewing the nation and its symbols as superior and worthy of respect compared to others. It is important to note that due to immigrant displacement, immigrants usually develop a national identity that constantly compares and evaluates their home and receiving country (Mahalingam, 2013).

Norton (2000) posits that culture, identity, and language are interconnected, and the mother tongue, by internalizing cultural elements, develops a national identity concerning an immigrant's home culture (Guardado, 2002; Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2001). Vallentin (2019) demonstrates that since language is a crucial cultural component, it can intentionally or unintentionally identify with the place or group with which an individual identifies or belongs.

Ho and Bauder (2010) refer to immigrants as chameleons who select their identity to manifest themselves depending on the context. This means that some individuals identify based on their country of origin, others by their receiving country, and some by a combination of both, such as the "Chinese American" label (Rumbaut, 1994). Similarly, a study with Iranian immigrants

in Canada highlighted identification with Iran after decades of residency abroad (Haghighat, 2016).

Transformation In Values

It is generally accepted that values are the underlying drives for our social attitudes (Boer & Fischer, 2013), acting on various priorities determined by genetic heritage, social experience, and location (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). Rohan (2000) demonstrated that the value system is a mental framework connected to the cognitive structure of our beliefs, and exposure to a new culture and language may lead to changes in these values (Haghighat, 2016). The host country can considerably impact the value and cultural practices brought from the home country. A notable example is a study on Iranian immigrants in the United States, which observed significant changes in attitudes toward marriage, family, and sexuality after migration (Hojat et al., 1999).

Iranian Culture and Persian Language

Persian, also known as Farsi, is an Indo-European language spoken by Iranians and in some neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and Tajikistan. While Persian is the official and primary language in Iran, the country also recognizes 75 minority languages, as stated in Article 15 of the Iranian constitution. Azeri is the most widely spoken minority language, with approximately 16% of the population using it (Haddadian-Moghaddam & Meylaerts, 2015).

Due to the significant influence of historical and cultural context on social practices (Hodges, 2006), it's important to note that Iranian culture is generally known as collectivist. However, it is gradually shifting towards a more individualistic culture, creating a generational gap. (Namazie & Tayeb, 2006). Saboori et al. (2016) demonstrate that the Iranian community is experiencing an identity crisis due to historical events characterized by the interplay and divergence among various components of Iranian identity, including national, Islamic, and modern identities.

Iranian cultures exhibit specific and unique social behaviors and Persian politeness strategies reflect this uniqueness at various levels, including pragmatics (Shiri, 2023) and hierarchical levels (Eslami-Ras et al., 2010). Beeman (1986) emphasized that the social practices

of Iranians in everyday life can be considered an art that requires complex linguistic skills. A fundamental cultural force and social schema in Persian culture is "aberu," which emphasizes social approval and public perception (Rodziewicz, 2022). Izadi (2017) points out that this concept corresponds to the notion of 'face,' which was introduced by Goffman (1967). The term "Aberu" translates to "water of the face" and is a combination of the word "ab," meaning water or liquid, and "ru," which refers to face, surface, and external features (Rodziewicz, 2022). The concept of "Aberudari" Symbolically represents the face as a container that can be filled with honor, like water, and be preserved, while 'aberurizi" emphasizes that this water can be shed (Izadi, 2017). Aberu has two primary sources: in-group members' attempts to meet society's expectations (Izadi, 2017) and their possessions, such as money (Sharifian, 2007). This means that in financial difficulties, pretending to be wealthy to maintain the aberu is "aberudari," or when there is a lack of food to host the guests, it can result in losing the aberu or "aberurizi ."This highlights the sophisticated sociocultural system of the Iranian community.

Iranian Immigrants

In Iranian-rooted immigrants, a strong sense of identification and love for their homeland is dominant. Even among immigrants who have never visited Iran, there is a tendency to emphasize their Iranian origin to others (Moghadam, 2021). Additionally, music and poetry produced by Iranian immigrants often reflect themes of pain from separation from their homeland (Mahdi, 1998).

Considering their attachment to their homeland, several studies have highlighted a high degree of language maintenance among Iranian Immigrants worldwide. A study conducted on Iranian immigrants in Canada revealed a tendency to form Iranian social circles, predominantly speaking Farsi, valuing their mother tongue, and identifying as Iranian even after decades of residency abroad. They emphasized the importance of teaching Farsi to the next generations and maintained daily and special occasions consumption of Iranian cuisine (Haghighat, 2016). Kaveh (2018) noted that the Persian language was not maintained exclusively; rather, it was often preserved alongside other dominant languages through strategies such as celebrating Persian holidays, reading and listening to Persian music and poems, and vacationing in Iran.

A study on Iranian immigrants in the United States with high levels of acculturation found no decrease in the usage of the Persian cultural pragmatic schema *ta'arof* (Mahdavi, 2012).

Sharifian and Jamarani (2011) also highlight that Iranian immigrants use the pragmatic schema *sharmandegi* to deliver unfortunate news even while communicating in English.

Schema

The notion of schema, which spans multiple disciplines such as cognitive psychology and linguistic studies, has been defined as "an active organization of the past" (Bartlett, 1932, p. 201). In essence, schema facilitates the effortless perception and organization of new information by relying on existing templates of information categorization (Sharifian, 2008). Bartlett (1932) played a pivotal role in developing the notion of the schema, demonstrating that schemas are dynamic as we constantly seek to connect what we already know with new information. Based on an experiment with the recall paradigm, Bartlett's findings emphasized that the story recalls would become more simplified, less detailed, and more consistent with familiar schema in addition to some extra explanations to make the story more coherent from their perspective.

