

**SOCIO-CULTURAL ATTITUDES TO TA'AROF AMONG
IRANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA**

A thesis presented to the graduate faculty

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Art

by

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DEDICATION

To my lovely parents, siblings, brilliant daughter, Vania,
and my supervisor, Prof. Makarova, to whom the credit all goes

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Abstract

This thesis examines the adaptation of Iranian Canadians (immigrants from Iran in Canada) to the new cultural environment with a special focus on a paradigm shift in their linguo-cultural attitudes. More specifically, it examines the attitudes of Iranian Canadians to ta'arof, an important politeness phenomenon in Farsi that has attracted the attention of many scholars of linguistics and anthropology.

The actual use of ta'arof as well as attitudes to its use are compared for two groups of first generation Canadian Iranians (60 participants total), with long and short periods of exposure to Canadian culture. All the participants come from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The theoretical foundation of this thesis is politeness theory, a framework formulated by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in 1987. The study employs a questionnaire survey as its methodology, commonly used in sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Makarova & Hudyma, 2015; Clement, 1986). The questionnaire contains questions about the respondents' use of ta'arof in different situations, and their attitudes to ta'arof. In addition, it included some sociocultural questions aimed at evaluating the respondents' level of acculturation. The goal of this study is to describe the use of ta'arof and attitudes to its use among first generation Canadian Iranians, as well as to examine whether social variables such as length of stay in Canada, gender, education and English proficiency contribute to a change in attitudes to ta'arof among first generation Iranian immigrants in Canada.

The results show that all the social variables in this study, namely age, gender, education, English proficiency, length of stay in Canada and acculturation can be either positively or negatively correlated with the participants' use of ta'arof and their attitudes to ta'arof.

The results also indicate that “ethnic self-identification,” in terms of “Canadian,” “Iranian,” or “Iranian Canadian,” is positively correlated with “the length of stay in Canada.” The Iranian immigrants with longer duration of stay in Canada are more likely to identify themselves as “Iranian Canadian” than as “Iranian.” Other findings suggest that the Iranian immigrants who have lived for a long period of time in Canada provide higher acculturation-level responses and use ta’arof less in their interactions with Iranians and non-Iranians in Canada, as compared to immigrants who have lived in Canada for a short period of time. The latter group yields lower acculturation-level responses, and their attitudes to ta’arof are significantly more positive.

Overall, even though the Iranian Canadian participants report the use ta’arof in Canada not only in communication within the Iranian diaspora, but also sometimes in communication with members of other Canadian ethnic groups, they dislike the pressures imposed by ta’arof, do not want to teach it to their children, and have overall rather negative attitudes towards ta’arof and its use. With the increase of the duration of stay in Canada, the attitudes to ta’arof become significantly more negative.

Keywords: Ta’arof, immigration, acculturation, politeness system, socio-cultural attitudes, Farsi, Iran, Iranian Canadians, Iranian.

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CHAPTER I

1. Introduction

The relation between language and culture was first proposed by an American linguist and anthropologist, Edward Sapir (1884–1939) and developed by his student, Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941). “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” or “linguistic relativity theory” describes the relationship between language and thought. The main idea in this hypothesis (Whorf, 1952, 1956; Levinson, 2000; Gilbert, et al. 2008) is that every human being views the world via his/her own native language (Mahadi & Moghaddas Jaffari, 2012, p. 232). The Sapir–Whorf hypothesis states that the way we think and view the world is influenced by our language (Anderson & Lightfoot, 2002; Crystal, 1987; Hayes, Ornstein, & Gage, 1987; Hymes, 1964; Labov, 1972; Gumperz, 1982). Among sociolinguistics scholars involved in the elaborations of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is J.A. Fishman. He has described language as a part, an index and a symbol of culture (1985, 1991 and 1996). In the broadest sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking (Brown, 2000, p. 177). Cultural and linguistic differences can contribute to some experience of miscommunication when people are outside their speech community (Afghari & Karimnia, 2007, p. 243). To highlight the integrity of language and culture, the concept of “linguaculture (linguaculture or languaculture)” was first introduced by Friedrich (1989), and Agar (1994, p. 60) popularized it as “a necessary tie between language and culture.”

Since language is an integral part of culture, an “extensive culture change” is anticipated as the result of a language shift (Fishman, 1996, p. 452). In the case of immigrant communities, first generation immigrants shift from their mother tongue to using the language of the host country at work and in other domains (Holmes, 2013). Some empirical evidence suggests a connection between language acquisition and acculturation. More specifically it suggests that due to the

reciprocal connection between language and culture, some degrees of culture change is anticipated when a speech community shifts to speaking another language (Fishman, 1996). Acculturation can be defined as “the process of coping with a new and largely unfamiliar culture” (Taft, 1977, p. 122). Acculturation can be the result of new experiences in the host country, such as developing a liking for hockey, or learning winter sports. However, a very important role in acculturation is played by the language shift from the mother tongue to the majority language of the host country. Each individual is believed to have a cognitive framework, shaped partly by the language he/she speaks (Durst, Minuchin-Itzigsohn & Jabotinsky-Rubin, 1993). The process of a new language acquisition influences immigrants’ cognitive framework and could lead to changes in the immigrants’ attitudes and values (Tran, 1993; Hojat et al., 2002; Yeh & Mayuko, 2003; Kim, Laroche & Tomiuk, 2004; Shahim, 2007). For example, profound changes in attitudes towards premarital sex, marriage and family have been recorded in the process of acculturation among Iranian immigrants in America (Hojat, et al., 1999, 2000, 2002; Hojat & Mehryar, 2004). These changes are linked to a new language acquisition that causes changes in values and attitudes. A new ethnic identity is the major outcome of language acquisition and attitudinal changes among first generation immigrants (Clement, 1986; Lanca et al., 1995; Noels, Pon & Clement, 1996; Makarova & Hudyma, 2015). In addition, majority language acquisition by immigrants enhances participation in social and cultural activities in the host country (Nowak-Fabrykowski & Shkandrij, 2004). According to Shahim (2007), language emerged as the most important segment of acculturation, in a factor analysis of a scale of acculturation developed for Iranian immigrants in North America.

In addition to language acquisition, there are also multiple studies that deal with the impacts of language preference and proficiency in the language of the host country on cultural

adaptation in immigrants. Multiple studies show that language preference and proficiency in the language of the host country are strongly correlated among immigrants (Brenneman, Morris, & Israelian, 2007; Chesterfield, Chesterfield, & Chavez, 1982). Proficiency in the language of the host country helps to advance communication and interpersonal relationships (Hojat, M., et al., 2009, p. 159).

Besides the aforementioned factors affecting cultural adaptation in immigrants, namely majority language acquisition, preference to speak a language as well as proficiency in the language of the host country, the length of immigration can also contribute to change in immigrants' opinions of their native linguaculture. For example, a study of the attitudes of Iranian American women to gender roles and intimate relationships confirms changes in immigrants' attitudes as compared to the ones prevailing in the homeland (Hanassab & Tidwell, 1996). The Iranian American women with a longer duration of stay in the US had more liberal and less traditional attitudes to gender roles and intimate relationships. For example, they consider hijab, a head covering worn in public, as a restriction on women's freedom and perceive women as equal with men in all aspects of private and social life.

1.1. Acculturation and its parameters

In addition to language change and the length of stay immigration, culture change or acculturation can also account for changes in immigrants' opinions of their native linguaculture. For example, the extent to which ta'arof is practiced among Iranian Americans is largely a function of acculturation (Mahdavi, 2013, p. 12).

There are two aspects of change after an exposure to a different culture: acculturation (acquiring the new culture's beliefs, behaviours and values) and enculturation ((re)-socialization of heritage culture norms) (Williams & Berry, 1991; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Acculturation has been defined as “the process of coping with a new and largely unfamiliar culture” (Taft, 1977, p. 122). This continuous process can lead to greater compatibility with the culture of the host country and ultimately to assimilation (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984, p. 209). However, at times, Iranian immigrants in the United States preserve aspects of their native linguaculture no matter how American they may appear. For example, a study of knowledge and use of ta’arof among 98 Iranian immigrants in the United States demonstrated that more acculturated people did not decrease ta’arof use (Mahdavi, 2013).

Regardless of the circumstances of immigration, immigrants inevitably experience the diverse phases of acculturation as they interact with others (Taft, 1977). As suggested by the dynamics of acculturation, there are two particular groups involved in the process: a dominant group and an acculturating group. The former has more prominent impact and power, while the latter undertakes different types of adjustment (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992).

According to some scholars, acculturation is multi-dimensional in nature (Cuéllar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). There are many parameters of acculturation, such as cultural preferences, ethnic identity (Suinn, Rikard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987), or food preference (Anderson, Moeschberger, Chen Jr., Kun, Wewers, M., & Guthrie, 1993). Numerous cross-cultural or holo-cultural studies have investigated the distinctive dimensions of acculturation as their real objective (Burnam, Telles, Karno, Hough, & Escobar, 1987; Cuéllar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Laroche, Kim, Hui, & Tomiuk, 1998; Marín & Gamba, 1996; Mendoza, 1989; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & Aranalde, 1978). For example, a study of 222 Mexican psychiatric inpatients and hospital staff/students in the United States demonstrated that the construct of acculturation includes four factors: (1) language familiarity, usage, and preference; (2) ethnic identity and generation; (3) general cultural heritage and exposure; and (4) ethnic interaction

(Cuéllar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). In another study of acculturation on 320 Asian-American participants, Suinn, Khoo, & Ahuna (1995) concluded that there are five dimensions of acculturation: (1) reading/writing/cultural preference; (2) ethnic interaction; (3) generational identity; (4) affinity for ethnic identity and pride; and (5) food preference.

In the current study, acculturation is viewed as one factor which is comprised of two major dimensions. The first of them is sociolinguistic orientation, which according to Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez (1980), refers to social behaviors related to the use of a second language (L2) for informational, recreational, and communication purposes. The second dimension of acculturation is psychological orientation, which is defined as psychological changes that result in growing identification with the prevailing norms, values, standards, and behaviors of the new cultural systems (Tropp, Erkut, Coll, Alarcón, García, 1999). The present study adopts this view of acculturation, because most research in the area (both in the field of cross-cultural psychology and in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)), include these two aspects as imperative dimensions of acculturation (e.g. Chung, Kim, Abreu, 2004; Cuéllar, Harris, Jasso, 1980; Cuéllar, Arnold, Maldonado, 1995; Schumann, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1986; Tsai, Ying, Lee, 2000; Yeh, 2003).

Berry (1998) discussed four different modes of acculturation (Berry's acculturative attitude styles) and explained how both cultural (group-level) and individual (psychological-level) factors affect the individual's acculturation attitudes (as cited in Haeri, 2006, p. 63).

To sum up, the socio-cultural attitudes of immigrants, and in case of my study - attitudes to ta'arof, the Persian politeness system - depend on the functioning of culture as a socially interactive process.

1.2. Theoretical Frameworks of Politeness

Linguistic politeness has become a focal point in the social investigation of language interactions in different cultures as numerous theories of linguistic politeness have been offered (e.g. Lakoff, 1973; Brown & Levinson, 1978; Leech, 1983; Gu, 1990). Since Brown and Levinson (1978)'s initial publication, their framework of politeness has been recognized as one of the most influential theories in linguistic, sociolinguistic, and applied linguistic literature (e.g. Ellen, 2001, p. 3; Fraser, 2005, p. 65; Ming-Chung, 2003, p. 1680). Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that they have created a profitable apparatus for sociolinguistic analysis of the phenomenon of politeness.

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Model is founded on the notions of "face," "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987, p. 61). "Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). The "face" has two dimensions that are referred to as "positive face" and "negative face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Negative face is defined as a person's right "to freedom of action and freedom from imposition", whereas positive face is described as a person's "positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of)" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). In other words, positive face is "the individual's wants of admiration and approval" and negative face is the individual's "wants of freedom from imposition" (p. 61). During interaction, every individual tries to maintain two types of "face", namely "positive face" and "negative face". There are several scholars who acknowledge the possibility of cross-cultural variability and argue that the content of face varies in different cultures (Fraser, 1990; Leech, 1983; Meier, 1995a; Sifianou, 1992). For example, Sifianou (1999) argues that "in general, when we talk about politeness, what we have in mind is relative politeness, based on what we think is appropriate behaviour in

particular situations. These norms, however, vary from culture to culture” (p. 29). Brown and Levinson (1987), on the other hand, are assuming that despite cross-cultural differences in content of face, the mutual knowledge of members’ public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal. (62)

In summary, Brown and Levinson’s framework of politeness, constructed on the notion of “face”, is a valuable apparatus for analyzing politeness systems in different languages, and in case of my study, the Persian politeness system, which is called ta’arof.

1.3. Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)

Brown and Levinson (1978) constructed their politeness theory on the premise that there are certain speech acts that intrinsically threaten the speaker/listener’s positive or negative face, and these are called Face Threatening Acts or FTAs. Everyday communication involves the use of face-threatening acts (FTA) that run counter to the face wants of the listener and/or of the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). For example, a direct refusal has the potential to offend the listener and hence threaten his/her face. FTAs can threaten both the speaker’s and the listener’s face. Negative FTAs obstruct the speaker’s or the listener’s freedom of action and freedom from imposition. For instance, it can be threatening to the listener’s negative face when the speaker forces the listener to perform or not to perform a certain action. FTAs which threaten the speaker’s negative face are those that pose an offence to one’s face. Excuses and unwilling promises and offers, for example, can threaten the speaker’s negative face.

Positive FTAs dispense harm to one’s face by denoting the interlocutor’s lack of appreciation and/or approval for one’s emotions, needs, and so forth. Some positive FTAs threatening the listener’s self-image include disapproval, criticism, insults, accusations, complaints, contradictions, and disagreements. The speaker’s positive face is threatened by acts

which indicate that the speaker has lost control over the situation. Examples of negative FTAs include apologies, confessions, and admissions of guilt (Brown & Levinson, 1978, pp. 65-7)

To counteract discomfort of face threatening acts in daily interactions, speech is padded with politeness devices (Miller, C., Strong, R., Vinson, M., Brugman, C. M., 2014). Brown and Levinson (1987) call these “politeness strategies”. To avoid threat to each other’s face, people try to mitigate their production of FTAs by using certain strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Positive politeness is one of the politeness strategies that is applied to fulfill the listener’s desire to be liked or acknowledged. For example, the endearment “honey” in the refusal “I’m very busy today, honey” is a positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 75). Negative politeness, on the other hand, is another connected strategy which is used to satisfy the listener’s desire to be respected (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, complimenting or trying to be respectful (e.g., “you did a really good job on that presentation”) prior to making a face threatening act of criticism fulfills someone’s positive face (Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 70). A speaker, on the other hand, may emphasize a desire not to impose on the listener (e.g., “if it’s not too much trouble”) to fulfill someone’s negative face (Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 70).

To conclude, FTAs, which occur regularly in everyday communication, are often softened by means of politeness. The Persian politeness system (Ta’arof) is the negative politeness strategy which is oriented towards the listener’s negative face and emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the listener. In other words, ta’arof is used to satisfy the listener’s desire to be respected.

1.4. Politeness in Persian/Farsi

Positive and negative politeness and FTAs are universal, but politeness systems differ across languages in their intricate details. According to Motaghi-Tabari and de Beuzeville, (2012) the Persian politeness system is connected to a Persian culture-specific behavioural phenomenon

called ta'arof" (p. 24). Anthropologists trace the origins of ta'arof (Persian: تعارف) to an Arabic word which means "acquaintance" (De Bellaigue, 2012) or "mutual knowledge" (Koutlaki, 2010, p. 45).

Amouzade (2001) claims that ta'arof is the core concept of politeness system in Persian (p. 9). Ta'arof has also been defined as "an elaborate system of ceremonial politeness" (Lewis & Stevens, 1986, p. 13), and "a style of polite communication, or ritual courtesy" (Koutlaki, 2010, p. 44). It is a system of ceremonial politeness that includes among other features, the exchanging of multiple compliments; particular forms of greetings, two or three offers of food and two initial refusals before accepting it; compliments, and excessive praise of customers, visitors and superiors; presenting oneself in a humbling way; as well as other countless devices.

The Persian politeness phenomenon of ta'arof, featuring offer-acceptance/rejection adjacency pairs, alludes to the most widely recognized convention in interpersonal interaction in Iran, which is to indicate a lower status for oneself while elevating the status of the individual being addressed (Beeman, 1986). Beeman (1986) also argues that ta'arof is an arduous concept in Persian as it encompasses complex behaviors that underscore differences in social status (p. 56).

Beside the classic example of a host offering tea to a guest who must deny the offer two times, there are many other examples of making ta'arof:

- Inviting someone to your house, when you really don't want them to come, but you almost feel like you have to invite them.
- Proceeding to pay at a grocery store, even though the cashier said something to the effect of "no go ahead, it's a gift."
- Going to someone's house and while sitting at the dinner table, the host offers you more food, even though your dinner plate is full.

- Offering to pay for your own meal when eating with older relatives, even though you more or less knew they would get it for you.
- Pretending you don't want to eat anything even if you're starving.

Here are some more examples taken from the online 'International Daily Tehran Times' (July 20, 2015):

A customer goes to the cashier to pay for the groceries. The cashier smiles and says: "Oh be my guest this time, your presence is enough honor for me." The customer instead insists to pay. The cashier refuses: "It is not a big deal really. Please be my guest!" while his hand is taking the money from the hand of the customer. Meanwhile, the customer hands in the money saying: "Nice of you really, No way! Don't say that. I will pay." And the charade of verbal "ta'arof" continues, because the customer who is actually taking the change back is at the same time refusing to take it! The customer has guests tonight; he has bought lots of groceries so as to offer them rare delicacies above his means, even if it puts him in financial discomfort. The most important thing is that the guests would have a pleasant stay.

Ta'arof verbal "role-play" serves to negotiate the status rules in a society. A close western behavioural analogue would be ta'arofing over dinner when being offered seconds: First you reject their offer, then they offer again, then you reject or accept based on if you want more. This is especially common the first time you go to someone's house. In-laws are also famous for doing this.

There are some Persian culture-specific politeness components underlying ta'arof ritual (Beeman, 1986; Motaghi-Tabari & de Beuzeville, 2012, p. 24):

- *Adab* (good manners);

- *Ehteram* (courtesy, respect);
- *Shaxsiat* (character–positive face);
- *Tavazo* (modesty, humility);
- *Aberu* (roughly synonymous with social credit or prestige);
- *Shekasteh-nafsi* (literally breaking self, meaning putting oneself down).

Cultural schemas of *shekasteh-nafsi* and *aberu* underlie much communicative behaviour of Iranians (Sharifian, 2005, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; 2007). Based on the cultural schema of *aberu*, Persians are urged to “make use of any compliments or praise that they receive to enhance the *aberu* of their interlocutors, their family, or whoever might have directly or indirectly contributed to a success or achievement” (Sharifian & Palmer, 2007, p. 42). The cultural schema of *shekasteh-nafsi* urges Persian speakers to show a high degree of modesty (Motaghi-Tabari and de Beuzeville, 2012). The construction *ghabel nistim*, which means, “we are not worth it”, clearly illustrates how Persian speakers put themselves down (Sharifian, 2007, p. 44).

Participants in the ta’arof discourse share stances and knowledge in varying degrees. Mutual knowledge and shared stances between the interactants are essential for a particular interlocutor to encode ta’arof semantically. As Enfield (2003b) notes pragmatic meanings and conversational implicatures are not semantically encoded. Since pragmatic rules and cultural conceptualisations are closely tied, knowledge of pragmatic and sociolinguistic rules of a language is equally or more significant for successful intercultural communication, (Sharifian, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a 2009b, 2011; Sharifian & Palmer, 2007). Cultural frameworks are pivotal in guiding our social and linguistic interactions (Agar, 1994; Goffman, 1986). In other words, people’s interpretations of communicative intentions are excessively affected by these frameworks. Sharifian (2005, 2011) claims that miscommunication is inevitable when

interlocutors do not share the same cultural schemas. Naturally ta'arof seems misleading to uninitiated westerners as they don't know the ta'arof rules and conventions. Therefore, they are not able to construct meaning beyond what is literally provided in the language. One of the significant reasons of this might be that speech has different function in Iran than it does in the mainstream Anglo-saxon society. In the mainstream Anglo-saxon society, language is more denotative than connotative, while in Iran, language is more connotative (Campbell, 2006). The vagueness inherent in Farsi, creates a rich, poetic linguistic culture.

Ta'arof at last turns into a game that both participants are mindful of playing. While some Iranians seem to be enjoying the use of ta'arof, and even more, the friendly mockery of its use, some others express very different feelings. The following example, which is a dialogue between my friend (host) and his guest illustrates how ta'arof unfolds:

My friend (Host):	<u>xāhesh mikonam</u>	<u>nooshidani</u>	<u>meil konid</u>
	Please	a drink	take
GUEST:	Xeili mamnoon.	Meil nadaram.	
	Thank you very much	I don't desire	
My friend (Host):	<u>Lotfan</u>	<u>ta'arof nakonid.</u>	<u>Befarmaaid</u> <u>xāhesh mikonam.</u>
	Please	do not make ta'arof	Go ahead please

Stating “do not make ta'arof” (Persian: ta'arof nakonid) implies that the host thinks making ta'arof is stupid and irritating although the request itself might be a devious type of ta'arof. In addition to this, the force of the imposition being made is alleviated by the use of *xāhesh mikonam* “please” and *befarmaaid* “go ahead” from the host's side (Afghari & Karimnia, 2007, p. 249). The guest, on the other hand, is hiding his true feeling by stating that he does not have desire for the drink offered to sound polite.

Although the function of ta'arof as a token of respect seems to be uppermost in the native speakers' minds, one should remember that an utterance can have more than one function (Tracy & Coupland, 1990). Ta'arof expressions can also be simultaneously multifunctional (cf. Penman,

1990). Thus, the use of ta'arof apart from conveying respect to an interlocutor can also function as a strategic move towards the initiator's aim, be it material gain or compliance to a request (Koutlaki 1997, p. 96).

In summary, ta'arof is a system of ceremonial politeness that includes among other features, multiple compliments exchange, where participants in the ta'arof discourse share mutual knowledge in varying degrees.

1.5. Typical Persian Ta'arof Scenarios and Formulaic Codes of Politeness

In all human societies, routine politeness formulas (RTF), as a linguistic device, are used to facilitate and regulate daily social interactions to achieve social cohesion and harmony (Saber, K., 2012). Members of every society are familiar with a large number of different scenarios in which they can perform a certain act (e.g. greeting) properly. Some typical Persian ta'arof scenarios and formulaic expressions used by speakers of Persian as politeness formulas are provided below:

1.5.1. Greeting

A variant of the salutation *salām aleykom* “hello there” or simply *salām* “hello” are used to begin Persian greetings (Miller, Strong, Vinson, Brugman, 2014, p. 26). An individual with the lower status is usually expected to offer *salām* first (Miller et al., 2014, p. 26). An exception to this rule is a host who welcomes a guest by initiating the greeting (Saber, 2012, p. 69).

Salām “Hello” will be followed by making inquiries about one another's health as well as asking about their affairs, or other news (Miller et al., 2014, p. 27). According to Saber (2012), in the Persian language the inquiries about one another's health and affairs are known as *ahvālporsi* that can range from the formal *hale šomā četowr ast?* “How are you?” to an informal variant

damāyet čāye? which, while literally meaning “Is your nose fat?”, in Persian this phrase means “Do you feel over the weather?” (Cited in Miller et al., 2014, p. 27).

1.5.2. Leave-taking (saying goodbye)

The process of leave-taking in Persian is as lengthy as greeting, in comparison with English (Miller et al., 2014, p. 27). According to Saberi (2012) leave-taking exchange typically lasts for up to 14 phases (p. 114). In addition to these phases, small talk may be sprinkled to fill the gaps while both parties do their best to avoid silence (Miller et al., 2014, p. 27). Below is an example of leave-taking provided in Saberi 2012, pp. 130-2:

Scenario: *A is leaving B's house after dinner where A is a woman in her early thirties and B is a man in his early forties.*

- ***Phase 1: Announcement of leave-taking by the person leaving***

A: *xob, dige kam kam age ejāze bedin zahmat ro kam konam.*

All right, with your permission I'd better get going and get out of your hair.

- ***Phase 2: Persuading the leave-taker to stay longer***

B: *xāhesh mikonam; hastin hālā, tašrif dāšte bāšin.*

Come on, you're already here, do stay.

- ***Phase 3: Turning down the offer to stay longer by giving a reason for the departure***

A: *mersi, mamnun, be andāzeye kāfi zahmat dādim.*

Thanks, I appreciate it, I've troubled you enough.

- ***Phase 4: Acknowledging the desire of the leave-taker to leave***

B: *xāheš mikonam, če zahmati? xeyli xošhāl šodim ke tašrif avordin.*

Please, what trouble? I'm very happy that you've come.

A: *xāheš mikonam.*

My pleasure.

▪ ***Phase 5: Inviting the leave-taker to a future reunion***

B: tašrif biyārin bāz, dar xedmadetun bāšim.

Grace us with your presence again, we are at your service.

A: inšallah dige dafeye bad šoma tašrif biyārin.

God willing God willing, next time you must grace us with your presence.

B: čašm, dar xedmatetun hastim.

OK, we are at your service.

▪ ***Phase 6: Apology and acknowledgement by the leave-taker for the trouble that the host/hostess has gone through***

A: mamnun, močaker, hesābi be zahmat oftadin.

Thanks a lot, really, you went to a lot of trouble.

B: xāhesh mikonam, zahmat kodume?

Please don't mention it, what trouble?

▪ ***Phase 7: Requests for expanding greetings to third parties***

A: dastetun dard nakone; salām beresunin be xānevāde.

Thanks; please say hello to your family for me.

B: čashm, hatman, shomā ham xeyli salām beresunin.

Sure, you send them a big hello as well.

▪ ***Phase 8: Expressing happiness and delight in the visit***

A: xeyli xošhāl šodim.

I had a good time.

B: xāheš mikonam.

My pleasure.

▪ **Phase 9: Requesting to be in further contact**

A: hālā inšallah dar tamās bāšim.

Godwilling, let's keep in touch?

▪ **Phase 10: Exchange of terminal leave-taking formulas**

B: inšallah; xeyli mamnun, xodā negahdār, xodāhafez.

Godwilling, thanks a lot, God preserve you, goodbye.

A: xodāhafeze šoma.

Goodbye.

As demonstrated in the examples above, the process of leave-taking (where a younger woman (A) is leaving an older man's house (B) after dinner) is quite lengthy and involves 10 phases, from announcement of leave-taking by the person leaving to requesting to be in further contact, and finally exchange of terminal leaving-taking formulas.

1.5.3. Thanking

The most common direct expressions of thanks that are used in Persian are *mamnun*, *mersi*, and *sepāsgozāram*, which are equivalent to “thank you” (Miller et al., 2014, p. 29). However, these direct expressions vary in terms of sociolinguistic and pragmatic values -e.g., *sepāsgozāram* is formal and is used more by seniors. On the other hand, *mersi* is less formal and is preferred by women (Saberī, 2012, p. 177).

According to Miller et al. (2014) expressions of gratitude are frequently accompanied by a phrase giving emphasis to the imposition of the thanker on the thankee (p. 30). An expression such as *xeyli zahmat kešidin* “You've gone to a lot of trouble”, for example, conveys gratitude while attending to the negative face of the interlocutor (Saberī, 2012, p. 181). Formal apologetic

expressions such as *šarmandeh* “I’m sorry” are sometimes used to convey thanks (Miller et al., 2014, p. 29).

There are some certain ways to respond to an expression of thanks. *Xāheš mikonam* “I beg you” “You’re welcome, my pleasure” is the most generic response to an expression of thanks (Saber 2012, p. 195). Miller et al. (2014) argued:

Some phrases can pull double duty, acting both as expressions of gratitude as well as a response. Some of these include *γorbānet* “your sacrifice”, *čākeram* “I am your servant”, *moxlesam* “I am your sincere friend”, all of which could mean either “Thanks” or “You’re welcome”. Note, however, that these phrases cannot be echoed i.e. one would not respond to *čākeram* by saying *čākeram* (30).

1.5.4. Compliments

Complimenting is another form of ta’arof. Holmes (1988) defines a compliment as a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to the person addressed, for some good attributes such as a possession, or skill, which is positively valued by the speaker and the listener (p. 486). In addition to this, compliments are speech acts that are used as social lubricants to maintain social solidarity (Holmes, 1988; Wolfson, 1981).