Rumelhart (1980) further illustrated that schemas could interact and merge due to their active and dynamic nature, emphasizing their adaptability to various cognitive perspectives. Schemas are not limited to conveying only positive or neutral information; they also transmit the value and attitude bias associated with the carried information (Beals, 1998). At the core, schemas play a crucial role in shaping how information is categorized, perceived, and understood due to their versatile, dynamic, and adaptive nature.

Cultural Pragmatic Schema

Human experiences are primarily shaped by cultural encounters, indicating that schemes operate not only on an individual level but also on a collective and cultural level (Bartlett, 1932). A cultural schema is a cognitive organization formed through social interactions and collective cognition, helping individuals make sense of their own culture and navigate cross-cultural experiences (Malcolm & Sharifian, 2002). Palmer (1996) highlights that cultural schemas encompass both language and culture and when individuals engage with culture and communicate using language, they are essentially operating these schemas. Cultural schemas are underlying facilitators of pragmatic meanings, and when speakers employ them in communication, they are

referred to as "cultural pragmatic schema" (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2011; Sharifian, 2016). Almutairi et al. (2019) describe the cultural pragmatic schema as an "Umbrella of superordinate clouds of social codes" that regulates human interactions (p. 3).

Sharifian (2016) introduces a hierarchical concept of the "pragmatic set," explaining that each cultural pragmatic schema may emphasize a variety of pragmemes linked with specific speech acts. Each pragmeme, linguistically performs several practs or utterances to achieve its goal. Pragmemes are often closely associated with specific cultural inferences and expectations; therefore, possessing the necessary knowledge to interpret pragmeme and use practs accurately is crucial (Sharifian, 2013). Sharifian (2016) emphasized the heterogeneous distribution nature of schemas, noting that while members of the same group may share some culturally significant schemas, they do not necessarily share all of them. When common and collective schemas are shared, various pragmatic tools can be effectively used. In the case of immigrants, reaching this level of communication can lead to cross-cultural adaptation to a new culture (Nishida, 2005). However, miscommunication occurs when these schemas are not shared, resulting in cross-cultural pragmatic failure and feelings of discomfort, especially in the context of migration (Sharifian, 2008; Thomas, 1983).

Persian Pragmatic Schema

The presence of cultural pragmatic schema in Persian communication helps speakers express politeness within social and cultural contexts. The pragmatic schemas often manifest in pre-made conventional expressions speakers use to generate and formulate phrases (Sharifian, 2016). Sharifian and Jamarani (2011) demonstrated that these schemas assist Iranians in maintaining a clear awareness of asymmetries in interactional level exchanges. Four main Persian culture-specific pragmatic schema types were identified based on various literature: *sharmandegi, ru-dar-bayesti, shekasteh-nafsi, and ta'arof*. According to Sharifian and Tayebi (2017), these four main pragmatic schemas, along with "aberu," are constituting factors of Persian politeness.

Sharmandegi

Sharmandegi, a Persian cultural pragmatic schema proposed by Sharifian and Jamarani (2011) and translated as "being ashamed" in English, commonly encourages speakers to express sentiments such as "I am ashamed" (sharmandam) or "You make me ashamed" (sharmandam

mikonid). Although this schema is frequently used in various situations in Iranians' daily lives, it does not convey the literal meaning of being ashamed (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2011). Its usage is prominent in Expressing gratitude, making offers, requesting, accepting, or refusing an offer or service, and apologizing. In Persian culture, which is marked by a keen awareness of reciprocity, *sharmandegi* plays roles in situations such as expressing guilt in appreciation, symbolizing hospitality, recognizing the value of a request, or reducing potential face-threatening acts when rejecting offers.

Ru-dar-bayesti

According to Sharifian (2016), *ru-dar-bayesti i*s a Persian pragmatic schema that literally translates to "face-out-of-obligation." It serves as a refusal strategy during moments of perceived distance and hesitation among Persian speakers. In simpler terms, it reflects the sense of distance that leads to hesitancy in accepting or declining an offer to avoid face-threatening acts. In extreme cases, *ru-dar-bayesti* can result in not rejecting an offer, regardless of one's actual needs (Sharifian, 2016). Some assert that *ru-dar-bayesti* is a manifestation of *ta'arof* (Mostofi, 2003).

Shekasteh-nafsi

Shekasteh-nafsi, a Persian pragmatic schema introduced by Sharifian (2008, 2005), is a composite term formed by the "shekast-eh," meaning break, and "nafs," referring to the self. This concept is similar to the English notion of "downgrading" (Shirinbakhsh & Rasekh, 2013) and "modesty" (Sharifian, 2008). Rooted in Sufi traditions, *shekasteh-nafsi* is characterized by a tendency to downplay one's talents and skills while praising others (Sharifian, 2016). It functions to avoid a self-centric view of personal achievements while fostering a collective viewpoint to express politeness (Sharifian, 2017).

Shekasteh-nafsi manifests when individuals downplay their position and attributes, sharing praise with others or attributing it to external sources such as God, Parents, or fortune (Sharifian, 2005, 2016). Compliment responses are highly culturally specified (sharifian 2005, 2008), and Persian speakers frequently employ *shekasteh-nafsi* to provide polite responses (Sharifian et al., 2019). According to Shirinbakhsh and Rasekh (2013), contemporary trends influenced by globalization and the modernization of Iranian society suggest that younger generations are

gradually employing this schema less frequently, shifting toward a more accepting response to compliments.