Social interactions, on the other hand, can be negatively affected by compliments. The complimenter’s intention, complimentee’s interpretation, and cultural norms are the factors that will influence whether the compliments are perceived as face-threatening acts or a face-saving behaviour (Farghal & Haggan, 2006). All of these reasons make compliments a multi-faceted speech act that can be regarded as either face-saving or face-threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987). An example adapted from Pomerantz, as cited in Golato, 2002, where A compliments B, while B disagrees with compliment assertion, shows how a compliment can be an FTA:

A: *Gee, hon. You look nice in that dress.*

B: *Do you really think so? It's just a rag.*

By its very nature, disagreeing with a listener tells him/her that we do not share his/her opinion or values regarding what may be an important issue. The very act of disagreeing expresses the speaker's indifference toward the addressee's positive face.

1.5.5. Names and titles

To show respect in public or any formal setting, Iranians tend to address others using their surnames with a title. Men are addressed with *āghā* “sir” without a surname or by *āghā-e* followed by a surname; e.g. *āghā-e Ahmadi* (Maria O’Shea, 2003). To address women, people use *xānoom* “madam” without a surname or *xānoom-e* accompanied by a surname (O’Shea, 2003). Professionals such as doctors or engineers will be addressed with a title, similarly; for example, *doktor Ahmadi* “Dr. Ahmadi” or *āghā-e doktor Ahmadi* “Mr. Dr. Ahmadi”.

1.5.6. Gift giving

Giving gifts at various occasions (e.g. birthdays, weddings, moving to a new house or apartment) is very prevalent in Iran. When Iranians give gifts, which are elegantly wrapped, the gift givers usually say, *nāqābele* “This is unworthy of you”. However, sometimes the gift giver puts the gift on a table, and it is not mentioned. This is followed by the recipient saying *vāy, cherā zahmat keshidin?* “Oh! Why did you go through so much trouble?” This will force the gift giver to take it saying *nāqābele* to apologize for the gift’s total inadequacy.

In conclusion, to regulate daily social interactions some typical formulaic expressions encompassing *ta’arof* are used by speakers of Persian as politeness formulas.

1.6. Ta'arof Exchanges and Speech Act Theory

Finegan's theory (1999) of *speech act* introduces three components of communication, from a pragmatic point of view:

- Locution-the semantic or literal significance of the utterance;
- Illocution-the intention of the speaker; and
- Perlocution-how it was received by the listener.

In other words, the speech act theory explains that the linguistic meaning, or *locution*, depicts the speaker's intention, or *illocution*. *Perlocution* is the effect of the act on the interlocutor.

Take the following scenario of individual (B) going to the house of acquaintance (A) to borrow an item. A then proceeds to invite B in for a visit (Azadarmaki 2012, pp. 201-2; cited in Miller et al., 2014):

A: *Befarmāid daxeel. Dame dar bade.*
Come in, the door is no place to stand.

B: *Nah xeyli mamnoon. Mozāhem namišam.*
I insist, you're welcome here, come on in.

A: *Xaheš mikonam morāhem hastin. Befārmaid.*
No I appreciate it, I don't want to impose.

B: *Nah motešaker, zahmat namidam.*
No I appreciate it, I don't want to impose.

Several outcomes are anticipated depending on the intent of the individuals playing ta'arof. Ta'arof exchanges are either successful or failed (Azadarmaki, 2012, pp. 201-2; cited in Miller et al., 2014):

Outcome 1:

A is not prepared to accept B and is not inclined to have her come inside, but invites B anyway. B is in a hurry and does not actually want to go in the house and tries to reject the

offer. After ta'arofing she (B) finally gets the item she came for and leaves. As a result both parties are satisfied.

A's offer is ostensible and B's refusal is genuine → offer is refused → A: satisfied and B: satisfied

Outcome 2:

It has been a long time since A has seen B and she invites her in to the house to talk. Likewise B is not in a rush and wouldn't mind spending a few minutes talking, but both ta'arof anyway. After ta'arofing, B finally goes into the house and both parties are satisfied.

A's offer is genuine and B's refusal is ostensible → offer is accepted → A: satisfied and B: satisfied

Outcome 3:

It has been a long time since B has seen A and she invites her in to the house to talk. However, B is in a hurry and does not actually want to go in the house and tries to reject the offer. The owner imagines that B is ta'arofing and insists on taking her inside the house. As a result B is kept from her work and is unsatisfied.

A's offer is genuine and B's refusal is ostensible → offer is accepted → A: satisfied and B: unsatisfied

Outcome 4:

A is not prepared to accept the guest and, in reality, is not inclined to have her come inside. However B wants to come in to the owner's house for a few minutes and visit. According to custom A insists on taking B into the house. B initially refuses, but then finally accepts. As a result of her misplaced insistence A has created work for herself and is unsatisfied.

A's offer is ostensible and B's refusal is ostensible → offer is accepted → A: unsatisfied and B: satisfied

Pragmatic ambiguity, as is seen in the aforementioned examples, is the integral part of ta'arof exchanges (Eslami, 2005; Afghari & Karimnia, 2007).

To sum up, as shown in the examples mentioned above, several outcomes contingent upon the intent of the people making ta'arof are anticipated.

1.7. Sociolinguistics of ta'arof

Sociolinguistics is concerned with non-linguistic social factors (e.g., ethnicity, social class, age, gender) and how they influence linguistic production and perception (Miller et al., 2014, p. 4). In other words, sociolinguistics studies language in social and cultural contexts. Some sociolinguistic variation associated with ta'arof will be discussed in the following section.

1.7.1. Social variation

Many Iranians agree that members of lower socio-economic classes and villagers do not know how to use ta'arof (Beeman, 1986, p. 197). According to Azadarmaki & Behesht (2010), fake ta'arof is less prevalent in small towns, in comparison with large cities (p. 208).

1.7.2. Individual variation

The amount of ta'arof use among Iranians varies depending on age, gender, social class, level of education and other social variables. Iranians often characterize each other in terms of the amount of ta'arof they make (Sharifian, 2007, p. 39); and that a person who is used to making ta'arof in an excessive way is called *ta'arofi* (Miller et al., 2014, p. 7).

1.7.3. Religion register

According to some scholars, ta'arof dates back to Zoroastrianism, a Persian religion of the pre-Islamic era. One of the principles of Zoroastrianism nowadays which is still practiced by a

small minority of Iranians is the use of “kind words” (Beeman, 1986). The urge to care about others more than oneself and not to speak about one’s achievements is widely seen in Persian literary texts (Ahmadi & Ahamdi, 1998 cited in Sharifian, 2009).

1.7.4. Commercial communication

Another theory of ta’arof origins attributes its development to commercial communication. Ta’arof is a vital part of the commercial communication, which can be commonly seen in stores or bazaars in Iran. Ta’arof is more prevalent in smaller shops, where customers bargain with owners over prices, rather than the chain stores or superstores, where price tags are non-negotiable. Tyler, Taylor, Woolstenhulme, & Wilkins (1978 as cited in Assadi, 1980) claim that without ta’arof in Iran, social and business interactions seem blunt and uncivil to Iranians (as cited in Motaghi-Tabari & de Beuzeville, 2012). Sellers use ta’arof to show extra attention and care to buyers in order to keep customers and drive their attention. For example, when shopkeepers say *qābeli nadāre* “It is nothing much” as a reflex to the question about the price, they want to tell that you are worthy of much more. For Iranians, it is rude and impolite to name the price immediately.

1.7.5. Ta’arof and Maintenance of Power Distance

As per Hofstede (1980), Iranian society has a “large power distance”. According to Koutlaki (2010) some people naturally have more authority and power, owing to their social status, seniority, or knowledge, and this power is encoded in language (p. 29). Parents, elders, teachers, and the clergy clearly illustrate high power individuals who are expected to be treated with reverence (Zandpour & Sadri, 1996, p. 179). Ta’arof has been characterized as an instrument of maintaining power distance in communication, bolstering resilience of social imbalance (Zandpour & Sadri, 1996, p. 179).

1.8. Ta'arof in immigrant Diasporas

As demonstrated above, ta'arof stems from multiple aspects of Iranian culture and society and serves to bolster and maintain them. Respectively, immigrant diasporas may encounter a shift from the traditions of the home country towards those of the new host country (acculturation), particularly when the social distance between the two cultures is quite significant, as between Iranian and mainstream Canadian Anglophone cultures. Two opposing tendencies can be seen when the minority culture and majority culture contact: the longing of the immigrant minority to keep up their language and culture as well as the force of the majority language and culture towards cultural assimilation of the immigrant minority (Holmes, 2013; Elahi & Karim, 2011; Isurin, 2011; Andrews, 1999). The interaction between these two propensities are intricate, and is contingent upon an entire scope of socio-linguistic, economic and political factors characterized as the “ethnolinguistic vitality” of a minority culture (Holmes, 2013). The effects of this interaction may differ, extending from a complete shift towards the majority culture in only two or three generations, to minority language maintenance beyond the third generation (Holmes, 2013). Members of an immigrant diaspora commonly show some indications of bilingualism and biculturalism including code-switching and a twofold set of social standards for contexts “inside” and “outside” of the diaspora. According to Elahi and Karim (2011) Iranian immigrants and their children and grandchildren reflect diverse experiences and cultural contexts depending on when they left Iran and how they have been greeted or represented in their host nations (p. 381).

The literature on various aspects of the lives of Iranian immigrants in North America (e.g., Mahdavi, 2012; Elahi & Karim, 2011; Sullivan, 2001), and in Canada (Dossa, 2004; Kazemi, 1986) is almost substantial, However, there is no research available that would address ta'arof use and

changes in attitudes to its use experienced by Iranian immigrants living in Canada. This study aims at filling in this gap.

1.9. The aims of the study

My study addresses socio-cultural attitudes to ta'arof, a type of politeness behavior, among Iranian immigrants in Canada. A broader aim of this study is to examine whether exposure to a different (North American) culture may change Iranian immigrants' attitudes to and their use of a crucial element of their native linguaculture, namely ta'arof.

1.10. The objectives of the study

This study is to examine the effects of the years of living in Canada, and other demographic characteristics, namely age, gender, education, and English proficiency on linguo-cultural attitudes of Iranian Canadians towards the use of a crucial element of their native linguo-culture, called ta'arof. Since discontinuation of ta'arof use or unfavourable attitudes towards it can be interpreted as signs of acculturation, I also aimed at investigating whether some other signs of acculturation are in place among the research group.

It is worth noting that the Farsi language is not the only language in Iran; Iran is a multiethnic country: According to Zandpour & Sadri (1996) the people of Iran come from a wide range of ethnic, religious, linguistic, and geographic backgrounds with unique histories and cultures (p. 175). Moreover, there are differences in the worldviews and cultural attitudes of Iranians who immigrated before and after the revolution of 1979, as well as differences in wealth, education and other socio-economic factors between members of Iranian diasporas in North America (Elahi & Karim, 2011). However, despite the variety of dialects and languages in Iran, it should be noted that the majority of Iranians are culturally dependent for the reason that they share basic values that cross ethnic boundaries (Afghari & Karimnia, 2007, p. 244).

In this thesis, I will disregard all these differences and provide a generic view of ta'arof as a feature of communication by Iranian Canadians, since my limited sample does not allow to control the group for social, ethnic, religious or geographic backgrounds. I also only consider ta'arofing within the "standard Persian" boundaries, and ignore other languages and dialects spoken by Iranian Canadian immigrants.

1.11. Theoretical framework

Politeness theory is an important theoretical aspect of the studies of ta'arof, as ta'arof is a tool of politeness aimed at preventing the loss of face in communication, a common politeness strategy in Asian cultures (Lee-Wong, 2000; Usami, 2002).

The *model of politeness strategies* proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) provided the framework for analyzing data in my study as the merit of the Brown and Levinson's framework of politeness has been demonstrated in a large number of sociolinguistics research studies (e.g. Holmes, 1990; Lane, 1990; *intra alia*). It has also been recognized in literature as one of the most influential politeness frameworks (cf., Ellen, 2001, p. 3; Fraser, 2005, p. 65; Ming-Chung, 2003, p. 1680).

1.12. The significance of this study

There is a substantial body of literature dealing with different aspects of the lives of Iranian immigrants in the United States (cf., Mahdavi, 2012; Elahi & Karim, 2011; Milani, 2004; Sullivan, 2001; Hanassab and Tidwell, 1996; Hojat, et al., 1999, 2000, 2002; Hojat & Mehryar, 2004), as well as in Canada (Dossa, 2004; Kazemi, 1986; Mirfakhraie, 1999; Shahim, 2007). However, no research can be found that would address the Iranian Canadian immigrants' attitudes to ta'arof and its use in spite of the dramatic rise in the figure for immigrants from Iran to Canada in recent years.

In 2006, the number of Iranian Canadians was 92,085 (Statistic Canada), with 27,600 Iranian immigrants arriving in Canada over a period of five years from 2001.

In addition, according to Afghari & Karimnia (2007) it is very important that Western observers be able to distinguish cultural patterns (p. 244). Awareness of different cultural patterns is more important in multicultural societies such as Canada as it provides its population the ability to identify and understand how intercultural communication events may differ from group to group, Thus decreasing the probability of misunderstandings or unintentionally offending the recipient(s) of their messages.

My study also uses the theory of politeness with a description of a system that may have some features in common with politeness systems in other linguocultures (e.g., Japanese *honne* and *tatemaie* and Chinese *limao*). Ta'arof described here is also a carbon copy of verbal politeness-based interaction in Italy. Ta'arof is nevertheless believed to be relatively a unique Iranian phenomenon embedded in the phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and discourse of Farsi (Lee-Wong, 2000; Usami, 2002; Sharifian, 2008, 2011; Motaghi-Tabari & Beuzeville, 2012). To support the claim for the relative uniqueness of ta'arof, take ostensible invitations in English and Persian, for example (cited in Miller et al., 2014):

- Unlike English, in Persian ostensible invitations are repeated multiple times (Eslami, 2005, p. 465)
- Unlike English, hedging (specifically the use of interrogatives and/or modals) is a sign of an ostensible invitation whereas imperatives are used more in genuine invitations. (Eslami, 2005, p. 471).

CHAPTER II

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Questionnaire design

I chose to use a questionnaire study to collect my research data (Tagliamonte, 2006), because the questionnaire allowed me to obtain quantifiable data on the use of ta'arof and attitudes towards its use by Canadian Iranians. Numerous studies have demonstrated that acculturation may relate to ethnic identity, language use and language proficiencies, food preference, general cultural heritage and exposure, as well as ethnic interaction patterns (Cuéllar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Laroche, Kim, Hui, & Tomiuk, 1998). Consequently, these factors have been incorporated into the questionnaire. The questionnaire included four sections: demographics, language proficiency (self-reported), cultural and social practice (such as participation in Iranian community functions, language use (English /Farsi), presence or absence of Iranian friends), and research questions related to the knowledge and use of ta'arof and attitudes to its use. All the research questions were presented in Likert scale multiple choice format. Language proficiency was represented with the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale (Higgs, 1984) ranging from 0 (no proficiency) to 5 (native or bilingual proficiency).

2.2. Participants

The total of 60 individuals were recruited to participate in the study to examine ta'arof use and attitudes. The participants included first generation immigrants from Iran to Canada; there were 29 women and 31 men in the participant group. Only the participants living in Canada for 2 *years or less* and 10 *years or more* were recruited. The term "first generation" indicates that the person was born in Iran and relocated to Canada as an adult, after the age of 17. For the analysis, participants were divided in two groups according to the duration of their stay in Canada. The

participants living in Canada for 10 years and more were assigned to group 1 (M=13; F=17), and the individuals who have lived in Canada for a short period of 2 years or less were assigned to group 2 (M=18; F=12). Ta'arof use and attitudes were compared for these two groups (G1 & G2) to examine the effect of the length of immigration on the adaptation of immigrants from Iran in Canada to the new cultural environment and to establish whether a paradigm shift may occur over time in their lingua-cultural attitudes.

The dependent variables in the study are self-reported use of ta'arof and Iranian Canadians' attitudes to ta'arof. The independent variables are the length of stay in Canada, social status, the level of education, English proficiency, age, and gender.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of participants by age. As Table 1 shows, 22 participants (36.6%) in this study were under 30 years of age and 15 people (25%) were aged between 41 and 50. Twenty-three individuals (38.3%) were in the 30-40 age group.

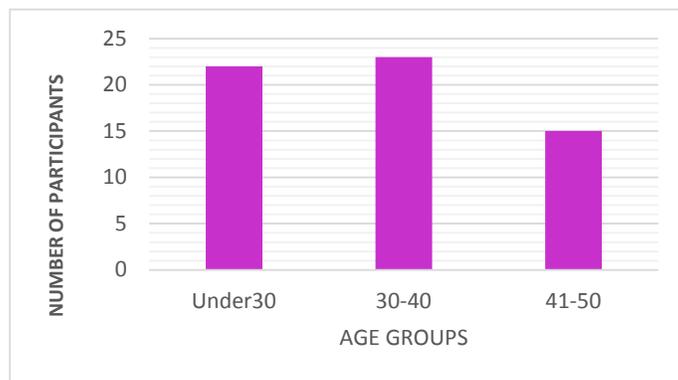


Figure 1. Distribution of participants by age

The majority of participants were “university graduate students” (41.6%) or had a “university graduate degree” (36.6%). Figure 2 shows distribution of participants by education.

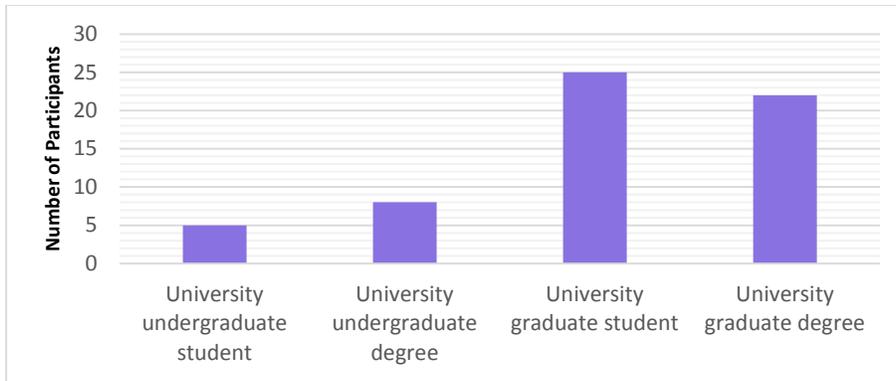


Figure 2. Distribution of participants by education

With regard to the proficiency in English as a second language, of the 60 participants, 20 individuals (33.3%) reported “full professional proficiency”, 19 individuals (31.6%) -- “professional proficiency” in English and only 10 individuals (16.6%) -- “limited proficiency” (Figure 3). Eleven participants (18.3%) claimed “native proficiency” in English as a second language. All the participants were native speakers of Farsi, and Farsi was their first language (mother tongue).

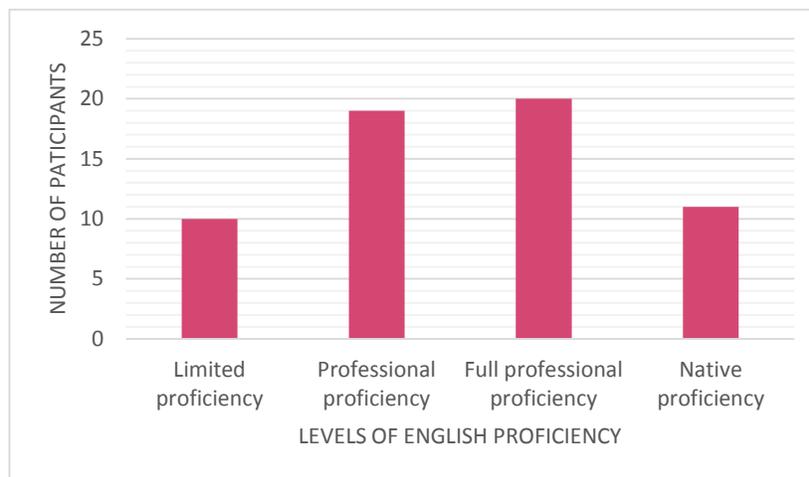


Figure 3. Participants’ proficiency in English

2.3. Data analysis

All the data from the questionnaire responses were entered into IBM SPSS version 22 charts for subsequent analysis. Social variables (participants’ age, gender, length of stay in Canada, education, language proficiency) and cultural data (having Iranian friends, participating in Iranian

functions, English language proficiency, preference for Iranian food, etc.) were correlated with the variables related to ta'arof use and attitudes. Z-tests helped to establish whether differences between responses by Groups 1 and 2 were significant.

CHAPTER III

3. RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in three major sections: (3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). Sections 3.1 and 3.2 are devoted entirely to the description of the results related to participants' acculturation, ta'arof use and attitudes to ta'arof. Section 3.3 examines the correlational relationship between social variables (age, education, English proficiency, gender and the duration of immigration) and acculturation, ta'arof use and attitudes.

3.1. Participants' level of acculturation

In this study, the two dimensions of participants' ethnic identity, namely sociolinguistic and attitudinal, were examined to assess (i) participants' *cultural and social behavior* (external/objective) as well as (ii) *attitudes and feelings* (internal/subjective). The concept of acculturation helps to analyze differences across the two groups of participants with long (G1) and short (G2) lengths of stay in Canada. The results of sociolinguistic and attitudinal aspects of participants' ethnic identity are used to learn about the relationship between the participants' *length of immigration, acculturation, and ta'arof use and attitudes*. It is hypothesized that the longer the stay in Canada is, the more Iranian immigrants in Canada are likely to be acculturated, and the less they are likely to use ta'arof in their interactions.

To assess the participants' level of acculturation, section 3 with 14 questions was included in the questionnaire (Ref. Appendix 1). The analysis of participants' responses to these questions is provided below.

3.1.1. Cultural and social behavior (sociolinguistic dimension)

3.1.1.1. *The use of English words in Farsi, and English and Farsi at home and with friends by participants*

Data analysis shows that a vast majority of participants in group 1 (longer stay in Canada) (18 participants =60%) and group 2 (shorter stay in Canada) (15 participants =50%) “sometimes” use English words while speaking Farsi. In addition, 18 (60%) of the participants in G1 speak Farsi with friends “all the time”. The proportion of people in group 2 who speak Farsi with friends “all the time” is 10% higher than the proportion of the participants in G1, at 21 (70%), which is not a significant G1/G2 difference ($z=0.8$, $p>0.05$).

Moreover, 90% of the G1 group participants (27) and all the participants in group 2 (30=100%) “never” speak English at home. The difference between G1 and G2 is not significant at the 5 per cent significance level ($z=1.8$, $p>0.05$). See Table 4.

Table 4

Participants’ social and cultural behaviour

Questions	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		All the time	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Using English words while speaking Farsi	0%	10% (3)	0%	20% (6)	60% (18)	50% (15)	30% (9)	20% (6)	10% (3)	0%
Speaking English with friends daily	60% (18)	70% (21)	10% (3)	10% (3)	20% (6)	10% (3)	10% (3)	10% (3)	0%	0%
Speaking Farsi with friends daily	0%	0%	10% (3)	10% (3)	20% (6)	10% (3)	10% (3)	10% (3)	60% (18)	70% (21)
Speaking English at home	90% (27)	100% (30)	10% (3)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Speaking Farsi at home	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10% (3)	0%	90% (27)	100% (30)

Overall, *the use of English words while speaking Farsi* is higher in G1 than G2 (Fig.5). The results indicate that the increase in duration of immigration leads to more frequent use of English words while speaking Farsi.

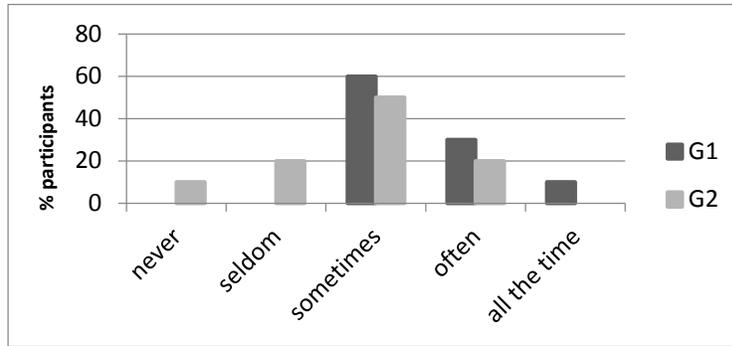


Figure 5. Use of English words while speaking Farsi by G1 and G2

The results are quite surprising when it comes to *speaking English and Farsi with friends daily*. The majority of participants in both groups (G1=18; G2=21) claimed that they “never” speak English, and speak Farsi instead with friends on a daily basis. The results may indicate that Iranians do not easily make friends with either Canadians or other immigrant groups and form friendship ties within the Iranian immigrant community.

In addition, the overwhelming majority of respondents from G1 (27) and all the participants from G2 (30) claimed that they “never” *speaking English at home*, and *speaking Farsi at home* “all the time.” The results show the value participants place on their native/mother language, Farsi.

In summary, the length of stay in Canada had no significant impact on the immigrants’ use of English and Farsi with friends and at home, since most participants reported speaking Farsi both with friends and at home, and do not use English in these domains. However, the length of stay does impact the use of English words while speaking Farsi: there is a positive correlation between increased use of English borrowings and the length of stay in Canada.

3.1.1.2. *Iranian food preferences*

Food is an essential element of Iranian culture, central to their sense of identity (Fischler, 1988). The results of the self-reported answers by participants concerning their consumption of Iranian food on special occasions and on a daily basis are reported below in Table 6.

Table 6

Participants' food preferences

Questions	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		All the time	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Consuming Iranian food on special occasions	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	70% (21)	40% (12)	30% (9)	60% (18)
Consuming Iranian food at other times	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	60% (18)	30% (9)	40% (12)	70% (21)

As Table 6 shows, the majority of participants in group 1 (70%=21) and group 2 (60%=18) consume Iranian food on special occasions quite “often” and “all the time”, respectively. Eighteen individuals from G1 (60%) and 21 participants from G2 (70%) consume Iranian food on a daily basis quite “often” and “all the time”, respectively.

While both groups eat Iranian food both on special occasions and on a daily basis either quite “often” or ‘all the time”, G2 gives significantly fewer responses (\bar{x} =35%) that they eat Iranian food very “often” ($z=2.3$, $p<0.05$), and more responses indicating that they eat Iranian food “all the time” ($\bar{x}= 65\%$) ($z=2.3$, $p<0.05$).

In summary, there is an impact involving the length of stay on the frequency of food consumption: the recent immigrants eat their ethnic food more often than those with longer duration of immigration (See Figures 7 and 8).

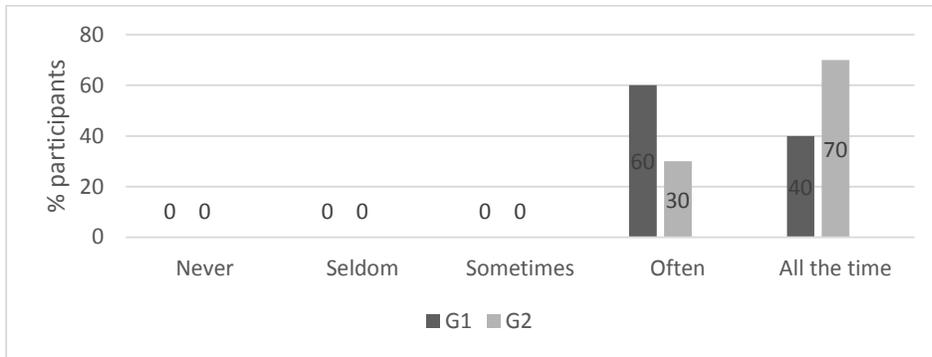


Figure7. Consuming Iranian food at ordinary times by G1 and G2

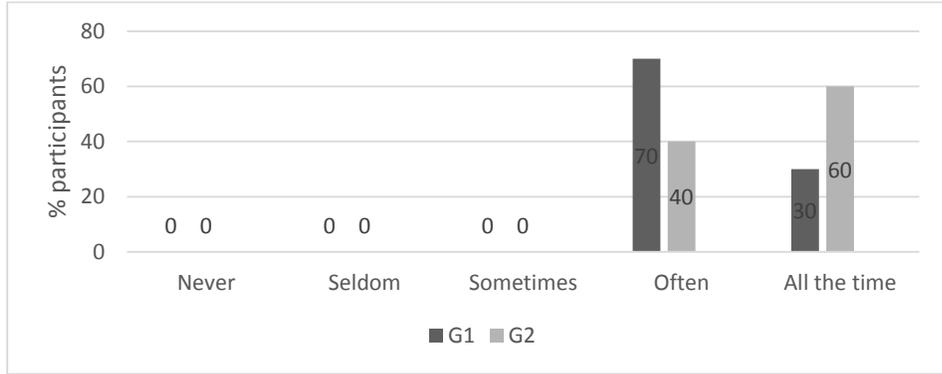


Figure 8. Consuming Iranian food on special occasions by G1 and G2

3.1.1.3. *Participation in Iranian functions, and personal networks*

Table 9 compares the results of the self-reported answers by G1 and G2 group participants concerning their participation in Iranian functions as well as participation in Iranian personal networks.