Ta'arof

Ta'arof is a complex and intricate cultural phenomenon deeply rooted in Iranian social interactions. Although providing a precise and easily translatable definition is challenging, this pragmatic schema is very well-known and dominant. Various studies described it as an "all-pervading mode of polite communication" (Koutlaki, 2010, p. 58), "unwritten laws of elaborate civility" (Mostofi, 2003, p. 701), "active, ritualized realization of differential status in interaction" (Beeman, 1986, p. 56), and "the great national trait of exaggerated politeness, modesty, and self-deprecation that Iranians seems to be born with" (Majd, 2008, p.65). Shiri (2023) considered *ta'arof* the "backbone of the Persian politeness system" (p. 16).

Ta'arof manifests in various aspects of Iranians' daily lives, involving repeated social gestures in situations such as greeting, leave-taking, offering or accepting goods and services, and entering spaces (Sharifian, 2016). For instance, individuals might insist on letting someone else go first in line or enter a room, or they might guide a guest to sit in a higher position to show high respect and acknowledge the guests' importance (Beeman, 2020). The response typically involves resistance or multiple refusals, and the term "ta'arofee" is used to characterize individuals who exhibit a significant and exaggerated use of *ta'arof* in their interactions (Shafiee Nahrkhalaji et al., 2013).

Beeman (2020) identifies the core principle of *ta'arof* as symbolic other-raising and self-lowering, reflecting a hierarchical orientation of Iranian culture. For example, addressing others with higher-status verbs and lowering oneself is common in Persian interactions. However, Shiri (2023) disagrees with the idea of inherent self-lowering in *ta'aro*f. Instead, using *ta'arof* in interactions can help maintain a balance between both sides.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to explore the relationship between migration and the use of pragmatic schemas. The following hypothesis examines the use of Persian pragmatic schemas in two generations of Iranian immigrants and non-immigrants.

Utilizing Bartlett's (1932) serial recall paradigm, we hypothesize that recall accuracy would decrease over time and become more schematic as time passes (H1). We also anticipate that there are differences in the types and distribution of schemas. We expect that *ta'arof* will be the most recalled (H2), self-recognized (H3), and explicitly named schema(H4), while the *shekasteh-nafsi* is the least. Furthermore, we expect individuals with higher conservative values (H5) and higher Iranian identity (H6) will better recognize culturally specific pragmatic schemas in the story.

Method

Participants

A sample of 102 participants were recruited randomly via social media platforms. Only two criteria for participation were applied: participants should hold an Iranian nationality and be no younger than 18 years old. 61 participants who were either under 18 or did not complete all three sessions were excluded. The remaining sample consisted of 41 Iranian participants (M_{age}= 25.37, SD= 8.16, 10 males, 31 females). Among these, 49% are first-generation immigrants, mainly residing in UAE (50%) and Hungary (40%), with a mean of 14 years being abroad (range=2-37). Additionally, 27% of the sample were second-generation immigrants, all born in the UAE, with the majority never living in Iran (73%). The remaining 27% of participants were born and currently living in Iran.

Measures

Cultural Lifestyle Inventory

The cultural lifestyle inventory (CLSI), developed by Mendoza (1989), is a self-report tool designed to measure the acculturation level of immigrants. In this study, the CLSI was utilized to assess the use of Persian or its dialects within the sample.

The CLSI assesses five dimensions: intra-family language use, extra-family language use, social affiliations and activities, cultural familiarity, and cultural identification and pride. For the specific research objectives, three dimensions were selectively utilized: intra-family language use (e.g., When you talk to your grandparents, in what language do you speak?), extra-family language

use (e.g., When you talk with your friends, in what language do you speak?), and cultural familiarity (e.g., What holidays do you celebrate?).

All the items in the CLSI were back-translated to Persian by native Persian speakers. Participants were instructed to read each item and select the option that best matched their life. The response scale was adopted to Persian and Iranian participants as follows: 1- only or mostly Persian/dialects of Persian, 2- only or primarily a foreign language, 3-equally Persian or dialects and foreign language, 4- does not apply.

Universal Value Questionnaire

The universal value questionnaire by Schwartz and Cieciuch (2022) was designed to assess 19 values through 57 items. Each item describes a person, and participants are asked to rate based on their similarity from 1 (not like me at all) to 6 (very much like me). Due to the purpose of the study, dimensions of openness to experience and conservativeness were exclusively used, each consisting of several subcategories, with a total of 30 items. For openness to experience, the subcategories included self-direction (addressing independence and creativity), hedonism (reflecting life enjoyment), and stimulation (pointing to an exciting and varied life). In conservativeness, subcategories comprised conformity (addressing obedience), security (addressing stability, family, and national security), and tradition (pointing to moderation and respect for tradition). Cronbach's alpha for the openness to experience and conservativeness categories indicated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.67$ and 0.71, respectively).

National Identity Questionnaire

The national identity questionnaire by Roccas et al. 2006 assesses two factors: attachment (e.g., It is important to me that I view myself as a member of the Iranian people) and glorification (e.g., compared to other ethnic groups, Iranians are particularly good) using a total of 8 items. Participants are instructed to indicate their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree) to (7 = strongly agree). The questionnaire demonstrated good internal reliability for both attachment (α=0.82) and glorification (α=0.73).