Table 9

Participants' attendance in Iranian functions, and personal networks

Questions	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		All the time	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Participating in Iranian functions	0%	0%	7% (2)	0%	10% (3)	13% (4)	60% (18)	20% (6)	23% (7)	67% (20)
Participating in Iranian personal networks	0%	0%	0%	0%	70% (21)	0%	10% (3)	10% (3)	20% (6)	90% (27)

As indicated in the table above, the vast majority of individuals in group 1 (60%=18) participate in Iranian functions quite “often”, and the 2nd group members (67%=20) participate in Iranian functions “all the time”. The results indicate a negative correlation based on the length of immigration on the frequency of participation in Iranian functions “all the time”: the longer the

duration of immigration is, the less Iranian Canadians participate in Iranian functions “all the time”. The G1/G2 difference is statistically significant ($z=3.4$, $p<0.05$)

As for participation in Iranian personal networks, the majority of G1 group participants (70%=21) network with other Iranians “sometimes”, whereas the majority of G2 group participants (90%=27) network with other Iranians “all the time”. This suggests that networking with other Iranians is very important for recent immigrants, but significantly decreases in frequency with a longer stay in Canada ($z=5.4$, $p<0.05$) (See Fig.10).

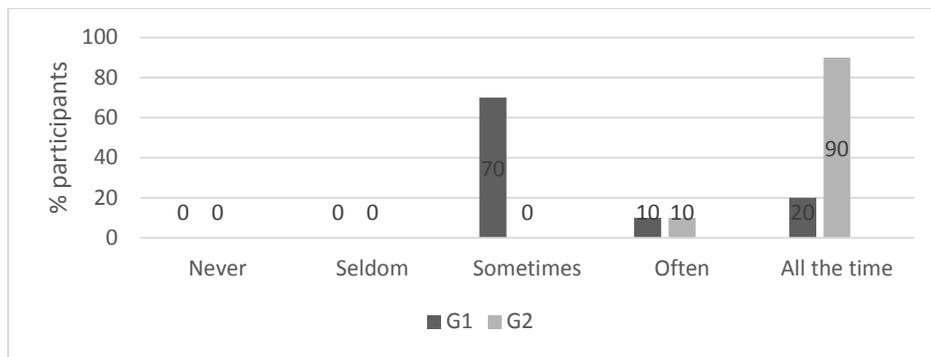


Figure 10. Participating in Iranian personal networks by G1 and G2

In sum, participating both in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks among G2 is stronger than in G1. In other words, the length of stay in Canada impacts immigrants’ participation in Iranian personal networks.

3.1.1.4. *Number of close Iranian friends*

The majority of participants in group 1 and group 2 also have “many” close Iranian friends (G1=60%; G2=73%). This suggests that G2 group participants (73%=22) have somewhat more Iranian friends than G1 (60%=18) although the G1/G2 difference is non-significant ($z=1.1$, $p>0.05$).

Overall, a shorter length of immigration is somewhat connected with having more friends among the same ethnicity (See Figure 11).

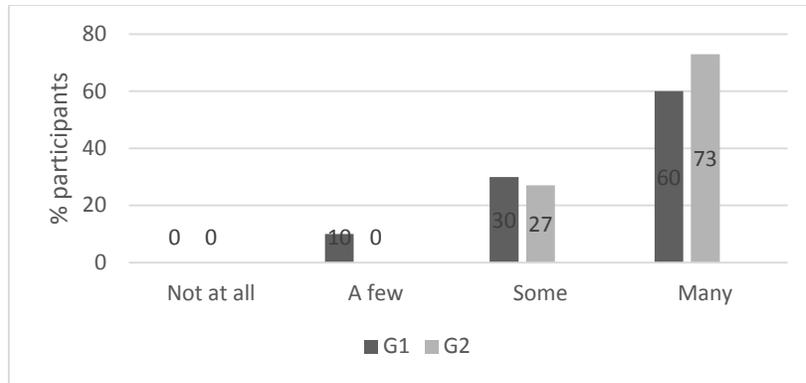


Figure 11. Number of close Iranian friends

3.1.1.5. *Number of objects of Persian art at home*

The majority of participants in group 1 and group 2 also have “some” objects of Persian art at home (G1=57%; G2=80%) ($z=1.9, p>0.05$).

Overall, a longer length of immigration is to some extent connected with having more objects of Persian art at home (See Figure 12).

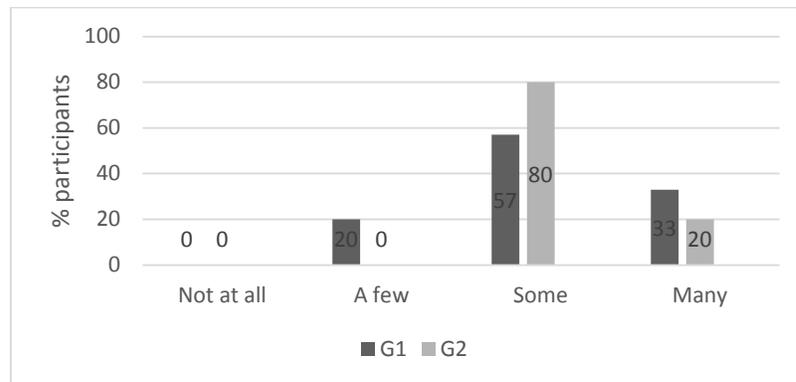


Figure 12. Number of objects of Persian art home by participants

3.1.1.6. *Self-identification*

The participants were also asked to self-identify themselves ethnically irrespective of any official status by using a word from a list of possible ethnic labels that included “Iranian”, “Iranian Canadian”, “Canadian Iranian”, “Canadian”, “Asian”, and “other”.

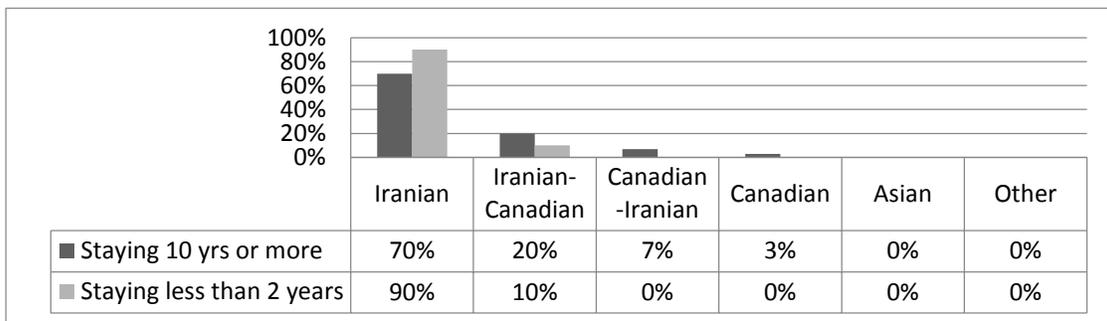
A vast majority of individuals from group 1 (70%=21) and group 2 (90%=27) identified themselves as “Iranian”. By contrast, only 20% (6) of participants from the 1st group identified themselves as “Iranian Canadian”, compared to only 10% (3) of participants from G2 (Table 13). In addition, only 7% (2) of participants from the 1st group identified themselves as “Canadian Iranian”. According to Isajiw (1992), people who use hyphenated nationalities suggest an individual identifies with both his/her adopted and native societies. Only very few individuals (3%) identified themselves as “Canadian”, and all these individuals come from Group 2 (longer stay in Canada).

These results suggest that the perception of ethnicity changes over time from the one associated with the old country of residence to the new country. The results also suggest that the participants mostly remain Iranian even after 10 years of stay in Canada (70% of group 1 participants identified themselves as “Iranian”) (See table 13).

To test if men and women are significantly different in how they self-identify, a chi-square test was performed. No relationship was found between “gender” and “self-identification”, $X^2(3, N=60) = 1.05, p = .79$ (Ref. Appendixes 2 & 3).

Table 13

Self-identification, by length of stay in Canada



3.1.2. Attitudes and feelings (attitudinal dimension)

3.1.2.1. *Teaching Farsi to Iranian children in Canada is important*

All the participants in both groups (G1 & G2) “strongly agree” with the opinion that teaching Farsi to Iranian-Canadian children in Canada is important.

The results confirm that the duration of stay in Canada does not affect the attitudes of Iranian Canadians about the maintenance of the Farsi language.

3.1.2.2. *Supporting Iranian friends in difficult circumstances is important*

All the G2 and 90% (27) of G1 group participants “strongly agree” that *it is important to support Iranian friends in Canada*. The results indicate that the length of stay in Canada does not affect the attitudes of Iranian Canadians about supporting their Iranian friends in difficult circumstances.

In sum, after examining sociolinguistic and attitudinal aspects of ethnic identity among the two groups of Iranian immigrants with different lengths of residence in Canada, it can be seen that with longer stay in Canada, immigrants are more likely to be integrated into the new society. In addition, in this sample, the effect of increase in duration of stay in the host country can be observed in sociolinguistic/objective aspect of participants’ ethnic identity, rather than attitudinal/subjective aspect. In other words, the adaptation is more sociocultural than attitudinal for the immigrants with longer length of residence in Canada.

3.2. Participants’ use of ta’arof (sociolinguistic dimension)

3.2.1. Participants’ knowledge of ta’arof

To test the participants’ knowledge of ta’arof, and the frequency of ta’arof use by participants in Iran and Canada, the individuals in the study answered nine questions (Ref. Appendix 4). Results for both groups of participants (G1 & G2) are quite similar.

As for the participants' knowledge of ta'arof (on a scale of "not at all" to "much"), all the participants in G1 and G2 claimed that they know very well ("much") when to use ta'arof in their everyday interactions.

3.2.2. Frequency of ta'arof use by participants

With regard to the frequency of ta'arof use by participants in Iran and Canada, a great majority of participants (G1= \bar{x} 80%; G2= \bar{x} 83%) "often" used ta'arof in Iran and use ta'arof with Iranians in Canada.

Further, 70% of individuals (21) in G1 group reported using ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada "sometimes", compared to 87% of the members of G2 (26) who "often" use ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada (See Table 14).

Table 14

Frequency of ta'arof use by participants

Questions	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		All the time	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
How often did you use ta'arof in Iran?	0%	0%	0%	0%	17% (5)	27% (8)	83% (25)	73% (22)	0%	0%
How often do you use ta'arof with Iranians in Canada?	0%	0%	10% (3)	0%	13% (4)	7% (2)	77% (23)	93% (28)	0%	0%
How often do you use ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada?	0%	0%	30% (9)	3% (1)	70% (21)	10% (3)	0%	87% (26)	0%	0%

It seems that the responses to the first two questions are somewhat similar across the groups although the proportion of those using ta'arof with Iranians in Canada for G2 is somewhat higher than for G1 (by 16%, which is statistically non-significant ($z=1.7, p>0.05$)).

The use of ta'arof with non-Iranians, on the other hand, is significantly different across the 2 groups; G2 (87%=26) uses ta'arof more "often" with non-Iranians than G1 (0%) ($z=6.8, p<0.05$). This means that there is an impact of duration of stay as well as of acculturation only on the use

of ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada. In other words, less acculturated immigrants use ta'arof more in their interactions with non-Iranians in Canada.

3.2.3. Difficulties experienced by participants in Iran and Canada due to ta'arof use

As for the difficulties associated with ta'arof experienced by participants in Iran and Canada, 70% (21) of the participants in group 1 and 83% (25) of the participants in group 2 “sometimes” had difficulties with Iranians in Iran if they did not use ta'arof in their interactions. However, avoiding the use of ta'arof with Iranians in Canada “seldom” causes any difficulties in communication for 60% (18) of the participants in G2 and 67% (20) of the participants in G1. In addition, just over half of the participants in both groups mentioned that the use of ta'arof in interactions with people from other nations or traditions in Canada “sometimes” causes problems.

In sum, not practicing ta'arof can sometimes harm a relationship. If you do not ta'arof someone enough, it may be considered as an insult or disrespectful. Even asking someone not to ta'arof may raise new difficulties, since the request itself might be a devious type of taarof. For Iranian immigrants in Canada, not using ta'arof with Iranians in Iran sometimes caused trouble, while it may seldom cause trouble while communicating with Iranians in Canada. Even while communicating with non-Iranians in Canada, the use of ta'arof may occasionally cause difficulties and misunderstandings (See Table 15). For example, looking after Iranian guests sometimes causes Canadians and Iranians trouble, because they offer coffee or tea and the Iranian rejects the offer and says “No”. Then the Canadian says “OK,” and they end up without coffee or tea when the Iranian wanted it.”

Table 15*Difficulties experienced by participants in Iran and Canada due to ta'arof use*

Questions	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		All the time	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Any difficulties with Iranians in Iran because of you not using ta'arof?	0%	0%	0%	0%	70% (21)	83% (25)	30% (9)	17% (5)	0%	0%
Any difficulties with Iranians in Canada because of you not using ta'arof?	0%	0%	67% (20)	60% (18)	20% (6)	27% (8)	13% (4)	13% (4)	0%	0%
Any problems when people from other traditions/nations have interacted with you in Canada because of you using ta'arof?	30% (9)	27% (8)	13% (4)	20% (6)	57% (17)	53% (16)	0%	0%	0%	0%

3.2.4. The pressure of ta'arof use experienced by participants in Iran and Canada

As is shown in Table 16, regarding the pressure of using ta'arof experienced by participants in Iran and Canada, 80% (24) of the participants in G2 and 87% (26) of the participants in G1 “often” feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Iran. In addition, about 90% (27) of participants of both groups “sometimes” feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Canada.

Overall, while the pressures of using ta'arof are experienced more frequently in Iran, they are still experienced occasionally by Iranians in Canada in conversations with other Iranians.

Table 16*The pressure of ta'arof use experienced by participants in Iran and Canada*

Questions	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		All the time	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Do you sometimes feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Iran?	0%	0%	0%	0%	13% (4)	20% (6)	87% (26)	80% (24)	0%	0%
Do you sometimes feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Canada?	0%	0%	0%	7% (2)	90% (27)	86% (26)	10% (3)	7% (2)	0%	0%

3.2.5. Participants' attitudes to ta'arof

To examine the Iranian-Canadian participants' attitudes about ta'arof, they were asked to answer 18 questions in the questionnaire on a scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (Ref. Appendix 5).

3.2.6. Participants' evaluations of the communicative and cultural value of ta'arof

In response to the question whether *ta'arof is an efficient tool for communication*, 33% (10) of the participants in the 1st group "disagreed", compared to 27% (8) of the 2nd group members who "agreed". The participants who disagreed feel that ta'arof is insufficient for information exchange. However, the participant who believe *ta'arof is an efficient tool for communication* argue that, despite its insufficiency for information exchange, ta'arof may work well for guarding social classes and other social differences as well as for building rapport.

A large majority of the Group 1 (43%=13) and about one-third of the Group 2 members "strongly disagreed" with the viewpoint that *ta'arof is a characteristic of good manner* ($z=0.08$, $p>0.05$). No one in the 1st group "agreed" with this, while one-fifth of group 2 members "agreed" ($z=2.6$, $p<0.05$) and 7% (2) "strongly agreed" ($z=1.5$, $p>0.05$).

Just under half of the Group 1 members and approximately one-third of members in the Group 2 “agreed” that *ta’arof makes communication too difficult* ($z=1.1, p>0.05$). Moreover, just under half of the 1st group members “strongly disagreed” that *ta’arof makes communication more exciting*, and about one-third of the individuals in the Group 2 “disagreed”.

While the majority of people from the Group 1 (37%=11) “disagreed” that *for an Iranian person, it is important to be able to use ta’arof* ($z=1.1, p>0.05$), just over half of the individuals from Group 2 and about one-third of Group 1 members “agreed” with this ($z=1.6, p>0.05$). In addition, 77% of the individuals from Group 1 and 90% (27) from Group 2 “strongly agreed” that *ta’arof is an important part of Iranian culture* ($z=1.4, p>0.05$).

To summarize, the majority of Iranians in Canada do not find ta’arof an efficient tool for communication or as a characteristic of good manners. The impact of the length of immigration on the attitudes about whether *ta’arof is an efficient tool for communication* and *it is a characteristic of good manners* is non-significant, but the proportions of the individuals with longer length of immigration who “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the opinions that *ta’arof is an efficient tool for communication* and *ta’arof is a characteristic of good manners* are a little higher, compared to the participants with a shorter length of stay in Canada. The majority of participants “agreed” that *ta’arof makes communication too difficult* and they “disagreed” *ta’arof makes communication more exciting*. However, the negative attitudes to ta’arof among G2 group participants are slightly higher than among G1 group participants. Moreover, whereas the majority of G1 participants “disagreed” that *for an Iranian person, it is important to use ta’arof*, the majority of G2 group participants “agreed” with this statement. It shows that the length of immigration impacts the attitude and importance of using ta’arof for Iranian individuals. Further,

the vast majority of participants from G1 and G2 “strongly agreed” that ta’arof is an important part of Iranian culture (See Table 17).

Table 17

Participants’ evaluations of the communicative and cultural value of ta’arof

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Ta’arof is an efficient tool for communication.	27% (8)	13% (4)	33% (10)	20% (6)	40% (12)	23% (7)	0% (0)	27% (8)	0% (0)	17% (5)
Ta’arof is a characteristic of good manners.	43% (13)	33% (10)	37% (11)	23% (7)	20% (6)	17% (5)	0% (0)	20% (6)	0% (0)	7% (2)
Ta’arof makes communication too difficult.	7% (2)	20% (6)	30% (9)	20% (6)	0% (0)	20% (6)	47% (14)	33% (10)	16% (5)	7% (2)
Ta’arof makes communication more exciting.	46% (14)	7% (2)	17% (5)	33% (10)	0% (0)	20% (6)	27% (8)	20% (6)	10% (3)	20% (6)
For an Iranian person, it is important to be able to use ta’arof.	0% (0)	0% (0)	37% (11)	24% (7)	30% (9)	13% (4)	33% (10)	53% (16)	0% (0)	10% (3)
Ta’arof is an important part of Iranian culture.	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	23% (7)	10% (3)	77% (23)	90% (27)

3.2.7. Participants’ emotive attitudes to ta’arof

The results show that half of the G1 participants “disagreed” (15) that they enjoy using ta’arof, compared to only 30% (9) of participants in the second group ($z=1.6, p>0.05$). The vast majority of people in the 2nd group, on the other hand, “agreed” (37%=11) that they enjoy using it in their interactions ($z=0.8, p>0.05$).

In addition, a large proportion of individuals in G1 “disagreed” (43%=13) that they enjoy when people use ta’arof, compared to 27% (8) of G2 participants ($z=1.3, p>0.05$). By contrast, about one-third of the individuals in the 2nd group “agreed” that they enjoy when people use ta’arof ($z=0.9, p>0.05$).

In sum, only about one-third of the participants enjoy using ta’arof or hearing it used, whereas the majority of participants dislike using it. G2 participants enjoy using ta’arof a little

more and dislike using ta'arof a little less than G1 group participants. However, it seems that the impact of duration of stay in Canada on the participants' emotive attitudes to ta'arof is not strong (Table 18).

Table 18

Participants' emotive attitudes to ta'arof

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
I enjoy using ta'arof.	23% (7)	13% (4)	50% (15)	30% (9)	0%	20% (6)	27% (8)	37% (11)	0%	0%
I hate using ta'arof.	0%	17% (5)	27% (8)	33% (10)	0%	7% (2)	33% (10)	23% (7)	40% (12)	20% (6)
I enjoy when people use ta'arof.	27% (8)	20% (6)	43% (13)	27% (8)	0%	10% (3)	23% (7)	33% (10)	7% (2)	10% (3)
I hate when people use ta'arof.	7% (2)	0%	20% (6)	33% (10)	0%	7% (2)	40% (12)	37% (11)	33% (10)	23% (7)

3.2.8. Preserving ta'arof in Canada and Iran

A great majority of individuals in the 1st group (60%=18) “disagreed” with the idea that it is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada, compared to 23% (7) of G2 group participants ($z=2.9, p<0.05$).

Participants were also asked if ta'arof needs to be preserved in the families of Iranian Canadians. While 70% (21) of the Group 1 members “disagreed”, a large proportion of Group 2 individuals (44%=13) “agreed” with the importance of maintaining ta'arof. The G1/G2 difference for disagreeing with the necessity of preserving ta'arof in Iranian families in Canada is significant ($z=2.9, p<0.05$).

In addition, the majority of G1 group participants “strongly agreed” that people of Iranian descent living in Canada and Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof, at 43% (13) and 47% (14), respectively, as compared to only 23% (7) and 20% (6) of G2 group participants. The G1/G2

difference for the idea that Iranians in Iran should discontinue the use of ta'arof is statistically significant ($z=2.2$, $p<0.05$).

Overall, there is no optimistic prognosis for the maintenance of ta'arof in the Iranian diaspora in Canada. The majority of participants in G1 “disagreed” with the importance of teaching ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada as well as the necessity of preserving it in the Iranian-Canadian families. Moreover, the ideas that people of Iranian descent living in Canada as well as Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof saw “disagreement” and “strong agreement” by the individuals in G2 and G1, respectively. It seems that the duration of immigration affects the attitudes about the importance of teaching and preserving ta'arof as well as discarding ta'arof in Iran (See Table 19).

Table 19

Participants’ opinions about preserving ta’arof in Canada and Iran

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
It is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada.	10% (3)	17% (5)	60% (18)	23% (7)	0%	0%	30% (9)	43% (13)	0%	17% (5)
Ta'arof needs to be preserved in the families of Iranian Canadians.	0%	10% (3)	70% (21)	33% (10)	0%	13% (4)	23% (7)	44% (13)	7% (2)	0%
People of Iranian descent living in Canada should discard ta'arof.	7% (2)	0%	27% (8)	40% (12)	0%	3% (1)	23% (7)	34% (10)	43% (13)	23% (7)
Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof.	3% (1)	17% (5)	30% (9)	43% (13)	0%	7% (2)	20% (6)	13% (4)	47% (14)	20% (6)

3.2.9. Participants’ opinions about factors that may have an impact on ta’arof use

Half of the G2 immigrants “agreed” that ta'arof is influenced by social distance, compared to about one-third of G1 immigrants ($z=1.3$, $p>0.05$) (the difference is non-significant).

A vast majority of participants in G1 and G2 “agreed” that ta'arof is influenced by age, gender and nearness in relationship or proximity. The factors that ranked the highest among all the

participants were relationship proximity ($z=0.6$, $p>0.05$) and age ($z=0.8$, $p>0.05$) (the difference across the groups is non-significant). More G2 immigrants (43%=13) “agreed” that gender was an important factor ($z=0.8$, $p>0.05$) (the G1/G2 difference is non-significant).

Overall, G1 and G2 immigrants concurred that all the factors, namely social distance, age, gender and relationship proximity had some effects on the use of ta’arof. Of the four factors, the noteworthy ones were relationship and age that were attributed higher influence by both groups. In addition, the social distance and gender factors were somewhat more important for G2, as compared to G1. It should also be noted that for male respondents, social distance and age are more important factors than for females, although non-significantly so. By contrast, more females than males overall “agreed” that ta’arof is influenced by gender and relationship proximity (See Table 20).

Table 20

Participants’ opinions about factors that may have an impact on ta’arof use

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Ta’arof is influenced by social distance.	0%	0%	0%	7% (2)	47% (14)	16% (5)	33% (10)	50% (15)	20% (6)	27% (8)
Ta’arof is influenced by age difference.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10% (3)	73% (22)	63% (19)	27% (8)	27% (8)
Ta’arof is influenced by gender.	17% (5)	0%	10% (3)	0%	23% (7)	20% (6)	33% (10)	43% (13)	17% (5)	37% (11)
Ta’arof is influenced by nearness in relationship /proximity.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	77% (23)	83% (25)	23% (7)	17% (5)

The analysis of data about the participants’ ta’arof attitudes demonstrates that the immigrants in the G1 group have more negative attitudes about ta’arof, compared to the G2 group individuals.

3.3. Correlations

To test for a linear relationship between the variables used in this study, Pearson's correlation (SPSS) was used to provide information about the direction and strength of the *linear relationship* between the variables.

The following guidelines were used for interpreting positive or negative correlations (Pearson's r) as well as their strengths:

If $r = +.70$ or higher very strong positive relationship
+.40 to +.69 Strong positive relationship
+.30 to +.39 Moderate positive relationship
+.20 to +.29 weak positive relationship
+.01 to +.19 No or negligible relationship
-.01 to -.19 No or negligible relationship
-.20 to -.29 weak negative relationship
-.30 to -.39 Moderate negative relationship
-.40 to -.69 Strong negative relationship
-.70 or higher Very strong negative relationship

3.3.1. Correlations between social variables and acculturation

3.3.1.1. Age

A Pearson's r data analysis established a moderate positive correlational relationship between "age" and *self-identification* as the objective aspect of ethnicity ($r=.39$, $p=.002$). In other words, younger participants have higher self-identification of being "Iranian" than do older participants. Of the 60 participants, 21 participants aged under 30, and 18 participants in 30-40 age group identified themselves as "Iranian", compared to only 9 participants between ages 41 and 50 (See Table 21). Appendix 6 compares Age * Self-identification Crosstabulation.

Table 21

Self-identification by age

Self-identification	Under 30	30-40	41-50
Iranian	21	18	9
Iranian-Canadian	1	6	2
Canadian-Iranian	-	-	2
Canadian	-	-	1
Asian	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-

The number of Persian art objects at home also correlates positively with “age” ($r=.48$, $p=.00$) (the correlation is strong). This means that younger participants have more objects of Persian arts at home, compared to older participants. Table 22 shows the number of participants in each age group with “some”, “many”, and “a few” objects of Persian arts at home. For Age * Number of objects of Persian arts Crosstabulation, see Appendix 7.

Table 22

Number of Persian art objects at home by age

Number of Persian art objects at home	Under 30	30-40	41-50
A few		3	
Some	22	14	5
Many	-	7	9

By contrast, there are strong negative correlations between the participants’ “age” and *participating in Iranian functions* ($r=-.59$, $p=.00$), as well as between “age” and “participating in Iranian personal networks” ($r=-.79$, $p=.00$). In other words, younger participants participate more in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks, compared to older participants.

3.3.1.2. Education

A strong negative correlation between “education” and *speaking English with friends daily* was observed ($r = -.43$, $p = .01$). This means that more educated participants speak Farsi less with friends in their daily interactions.

Similarly, there is a strong negative correlation between “education” and *participating in Iranian personal networks* ($r = -.63$, $p = .00$). It means that more educated immigrants had fewer networks.

However, “education” and *the number of Persian art objects at home* are positively correlated and the correlation is strong ($r = .43$, $p = .01$). The idea is that more educated individuals have more Persian art objects at home.

3.3.1.3. English proficiency

“English proficiency” is positively correlated with *self-identification* ($r = .27$, $p = .04$), and *using English words while speaking Farsi* ($r = .27$, $p = .04$). It means that the participants with a better command of English self-identify themselves as more “Iranian Canadian” than they do as “Iranian”. In addition, they use more English words while speaking Farsi.

Participating in Iranian functions ($r = -.47$, $p = .00$) and *Participating in Iranian personal networks* ($r = -.75$, $p = .00$), on the other hand, are negatively correlated with “English proficiency”. In other words, the better immigrants speak English, the less they participate in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks.

3.3.1.4. Length of stay in Canada

Self-identification is positively correlated with “the length of stay in Canada” ($r = .41$, $p = .00$). This means that the immigrants with longer stay in Canada identify themselves more frequently as “Iranian Canadian” than as “Iranian”.