Working Memory Questionnaire

The working memory questionnaire (Vallat-Azouvi et al., 2012) is a self-report instrument designed to assess daily working memory deficits. The questionnaire was translated into Persian and was utilized to ensure the validity of participants' responses in recalls. It includes 30 randomly presented items and covers three dimensions relevant to both healthy individuals and patients with brain injuries. The dimensions assess short-term storage, attention, and executive control. Each dimension comprises ten items, which subjects should rate on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (no problem at all) to 4 (very severe problem in everyday life). In this study, Cronbach's alpha indicated good internal reliability for dimensions of attention (α=0.76), executive control (α=0.77), and short-term storage (α=0.83).

Recognizing Pragmatic Schemas

Additional self-report questions were included to assess participants' recognition of each pragmatic schema in the story. Participants were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (did not recognize at all) to 5 (completely recognized) how much they could recognize each specific pragmatic schema in the story. The pragmatic schemas assessed were *ru-dar-bayesti*, *ta'arof*, *shekasteh-nafsi*, and *sharmandegi*.

Persian Cultural Story

At the very beginning of the survey, the participants were exposed to a story. The story was culturally rich and carefully infused with elements of Persian culture, totaling 944 words. It was written from a first-person, singular perspective and addressed a topic related to hosting an unexpected guest.

To ensure the story's effectiveness and reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 23 native Persian speakers residing in Iran (M_{age}=38.82, SD= 14.74, 9 Male, 14 Female). Participants were randomly recruited for the pilot test. They were asked to read each sentence and rate it on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not aligning at all) to 6 (completely aligned), indicating how well each sentence aligned with Persian culture and communication style. Schematic sentences were expected to have higher alignments with Persian culture and lower ratings for neutral sentences. Schematic sentences with high alignment ratings were retained, while neutral sentences that

received higher-than-expected rates were adjusted for greater neutrality. Based on the standard deviation and rankings, necessary adjustments were made.

The final story used in the experiment comprised 30 sentences: 13 highly schematic and 17 neutral sentences. The schematic sentences were derived from four main pragmatic schemas: *ta'arof, shekasteh-nafsi, sharmandegi, and ru-dar-bayesti*. *Ta'arof* appeared in the story 9 times, *ru-dar-bayesti* 1 time, *shekasteh-nafsi* 5 times, and *sharmandegi* also 5 times. Due to the interplaying nature of schemas, each schema was presented either in isolation or as a combination.

Procedure

Participants were informed about the longitudinal nature of the study and provided with a consent form. They were asked to agree to provide their email addresses for follow-up sessions, which were deleted after all sessions were completed. The United Ethical Review Committee for Research in Psychology (EPKEB) approved the study with reference number 2024-004.

The experiment was conducted entirely online for three weeks and exclusively in Persian. After agreeing to the consent form, participants were prompted to create a unique code for identification that they could use in subsequent sessions. Demographic information, including age, gender, place of birth, and current residency, was collected, along with additional questions regarding the participants' residency history. Participants were then instructed to read the story provided. Following Bartlett's (1932) original experimental paradigm, participants completed the working memory and national identity questionnaire immediately after reading the story as both distractors and a means to fill the 15-minute gap between reading and first recall. Following this interval, participants were prompted to recall the story. The instruction emphasized the importance of recalling as much as they could remember without being concerned about accuracy. The prompt was: "Recall it as much as you remember. Accuracy is not what we are looking for, and write as if you are telling it to someone who has never heard of it." (Bergman & Roediger, 1999).

The follow-up sessions were sent to participants via their email addresses. After filling in their unique code, they were immediately asked to recall the story read in the first session as much as they remembered. In session 2, participants were asked to complete the cultural lifestyle inventory questionnaire after recalling the story. Similarly, after recalling the story in session 3, participants were instructed to fill out the value questionnaire and Persian pragmatic schema recognition questions (see Table 1). Due to the significant decrease in participant numbers from

session 1 until the last session, the provided results are based on those who participated in all three sessions, except explicit naming results. Due to the sample size, grouping participants based on residency was not achievable.

Table 1

Sessions Details

Session number	Session details			
1	Demographics and reading the story	Working Memory Questionnaire	National Identity Questionnaire	Recall of story
2	Recall of story	Cultural Lifestyle Inventory		
3	Recall of story	Universal Value Questionnaire	Pragmatic Schema Recognition Questions	

Data Analysis

Each session recall was coded based on accuracy and schematic rate of recall. For accuracy, participants received 1 point for each item if they accurately recalled the sentence or conveyed its meaning. For recall based on schematic rate, participants received a score of 1 point for each item if they recalled the exact schematic phrase, conveyed the meaning, or used the schema's name instead of explaining and recalling the sentence. This coding process was repeated for all three sessions for all participants.

In data analysis, we conducted a correlational analysis to explore the links between the main variables (H5, H6). Spearman's rho correlation was chosen due to the non-normal distribution of the data. Descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the distribution of Persian language use within the sample through the lifestyle inventory questionnaire. Repeated measure ANOVA was used to assess the effect of memory performance on recalls. Additionally, to assess participants' recall accuracy and schematic rate, the Freidman test following Durbin-Conover pairwise comparisons was utilized (H1).

Furthermore, differences in distribution and types of schemas were explored. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine the distribution of each schema in recalls (H2). Assessment of recognition of schemas was conducted via descriptive statistics and paired sample T-Test (H3). A

Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted to assess the distribution of explicit naming of schemas in recalls across the three groups of migration status (H4).