However, *the consumption of Iranian food on special occasions* ($r=-.30$, $p=.02$) as well as *the consumption of Iranian food at other times* ($r=-.30$, $p=.02$) are negatively correlated with “the length of stay in Canada”. In other words, the immigrants with longer duration of living in Canada reported less consumption of Iranian food on special occasions as well as on ordinary times.

Participating in Iranian functions ($r=-.38$, $p=.00$) and *Iranian personal networks* ($r= -.77$, $p=.00$) are also negatively correlated with “the length of stay in Canada”. In other words, the individuals with longer stay in Canada participate less in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks.

3.3.2. Correlations between social variables and Ta’arof use

The following section presents the results of the statistical analysis regarding correlations between social variables ta'arof use. Appendix 8 provides the comparative relationships for this analysis.

3.3.2.1. Age

There is a positive correlation between *the frequency of ta’arof use with Iranians in Iran* and “age” ($r=.29$, $p=.03$). This suggests that the older individuals are, the more they used ta’arof in Iran with Iranians.

In addition, the correlation between “age” and *pressures of using ta’arof with other Iranians in Iran* is positive ($r=.22$, $p=.09$). This means that the older immigrants are, the more they feel the pressures of using ta’arof.

However, “age” and *frequency of ta’arof use with non-Iranians in Canada* are negatively correlated and the relationship is strong ($r=-.45$, $p=.00$). It means that younger participants use ta’arof with non-Iranians in Canada more than the older ones do.

3.3.2.2. Gender

There is a moderate negative correlation between “gender” and *the frequency of ta’arof use with Iranians in Iran* ($r=-.30$, $p=.02$). It means that males used more ta’arof with Iranians in Iran, compared to females.

Moreover, “gender” and *the frequency of ta’arof use with non-Iranians in Canada* are negatively correlated ($r=-.22$, $p=.10$). In other words, men use ta’arof with non-Iranians in Canada more than women.

Furthermore, *difficulties in communication associated with the use of ta’arof in Canada with non-Iranians* correlate negatively with “gender” ($r=-.33$, $p=.01$). This suggests that males have more difficulties with ta’arof use in Canada with non-Iranians.

By contrast, *difficulties associated with not using ta’arof in communication with Iranians in Iran* correlate positively with “gender” ($r=.25$, $p=.05$). This suggests that women have more communication difficulties in Iran because of not using ta’arof in their interactions.

3.3.2.3. Education

The frequency of ta’arof use with Iranians in Iran and “education” are positively correlated and the correlation is strong ($r=.62$, $p=.00$). In other words, the more individuals are educated, the more they used ta’arof in Iran with Iranians.

Similarly, *the frequency of ta’arof use with Iranians in Canada* correlates positively with “education” ($r=.24$, $p=.06$). This suggests that better educated immigrants use ta’arof more in their interactions with Iranians in Canada.

Also, *difficulties in communication associated with the use of ta’arof in Canada with non-Iranians* correlate positively with “education” ($r=.35$, $p=.05$). In other words, more educated

individuals have more difficulties in communication with non-Iranians in Canada because of not using ta'arof.

In addition, *Pressures of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Iran* correlate positively with “education” ($r=.43$, $p=.00$). In other words, the more people are educated, the more they feel the pressures of using ta'arof in Iran with other Iranians.

By contrast, there is a moderate negative correlation between “education” and difficulties associated with not using ta'arof in communication with Iranians in Iran ($r=-.34$, $p=.01$). It means that more educated immigrants have reported fewer difficulties with Iranians in Iran because of not using ta'arof.

3.3.2.4. English proficiency

“English proficiency” is negatively correlated with *the frequency of ta'arof use with non-Iranians* ($r= -.55$, $p=.00$) *in Canada*. The participants with higher level of proficiency in English use ta'arof less.

3.3.2.5. Length of stay in Canada

The immigrants with longer duration of stay in Canada use ta'arof less in their interactions with Iranians ($r= -.26$, $p=.04$) and non-Iranians ($r= -.78$, $p=.00$) in Canada.

No significant correlational relationships were found between the duration of stay in Canada and the other categories of ta'arof use. The correlations were negligible.

3.3.3. Correlations between social variables and Ta'arof attitudes

The following section presents the results of the statistical analysis regarding correlations between social variables attitudes towards ta'arof. Appendix 9 provides the comparative relationships for this analysis.

3.3.3.1. Age

Support for the opinions that *for an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta'arof* ($r=-.24$, $p=.07$) and *it is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada* ($r=-.25$, $p=.05$) are negatively correlated with “age”. Older people are more likely than younger individuals to agree with these viewpoints.

By contrast, support for the opinion that *Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof* ($r=.39$, $p=.02$) correlates positively with “age”. In other words, older immigrants are more likely than younger ones to support this point of view.

3.3.3.2. Gender

Enjoyment of hearing ta'arof ($r= -.40$, $p= .02$) and support for the opinion that *Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof* ($r=-.29$, $p= .03$) are negatively correlated with “gender”. Men enjoy it more when other people use ta'arof. On the other hand, men are more likely than women to support the viewpoint that Iranians in Iran should discontinue ta'arof.

3.3.3.3. Education

Support for the opinion that *ta'arof makes communication more exciting* correlates negatively with the level of “education” ($r=-.26$, $p= .04$). In other words, the more educated individuals are, the less likely they are to agree with the opinion that ta'arof makes communication exiting.

Support for the opinion that *Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof*, on the other hand, correlates positively with “education” ($r=.42$, $p= .01$). The more educated immigrants are, the more likely they are to support the view that Iranians in Iran should discontinue ta'arof.

3.3.3.4. English proficiency

Opinions that *ta'arof makes communication too difficult* ($r = .22$, $p = .09$) and *Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof* ($r = .36$, $p = .00$) are positively correlated with “English proficiency”. In other words, immigrants with a better command of English are more likely to support the viewpoints that *ta'arof makes communication too difficult* and *Iranians in Iran should discontinue ta'arof*.

By contrast, support for opinions that *for an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta'arof* ($r = -.25$, $p = .06$), *it is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada* ($r = -.25$, $p = .06$) and *ta'arof needs to be preserved in the families of Iranian Canadians* ($r = -.35$, $p = .01$) are negatively correlated with “English proficiency”. People with higher English proficiency are less likely to support these viewpoints.

3.3.3.5. Length of stay in Canada

Participants with longer stay in Canada are less likely to agree with the opinions that *ta'arof makes communication more exciting* ($r = -.26$, $p = .04$), *for an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta'arof* ($r = -.28$, $p = .03$), *ta'arof is an efficient tool of communication* ($r = -.42$, $p = .01$), *ta'arof is a characteristic of good manners* ($r = -.30$, $p = .02$), and *I enjoy using ta'arof* ($r = -.22$, $p = .09$). In other words, they are negatively correlated.

On the other hand, support for the opinion that *Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof* correlates positively with the length of stay in Canada ($r = .34$, $p = .01$). It means that immigrants with longer duration of stay in Canada are more likely to support the idea of discontinuation of *ta'arof* use.

CHAPTER IV

4. DISCUSSION

One of the most important goals of my study was to address the socio-cultural attitudes to ta'arof among Iranian immigrants living in Canada. This chapter offers the interpretations of the results reported above.

4.1. Summary of findings about acculturation

It is clear from the data that the longer immigrants from Iran stay in Canada, the more likely they are to be integrated into the new society. In addition, the adaptation is more sociocultural than based on attitudes for the immigrants with longer stay in Canada. For example, whereas G1 participants speak more English words while speaking Farsi, they have more Persian handicrafts at home, and mostly remain Iranian even after 10 years of stay in Canada.

4.1.1. *Length of stay in Canada*

The use of English words while speaking Farsi in G1 members is higher than G2 members. The majority of participants in both groups claimed that they “never” speak English, and speak Farsi instead with friends daily; “never” speak English at home, and speak Farsi at home “all the time”. The recent immigrants eat their ethnic food more often than immigrants with longer stay in Canada, and participate more in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks. A shorter duration of stay in Canada is somewhat connected with having more friends among the same ethnicity. On the other hand, a longer stay in Canada is to some extent connected with having more objects of Persian art (handicrafts) at home, more specifically because of feeling nostalgic as well as having more time to get back to Iran to get the artifacts. The perception of ethnicity changes over time from the one associated with the old country of residence to the new country. The immigrants with longer stay in Canada identify themselves more frequently as “Iranian Canadian”

than as “Iranian”. Participants in both groups strongly concur with the viewpoint that teaching Farsi to Iranian-Canadian children and supporting Iranian friends in Canada in hard circumstances are important.

4.1.2. Age

Younger participants have higher self-identification of being “Iranian”; more objects of Persian arts at home, participate more in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks than older participants. Feeling nostalgic and the ease of stress on the first survival years of immigration are among the accounts for having more objects of Persian arts at home among younger participants.

4.1.3. Level of education

The immigrants with a higher level of education tend to speak Farsi less with friends in their daily interactions; they have fewer networks with other immigrants from Iran and more Persian art objects at home.

4.1.4. English proficiency

The participants with a better command of English self-identify themselves more frequently as “Iranian Canadian” than as “Iranian”; they use more English words while speaking Farsi; and participate less in Iranian functions and Iranian personal networks.

4.2. Interpretation of culture change

Overall, we see that the increased duration of stay in Canada is associated with changes in preferences, behaviours and attitudes of immigrants, i.e., the effect of acculturation is observed. Acculturation is susceptible to many factors. Motivation for migrating (e.g., voluntary or involuntary), individual or social variables (e.g. age, gender, etc.), cultural factors, and factors associated with the migrant experience (Berry, 2001; Bochner, 1982) are among the major factors that may impact the degree of acculturation. If most refugees had a choice, they would prefer to

stay in their home countries to avoid being isolated, ostracized, and impoverished (Williams & Berry, 1991, p. 632). In fact, the involuntary motivation for abandoning the mother land is usually externally imposed, whereas the voluntary immigrants' motivation for migrating is imposed internally.

According to Berry (2001), individual migrants' idiosyncratic demographical and psychological characteristics affect their acculturation. Age, gender, education and socioeconomic status as well as language acquisition ability are individual variables that can excel familiarity with the culture of the host country and lower the degree of uncertainty experienced.

4.2.1. Age

As suggested by Berry (2001), age of migration and success of acculturation are negatively correlated. It is believed that younger individuals will adapt faster to the culture of the host country. There are some research findings that acknowledge the correlation between the age on which migration occurs and acculturation.

Tran's (1989) study conducted with 75 Vietnamese American female college students found that the age at which the participants came to the United States was specifically correlated with acculturation. Specifically, those who relocated to the United States at an early age and had been in the United States for an extended period of time were found to be more acculturated. This finding is similar to Faragallah, Schumm, and Webb's (1997) study who found that longer residence of Arab Americans in the United States and younger age at immigration were associated with greater acculturation to the United States society and greater satisfaction with life in this country (Dow, 2011, P.223)

4.2.2. Gender

Acculturation can also be affected by gender to some extent. Main differences between the host and home culture may lead women to adopt new roles in the host country which can encompass a range of conflicts with native culture and traditional roles that they may experience (Moghadam, Ditto, & Taylor, 1990).

4.2.3. Level of Education and Socioeconomic Status

The level of education and socioeconomic status has been cited by Berry (2001) as another factor that affects an individual's successful acculturation. The findings of research studies conducted in this area with Albanian immigrants (Dow & Woolley, 2010) and Bosnian refugees (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003) substantiate this. The connected findings show that the more educated members or the members originating from more urban areas were more likely to use integrative acculturation strategies to adjust to life in the USA.

4.2.4. Language Acquisition Ability

Many scholars in the field of acculturation have acknowledged the significance of communication (Kim, 1977; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988). A common language is a must to communicate, and therefore the majority of new arrivals look to acquire linguistic skills (Dow, 2011, P.223)

Shared networks with members of the host country facilitate the process of acculturation, whereas the native country network may act as a deterrent to acculturation for the reason that it reduces the incentive for communication with the host country members, and therefore the need to learn acceptable social behaviors (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). For example, a study by Surdam and Collins (1984) with African students in the USA found that their ability to adjust was positively associated with the length of stay in the host country, level of interaction with Americans, level of

participation in campus and community activities, social status in the home country, level of English language proficiency on arrival, and a positive religious attitude (Dow, 2011, p. 224).

4.2.5. Cognitive framework

As the results demonstrate, there are some degrees of change at the sociolinguistic level in both G1 and G2 group participants. The process of a new language acquisition affects immigrants' cognitive framework and could result in some changes in the immigrants' attitudes and values (Tran, 1993; Hojat et al., 2002; Yeh & Mayuko, 2003; Kim, Laroche & Tomiuk, 2004; Shahim, 2007). The cognitive framework is shaped partly by the language an individual speaks (Durst, Minuchin-Itzigsohn & Jabotinsky-Rubin, 1993). There are some other research studies that confirm the idea that attitudinal changes are among the outcomes of the changes in the cognitive framework. For example, changes in attitudes towards premarital sex, marriage and family in the process of acculturation have been seen among Iranian immigrants in the USA (Hojat, et al., 1999, 2000, 2002; Hojat & Mehryar, 2004).

4.2.6. Interlanguage

As already mentioned, the use of English words while speaking Farsi is higher in G1 participants than G2 participants. It is argued that language shift is an evidence of "interlanguage".

The term "interlanguage" was propounded by Selinker (1972) on the basis of Weinreich's (1953) concept of "interlingual". Selinker (1972) defined interlanguage as the existence of another linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a target language norm (P. 214).

According to language acquisition theories, an adult learning a foreign language develops an individual "interlanguage," a system of representations influenced by both the native and the foreign language and evolving in the direction away from the native language and towards more

accurate foreign language representations (Risager, 2006). In addition, a lengthy exposure to a foreign language impacts the native language structure, pulling it in a direction closer to the foreign language.