Result

Descriptives

Correlation Analysis

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between the variables. We expected that more conservative values would lead to higher recognition of schemas (H5), which, accordingly, a positive correlation was found between conservativeness and recognizing *sharmandegi* (rho(38) = 0.35, p=0.02), as well as with recognizing *ru-dar-bayesti* (rho(38) = 0.34, p=0.03). A strong positive correlation was found between recognizing *ru-dar-bayesti* and *ta'arof* (rho(39) = 0.59, p<0.01), as well as between recognizing *ru-dar-bayesti* and *sharmandegi* (rho(29) = 0.45, p<0.01). Lastly, there was a negative correlation between *shekasteh-nafsi* recognition and intra-family language use (rh0(39)=-0.38, p=0.01). No other correlation was found, even between national identity and recognizing schemas (H6) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Spearman Correlation Matrix of Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age	-														
2. Gender	-0.16	-													
3. Residency	0.08	-0.14	-												
4. Attach	0.19	-0.04	0.12	-											
5. Glor	-0.01	0.13	0.24	0.33*	-										

6.NI-Av	0.11	0.06	0.19	0.76***	0.84***	-									
7.IF-Lu	0.09	0.12	0.29	0.03	-0.07	-0.03	-								
8.EF-Lu	0.02	0.04	0.28	0.07	0.15	0.12	0.11	-							
9.Cf	-0.08	-0.02	0.26	-0.04	0.19	0.12	0.14	0.26	-						
10-Open	-0.01	-0.04	0.03	-0.15	-0.09	-0.12	0.19	0.12	0.26	-					
11-Con	-0.01	-0.12	-0.00	0.11	0.00	0.06	-0.06	0.20	0.27	0.24	-				
12-Ta'a-r	0.06	-0.32*	0.20	0.06	-0.14	-0.14	-0.10	0.22	0.13	0.02	0.13	-			
13-Sha-r	0.07	-0.06	-0.14	0.25	-0.04	0.12	-0.04	0.27	-0.09	0.26	0.35*	0.23	-		
14-Rud-r	0.11	-0.13	0.05	0.12	0.03	0.05	0.15	0.05	0.28	-0.03	0.34*	0.59***	0.45**	-	
15-She-r	0.08	-0.05	-0.32*	-0.24	-0.30	-0.33	-0.16	0.17	-0.01	0.29	0.07	0.10	0.30	-0.01	-
Mean	25.37			2.68	5.65	4.18				4.88	4.56	4.56	4.32	4.66	4.00
SD	8.16			0.87	1.37	0.77				0.68	0.64	0.87	0.79	0.82	1.34

Note. Attach: attachment to the nation, Glor: Glorification of the nation, NI-Av: National Identity Average, If-Lu: Intra-family language use, Ex-lu: Extra-family language use, Cf: Cultural familiarity, Open: openness, Con: Conservation, Taa-r: Taarof recognition, Sha-r: sharmandegi recognition. Rud-r: Ru-dar-bayesti recognition. She-r: shekasteh-nafsi recognition; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Working Memory Questionnaire

The working memory questionnaire was initially used to assess the effect of participants' working memory abilities and filtering purposes using repeated measure ANOVA. The test indicated no significant main effect of memory performance over session on the schematic recall rate ($F(2,72) = 2.84$, $p=0.06$). The exact process was repeated for the accuracy of the recall, and

similarly, no significant main effect of memory performance was observed on participants' accurate recall ($F(0.87,2) = 9.01$, $p=0.42$).

Language Use Distribution

Table 3 presents the distribution of language use among participants who completed all three sessions, regardless of their residency status. This distribution is categorized into three domains: intra-family language use, extrafamilial language use, and cultural familiarity.

Table 3

Persian Language Use Distributions

Language use	Only Persian/dialects		Only a foreign language		Both Persian and foreign language		Does not apply	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
			Intrafamily language use					
Grandparents	36	88%	1	2%	0	0%	4	10%
Father	39	95%	0	0	0	0	2	5%
Mother	41	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Siblings	35	85%	1	2%	3	7%	2	5%
Husband/wife	10	24%	0	0%	0	0%	31	76%
Children	5	12%	0	0	1	2%	35	85%
			Extrafamilial language use					
Friends	25	61%	3	7%	12	32%	0	0%
newspaper	11	27%	5	12%	10	24%	15	37%
			Cultural familiarity					
Food	19	46%	1	2%	21	51%	0	0%
Holidays	25	61%	0	0%	16	39%	0	0%

Familiar with	18	44%	0	0%	23	56%	0	0%
Future Children	4	10%	3	7%	34	83%	0	0
Comfortable	22	54%	3	7%	16	39%	0	0

Farsi was the dominant language in family settings. The majority of participants, regardless of their migration status, spoke Persian or a dialect of Persian with their grandparents (88%), siblings (85%), and children, if they had any (12%). Farsi was exclusively used with parents (father: 95%, mother:100%) and partners if they were married (24%).

Diversity in responses was more apparent in extrafamilial settings. Most of the participants built friendships with Persian speakers (61%). Cultural familiarity was notably balanced between Persian and foreign languages. Food Consumption varied, with participants consuming exclusively Persian food (46%) or both Persian and foreign foods (51%). No participant indicated celebrating foreign holidays exclusively; most celebrated Persian holidays (61%) or both Persian and foreign holidays (39%).

Everyone was familiar with Iranian culture, either exclusively (44%) or in addition to other cultures (56%). Participants were comfortable with just Iranian culture (54%) or alongside other cultures (39%), with few participants indicating greater comfort with another culture than Iranian (7%). There was a preference for bilingualism for future generations, with the majority preferring to teach both Persian and any other language to their children (83%).

Accuracy and Schematic Recall Rate

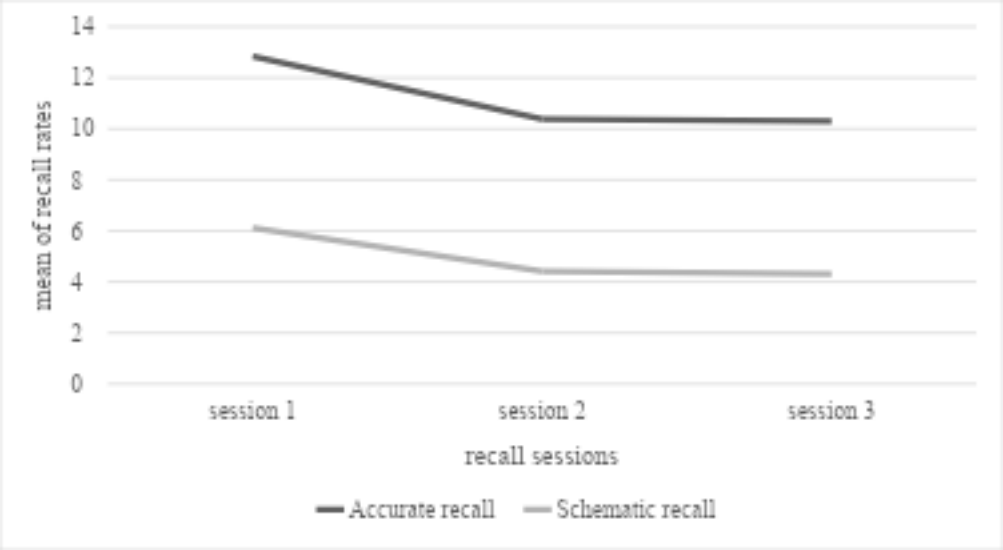
We hypothesized that accuracy would decline as the number of sessions increased, coinciding with the growth of schemas, for which the Freidman test was used for this purpose (H1). The Freidman test indicated no significant difference in accuracy rates across the three sessions ($X^2(2) = 5.22$, $p=0.07$). However, pairwise comparison using the Durbin-Conover test, consistent with our expectation, revealed that accurate recall in session 1 was significantly different from session 2 ($Q=2.17$, $p=0.03$), with session 1 showing the highest accuracy score.

However, contrary to our expectation, the Freidman test showed a significant difference in schematic rates over the three sessions ($X^2(2)=15.45$, $p<0.01$). Further pairwise comparisons

revealed a significant difference in schematic scores between session 1 and both session 2 (Q=3.54, p<0.01) and session 3 (Q=3.95, p<0.01), with session 1 having the highest schematic rate. No significant difference was found between sessions 2 and 3 (Q=0.42, p=0.67) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Schematic and Accurate Recall Rate in 1-3 Sessions



Types and Distribution of Schemas

Distribution of Schemas

Table 4 provides the distribution of schemas in recalled stories across the three sessions. The result, consistent with our hypothesis (H2), revealed that *ta'arof*, alongside *sharmandegi*, with no significant differences between them (t(37)= -1.63, p= 0.11), were the most often recalled pragmatic schemas in recalls. In contrast, the least recalled pragmatic schema was *shekasteh-nafsi*.

Table 4

Distribution of Schema in Recalls

	Mean	Median	SD
1-Sharmandegi	4.11	4.00	1.71

2-Ta'arof	3.42	3.00	2.63
3-Sharmandegi & Ta'arof	2.34	2.00	2.12
4-Shekasteh-nafsi & Ta'arof	2.16	2.00	2.00
5-Ru-dar-bayesti	1.66	2.00	1.05
6-Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	1.61	1.00	1,60
7-Shekasteh-nafsi	0.18	0.00	0.46

The paired sample t-test revealed significant differences between the majority of pairs (see Table 5). The only non-significant difference, other than between *ta'arof* and *sharmandegi*, were found between combination of *shekasteh-nafsi* and *ta'arof with* combination of *sharmandegi* and *ta'arof* , as well as with *shekasteh-nafsi*. No significant difference was indicated between *ru-dar-bayesti* and combination of *sharmandegi* with *shekasteh-nafsi*. The rest of pairs remained significant.

Table 5

Paired Sample T-Test Results for Distribution of Schemas

		t value	P
Ta'arof	Sharmandegi	-1.62	0.115
	Sharmandegi & Ta'arof	3.13	0.003
	Shekasteh-nafsi & Ta'arof	4.57	<0.001
	Shekasteh-nafsi	7.79	<.001
	Ru-dar-bayesti	4.66	<.001
	Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	5.49	<.001
Sharmandegi	Sharmandegi & Ta'arof	5.18	<.001
	Shekasteh-nafsi & Ta'arof	6.05	<.001
	Shekasteh-nafsi	14.79	<.001
	Ru-dar-bayesti	9.82	<.001
	Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	9.04	<.001

Sharmandegi & Ta'arof	Shekasteh-nafsi & Ta'arof	0.68	0.502
	Shekasteh-nafsi	0.86	<.001
	Ru-dar-bayesti	2.01	0.051
	Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	3.71	<.001
Shekasteh-nafsi and Ta'arof	Shekasteh-nafsi	6.42	<.001
	Ru-dar-bayesti	1.62	0.113
	Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	2.36	0.024
Shekasteh-nafsi	Ru-dar-bayesti	-9.03	<.001
	Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	-5.99	<.001
Ru-dar-bayesti	Sharmandegi & Shekasteh-nafsi	0.21	0.838

Recognizing Schemas

Our third hypothesis emphasized the difference in self-reported recognized schemas in the story (see Table 6). Consistent with our expectations (H3), *ta'arof* and *ru-dar-bayesti* were highly recognized schemas with no significant differences, while *shekasteh-nafsi* remained the least recognized. However, The paired sample T-Test showed other significant differences. There was a significant difference between recognizing *shekasteh-nafsi* and *ta'arof* ($t(40) = 2.33$, $p=0.025$), as well as between *ru-dar-bayesti* ($t(40) = 2.58$, $p=0.014$). In addition, a significant difference was observed between recognizing *sharmandegi* and *ru-dar-bayesti* ($t(40) = -2.40$, $p= 0.021$).

Table 6

Descriptives of Schema Recognition

	Mean	SD
1-Ta'arof	4.59	0.87
2-Ru-dar-bayesti	4.66	0.82
3-Sharmandegi	4.32	0.79
4-Shekasteh-nafsi	4.00	1.34

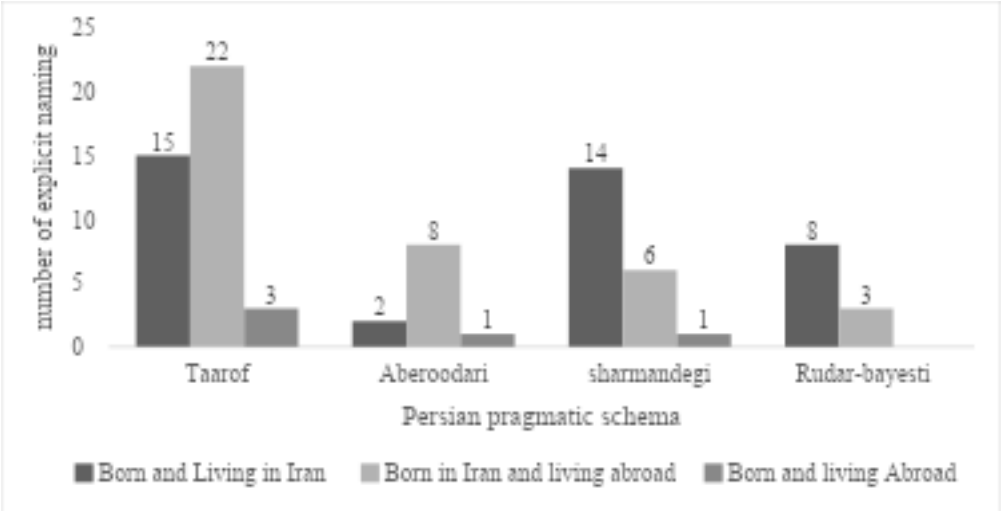
Explicit Schema Naming

Instead of recalling the schematic sentence, it was expected that participants shorten the pragmatic sentences to the name of the schema (H4), which was severally observed in session 1. A Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted to assess the distribution of these explicit names across three groups based on their migration status: non-immigrants, first-generation, and second-generation immigrants (see Figure 2). The test, consistent with our hypothesis, demonstrated that the cultural pragmatic schema *ta'arof* is the most commonly named pragmatic schema ($\chi^2 = 13.9$, $p < 0.001$), with the highest frequency among first-generation immigrants. At the same time, *shekasteh-nafsi* was not mentioned in any recall by any group.

Significant differences were found in the naming of *sharmandegi* ($\chi^2 = 12.3$, $p = 0.002$) and *ru-dar-bayesti* across the three groups in session 1 ($\chi^2 = 8.91$, $p = 0.012$) with individuals born and residing in Iran most frequently naming it. Surprisingly, "Aberudari," as a cultural schema and not pragmatic, was frequently mentioned in recalls and significantly differed across all three groups ($\chi^2 = 7.82$, $p = 0.020$), with first-generation immigrants being the most frequent.

Figure 2

Distribution of Explicit Naming of Persian Pragmatic Schema



Note. The figure provided includes the data exclusively from session 1.

Repeating the same process across all three sessions, similar to session 1, *ta'arof* was the most commonly named pragmatic schema, while *Shekasteh-nafsi* was not mentioned by any. Consistently, a marginally significant difference in naming "aberudari" (X^2=5.60, p=0.06) was observed, with first-generation immigrants being the most dominant group.

Discussion

This study investigated the retention of Persian pragmatic schemas across generations of Iranian immigrants and non-immigrants by recalling a culturally aligned story. Participants were asked to recall a story reflecting Persian culture. To ensure that memory performance or outliers did not affect the results, a working memory questionnaire was administered, confirming the homogeneity of the sample, with no significant main effect of memory performance on recalls. Considering the predominantly immigrant sample, the findings revealed a strong preference for the Persian language- whether exclusive or inclusive- among Iranians, regardless of their residency status. These results align with prior literature demonstrating the consistent maintenance of Iranian culture and Persian Language use, even among subsequent generations (Bozorgmehr & Meybodi, 2016; Haghighat, 2016; Kaveh, 2018).

Our first hypothesis (H1), based on Bartlett's (1932) findings, predicted that the story would become simplified and more schema-consistent in recalls over time. Supporting this expectation, our findings showed the highest accuracy in recalls in the first session, followed by a decrease in accurate recall in subsequent sessions. However, contrary to our expectation, the highest rate of schematic recall also occurred in session 1, with subsequent sessions showing a lower schematic recall rate. Given that pragmatic schemas are closely tied to language and social interaction, this trend can be interpreted through the composition of our sample, which predominantly consisted of immigrants. The reduced use of language in extrafamilial contexts may lead to decreased use of these schemas in real life, impacting long-term retention. Interestingly, although no schemas were explicitly named in the story, participants named the pragmatic schemas during recall and even added the concept of "aberu." This aligns with Bartlett's (1932) findings that extra explanations are often added to make a story more coherent from the recaller's perspective, a process he termed "rationalization." Furthermore, as noted by Sharifian and Tayebi 2017, these four pragmatic

schemas and "aberu" reflect Persian politeness, and naming all these in recalls could also be viewed as a form of rationalization in this study.

Prior research by Majd (2008) and Shiri (2023) emphasized the deeply rooted nature of *ta'arof* in Iranian culture, and Mahdavi (2012) found no decrease in its usage among Iranian immigrants. In contrast, Shirinbakhsh and Rasekh (2013) reported less frequent use of the pragmatic schema *shekasteh-nafsi*. Consistent with these findings, our study observed a similar pattern across various domains. *Ta'arof* was the most frequently recalled (H2), highly self-reported as recognized (H3), and dominantly explicitly named (H4), while *shekasteh-nafsi* was the least in all three domains. *Sharmandegi* and *ru-dar-bayesti* schemas demonstrated higher variability depending on the domain, highlighting the schemas' dynamic and heterogeneous nature. Moreover, results from the explicit naming of schemas revealed generational differences among immigrants. Second-generation immigrants were the least likely group to name schemas compared to the two other groups, who were born in Iran regardless of their current residency. This finding underscores the importance of being in a relevant social context to maintain cultural nuances. Interestingly, despite having been outside of Iran for a minimum of two years, first-generation immigrants were predominant in naming some schemas compared to non-immigrants who remain within the cultural context. This result can be attributed to the time capsule experienced by immigrants, whereby they preserve the culture and its components in the form they knew before emigrating, with limited opportunities for further cultural updating.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized that conservation values and high national identity would contribute to higher recognition of pragmatic schemas. While the sample exhibited overall high conservative values, no general association with schema recognition was found. However, individuals scoring higher in conservation tended to recognize specific schemas, namely *sharmandegi* and *ru-dar-bayesti*, more frequently (H5). This trend can be explained by the fact that both schemas are similarly characterized as strategies for avoiding face-threatening acts (Sharifian, 2016, 2017), making them emotionally charged, unlike other schemas. Moreover, given that the internalization of cultural elements contributes to national identification and considering the high national identification of the sample, it was anticipated that stronger national identity would correspond to higher recognition of culturally specific schematic episodes. Contrary to our expectations, no such association was observed. These findings emphasize that cultural pragmatic

schemas are not necessarily tied to national identity but are shaped and maintained through social interactions (H6).

Overall, the findings of this study, based on a predominantly immigrant sample, suggest that migration influences the retention and use of pragmatic schema in varying forms and degrees. As cultural pragmatic schemas serve as essential tools of communication, they can facilitate adaptation but may also lead to miscommunication and discomfort. This highlights their significance in the education and well-being of individuals, especially immigrants.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study, while providing insightful results, has certain limitations. Firstly, the small sample size due to repetitive sessions (41 participants) limits the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the study was conducted online to reach more participants, but in-person sessions might have provided more reliable data, especially for the recall portion of the experiment. Building on these findings and limitations, future studies should include a more extensive and more diverse sample of Iranians both in Iran and worldwide. Iranian schools abroad, such as those in the UAE and Oman, should be considered in future research to emphasize the importance of the school context. Additionally, the political role and religious context may significantly influence the Iranian-rooted population, and considering these factors can strengthen the validity of the findings. Finally, accounting for the acculturation patterns of immigrants and the influence of the host country would be important for future studies.

Conclusion

The findings of this study, conducted with a predominantly immigrant sample characterized by high levels of conservation and national identity, highlight the complexity and dynamic nature of Persian pragmatic schemas among Iranian Immigrants and non-immigrants. Our investigations, utilizing the recall of a culturally aligned story, revealed that migration can influence the retention of culturally specific pragmatic schemas. Over time, story retention became more simplified and rationalized from the participants' perspective. This process included naming pragmatic schemas and introducing additional concepts such as "aberu," thereby completing the Persian politeness package. Consistent with prior research, this study demonstrated the dominance of *ta'arof* in the recall, recognition, and explicit naming, while *shekasteh-nafsi* was the least

prominent across these domains. Other pragmatic schemas exhibited variability, reflecting their dynamic nature. Conservation values were linked to higher recognition of emotionally charged schemas, and no significant association was found between schema recognition and national identity. Overall, the study underscores that cultural pragmatic schemas are deeply tied to social interaction, which migration and its generations can influence it.

Despite the small sample size and its limitations, our study offers valuable insights into the use and variation of pragmatic schemas within the Iranian community, including immigrants. These findings are particularly significant, as cultural pragmatic schemas serve as essential communication tools. They can foster adaptation or, conversely, lead to miscommunication, emphasizing their importance for effective and meaningful interactions. Future studies should involve a more extensive and diverse sample, adopt in-person methodologies, and examine the political and religious influence on Iranian identity and its cultural pragmatic schemas. Gaining a deeper understanding of these elements can enhance our comprehension of immigrant communities' psychological and linguistic dynamics. Such knowledge has the potential to inform the development of immigrant policies, educational programs, and initiatives aimed at improving well-being, public relations, and sociocultural integration.

Declaration

Artificial intelligence (ChatGPT and Grammarly) was utilized in this study solely for grammar and spelling checks, without involvement in the writing process. The exact prompt used: "Please check grammar and spelling without changing anything."

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