4.2.7. Interculture

Kordes (1991) developed the term “interculture” by analogy with Selinker’s notion of interlanguage (pp. 300-1). Interculture is defined as the individuals’ degree of cultural competence, and this fluctuates between the native and the target culture and departs from the first culture as their awareness of the target culture increases. However, it is not easy to identify the relationship between interlanguage and interculture. Singerman (1996) argues that there is a correspondence between the linguistic competence and intercultural competence (pp.74-81). Thus, it is possible to hypothesize that the development of biculturalism may follow an ‘interculture’ pattern, somewhat similar to ‘interlanguage.’ Under the prolonged influence of a host culture, immigrants gradually form a more accurate representation of it. At the same time, the immigrants’ perception of their own native culture experiences pressures from the majority culture, leading to some reassessments in the perceptions and practice of the native culture.

4.3. Summary of findings about changes in ta’arof use and attitudes

4.3.1. Age

The older individuals are, the more they used ta’arof in Iran with Iranians and the more they feel the pressures of using ta’arof. Younger participants, on the other hand, use ta’arof with non-Iranians in Canada more than the older ones. Older people are more likely than younger individuals to agree with the viewpoints that *for an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta’arof, it is important to teach ta’arof to Iranian children in Canada, and Iranians in Iran should discard ta’arof.*

4.3.2. Gender

Males used more ta'arof with Iranians in Iran, and use ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada more than women. Males have more difficulties with ta'arof use in Canada with non-Iranians; Women have more difficulties with Iranians in Iran because of not using ta'arof in their interactions. For male respondents, 'social distance' and 'age' are more significant. By contrast, more females than males overall "agree" that ta'arof is influenced by gender and relationship proximity. Men enjoy it more when other people use ta'arof, and are more likely than women to support the viewpoint that Iranians in Iran should discontinue ta'arof. Overall, the data suggests that men are more positive in their attitudes about ta'arof than women.

A comparison of this study and the study of ta'arof use among Iranian Americans (Mahdavi, 2013) showed that both Iranian women in Canada and the United States did not use ta'arof more than men.

4.3.3. Level of education

Individuals with a higher level of education use ta'arof more, feel more pressure to use it in Iran and with other Iranians in Canada, run into more problems while trying to use ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada, disagree that ta'arof adds excitement to communication and believe that ta'arof should be discarded. The more educated individuals are less likely to agree with the opinion that *ta'arof makes communication exiting*, while they are more likely to support the view that *Iranians in Iran should discontinue ta'arof*.

4.3.4. English proficiency

The participants with higher level of proficiency in English use ta'arof less. Immigrants with a better command of English are more likely to support the viewpoints that *ta'arof makes communication too difficult* and that *Iranians in Iran should discontinue ta'arof*. However, they

are less likely to support the viewpoints that *for an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta'arof, it is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada* and *ta'arof needs to be preserved in the families of Iranian Canadians*. In sum, the individuals with a lower English proficiency level have more positive attitudes about ta'arof, want to teach it to children, and do not particularly want its discontinuation.

4.3.5. Length of stay in Canada

Both recent and longer-term Iranian immigrants in Canada keep making ta'arof with other Iranians in Canada, but the use decreases over the duration of stay in Canada. This finding does not agree with the finding of a study of the use of ta'arof among 98 Iranian Americans. In the United States, more acculturated Iranian immigrants did not decrease ta'arof use (Mahdavi, 2013). Long-term Iranian immigrants and older immigrants in Canada used ta'arof in Iran somewhat more than recent and younger immigrants. While both longer-term and recent immigrants attempt to use ta'arof in communication with non-Iranians in Canada, long-term immigrants use it only "sometimes," compared to recent immigrants who are prone to make ta'arof in their interactions with non-Iranians quite 'often.' Both long-term and recent Iranians in Canada do not find ta'arof an efficient tool for communication or characteristic of good manners; both "agreed" that ta'arof makes communication too difficult, and "disagreed" it makes communication more exciting; both "strongly agreed" that ta'arof is an important part of Iranian culture. However, while the majority of long-term immigrants "disagreed" that for an Iranian person, it is important to use ta'arof, the majority of recent immigrants "agreed." Recent immigrants enjoy using ta'arof a little more and dislike using ta'arof a little less than long-term immigrants. The majority of longer-term immigrants "disagreed" with the importance of teaching ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada as well as the necessity of preserving it in the Iranian-Canadian families. The ideas that people of

Iranian descent living in Canada as well as Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof saw "disagreement" by recent immigrants and "strong agreement" by long-term immigrants. It seems that the duration of immigration affects the attitudes about the importance of teaching and preserving ta'arof as well as discarding ta'arof in Iran. G1 and G2 members concurred that all the factors, namely social distance, age, gender and relationship proximity had some effects on the use of ta'arof. Of the four factors, the noteworthy factors were "relationship" and "age" that had higher figures for both groups. The 'social distance' and 'gender' factors were somewhat more important for G2, as compared to G1. Participants with longer stay in Canada are less likely to agree with the opinions that *ta'arof makes communication more exciting, for an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta'arof, ta'arof is an efficient tool of communication, ta'arof is a characteristic of good manners, and I enjoy using ta'arof*. By contrast, they are more likely to support the idea that *Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof*.

To sum up, the longer-term immigrants have more negative attitudes about ta'arof, in comparison with the recent immigrants. The idea is that ta'arof is referred to as something unnatural and hypocritical by the individuals in G1 group although it is positively associated with being kind to people. Most participants disagree with the positive communicative impact of ta'arof, want it discarded and do not want to teach it to their children in Canada. However, the attitudes of recent immigrants towards ta'arof are 'half-positive,' whereas the attitudes of longer-term immigrants are strongly negative with younger people tending to have more negative attitudes towards ta'arof. In addition, as for the cultural value of ta'arof, all the participants concur that ta'arof is a vital part of Iranian culture.

4.4. Interpretation of changes in ta'arof use and attitudes

As is shown in our study, G1 and G2 group Iranian Canadians make ta'arof in communication, with both other Iranians and occasionally non-Iranian Canadians. These findings give weight to a viewpoint found in some studies (e.g., Sharifian, 2008; Motaghi-Tabari & de Beuzeville, 2012, p. 31) that both Iranians in Iran and Iranian immigrants use some ritualistic conversation responses different from those used in Anglophone cultures. However, there are some studies that show the opposite: while talking in English, immigrants from Iran can have conversation strategies similar to those of Anglophones (Motaghi-Tabari & de Beuzeville, 2012, p. 31). In other words, ta'arof is discarded in intercultural communication in English. In my study, on the other hand, Iranians in Canada indicated that firstly, they mostly speak Farsi with other Iranians, and secondly, they use ta'arof in communication in both Farsi and English. Ta'arof is used more by educated individuals, probably because education is one of the major domains of ta'arof use (Koutlaki, 2010).

The highly negative attitudes to ta'arof expressed by participants in this study, who demonstrate overall positive attitudes to Iranian culture in general, and agree that ta'arof is an important part of Iranian culture, was surprising and had not been predicted. More mixed reactions were expected. There are some possible explanations of these attitudinal changes.

4.4.1. Acculturation

It can be suggested that the impact of the majority culture may be one of the major causes of negative attitudes about ta'arof and its use by Iranian Canadian immigrants. Immigration causes 'hybrid identities'. In terms of identity, hybridity implies a blending of cultures and represents a coexistence of difference in which new structures and perspectives emerge (Garcia Canclini, 1995; Milani, 2004, p. 157). Hybrid identity involves ongoing intertextual performances in which

individuals choose to perform one identity in one specific setting, another identity in another setting, or both simultaneously (Broadhurst, 1999; Edwards, Ganguly, & Lo, 2007). The fact that longer-term immigrants have more negative attitudes against ta'arof and use it less supports the idea that attitudes towards ta'arof change under the pressures of acculturation or integration. In addition to acculturation and integration that cause changes in attitudes to ta'arof and its use, it can also be argued that longer-term immigrants avoid making ta'arof, presumably because they have realised its cultural specificity (Motaghi-Tabari & de Beuzeville, 2012, p. 33). In addition, the immigrants with shorter duration of stay in Canada use ta'arof more in their interactions with Iranians and non-Iranians in Canada, probably since less acculturated people are more accustomed to and comfortable with ta'arof speech act and responding to ta'arof than Iranian immigrants with longer length of immigration (Motaghi-Tabari & de Beuzeville, 2012, p. 34).

4.4.2. Immigration motivation

In addition to cultural factors such as acculturation or integration, the highly negative or positive attitudes to ta'arof expressed by participants in our study may also be contingent upon a variety of factors such as their incentives or motivations for immigrating (e.g., voluntary or involuntary), individual factors, and factors associated with the migrant experience (Berry, 2001; Bochner, 1982). The idea is that negative attitudes towards the use of cultural values such as ta'arof in this study may suggest voluntary immigration motivation which is usually imposed internally.

4.4.3. Culture clash: Restraint

As a cultural practice, Iranians are used to verbal compliments such as in ta'arof and being very polite and considerate (Ta'arof) to avoid hurting someone's feelings. According to Kaeni (2006), ta'arofing is a formality that is used out of respect towards other people with no direct equivalent in English or American culture. Thus, Iranians might avoid expressing their personal

opinions for the sake of being polite and agreeable. In my opinion, indirectness and the pressure of hiding personal opinions for the sake of being considerate may be among the underlying factors that contribute to growing negative attitudes towards ta'arof among Iranian immigrants.

4.4.4. Culture clash: Social Status and Distance

According to Miller et al. (2014) *social status* (power difference) and *distance* (closeness) are the two different dimensions between two individuals which are generally expressed by politeness strategies (p.18). Power difference and distance (closeness) may have an effect on the way that face-oriented politeness is expressed linguistically. For example, in Iranian culture, when addressing someone of a perceived high status, a speaker will confer a high degree of respect by using other-raising strategies (Koutlaki 1997, p. 119). As stated by Afghari et al. (2011), unlike Persian, other-raising pattern and self-lowering is not common in a compliment interaction in English and the response is usually followed by agreement on the part of the addressee as in the following example (p. 33):

A: Thank you, Jack; it was an honor to have you in our program. You are really smart.

B: smart?

A: Yes. Really, you are.

B: Oh, yes. I am smart. However, ...

4.4.5. Complexity of ta'arof

As stated by Assadi (1980), foreigners variously find the ta'arof used by Persian speakers baffling, intriguing, frustrating, complex, and a waste of time (p. 221). Thus, awareness about the complexity of ta'arof phenomenon and its negative consequences in daily interactions in a Western society can be suggested as another contributing factor that leads to negative attitudes towards ta'arof among Iranian immigrants in Canada.

4.4.6. Gender role

Centuries of gender discrimination and segregation of sexes has created distinct roles and codes of behavior for both the sexes and many are still practiced today. As stated by Mir-Hosseini (2002) Iranian women are still suffering from gender inequality in spite of their public roles. Earlier research conducted by Mahdi (2002) also shows that most of Iranian immigrant women share a Western liberal view of women's role in society and withhold approval of how the Islamic Republic of Iran has defined women's gender roles (pp. 194-5). Because of the hierarchical culture in Iran, one needs to show respect to individuals who are in a higher social position. On the other hand, Iranian culture is patriarchal, where males hold more rights and privileges than females. It could be expected that Iranian women are in a circumstance when they need to hone their ta'arof skills to manifest respect more frequently, and accordingly, they may despise ta'arof more than men. Our study confirmed that women experience more difficulties with ta'arof in Iran and enjoy others using it less, and that women consider the gender factor in ta'arof use to be more important than men believe it to be. These results align with earlier observations that acculturation patterns differ by gender (Archueta, 2015). However, women oppose discarding ta'arof more than men do.

4.4.7. Changes in the social order in Iran

Ta'arof is a manifestation of the hierarchical Iranian society (Hofstede, 1980; Koutlaki, 2010). However, a growing change in the social order in Iran is undermining the social meaning and purposes of ta'arof. Ta'arof has been employed to highlight hierarchies and respect to seniors in the society (Zandpour & Sadri, 1996). However, in today's Iranian society, young individuals are more defiant in the workplace and feel less or no respect for the elderly people, compared to the past (Yaghmaian, 2002). In fact, one of the major core features of ta'arof (respect and deference) is fading away.

4.4.8. The effect of global economy in Iran

There has been a fundamental change in the economy of Iran as the result of ongoing globalization. Instead of the traditional shops, where a clerk would have leisurely conversations with customers while bargaining over the prices, there are modern supermarkets with fixed price tags and cashiers. Thus, ta'arof's biggest 'playground', the bazaar (Koutlaki, 2010), is disappearing by the influence of global economy.

4.4.9. Economic downturn in Iran

It is commonly understood that the deepening economic crisis can profoundly impact children, youth and low-income families. Its effects ripple through the multiple contexts in which people are situated. Within the family, stressors such as job loss, and loss in family savings place strain on parental relationships, and on a broader level, on the society as a whole. The opportunity for visiting friends, or hosting friends at home in Iran now is becoming less and it is partly associated with the worsening economy and financial burdens. In current Iran, the majority of people are working more than one job at the same time to survive and make ends meet. This is leaving them no extra time to socialize. Thus, hospitality, as the third cornerstone of ta'arof, is fading away.

Thus, the responses of Iranian participants may not be merely associated with their acculturation in Canada. These responses might also be the reflection of changes that are happening back home.

4.4.10. The phenomenon of Culture erosion

All the participants in this study unanimously proclaimed ta'arof to be an important part of Iranian culture, but they are not eager to protect it from fading away. This may be a manifestation

of a wider phenomenon of “cultural erosion” (Norberg-Hodge, 1999), the spread of Americanization, lifestyle and culture as being superior to all else.

Culture is the way of life of people in a society; a set of beliefs which they learn, and share (Linton, 1945). The triumphant march of imperialism over the globe leads to the annihilation of traditional local cultures. Norenberg-Hodge (1999) argued that the effect of globalizing market forces is destroying rural communities and their cultural traditions and values on an unprecedented scale. The spread of consumer culture seems unstoppable.

Erosion of the distinctive features of local cultures is lamented by researchers who warn that any levity by custodians of a culture would result in fast erosion of the uniqueness of the people and their culture (Wahab, Odunsi, & Ajiboye, 2012).

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION

My research found that the longer-term Iranian immigrants in Canada hold more negative attitudes against ta'arof, compared to the recent immigrants. The majority of longer-term and recent immigrants disagree with the positive communicative impact of ta'arof, and they want it discarded and do not support the idea of teaching ta'arof to their children in Canada. However, the attitudes of recent immigrants towards ta'arof are "half-positive," whereas the attitudes of longer-term immigrants are strongly negative with younger people tending to have more negative attitudes towards ta'arof. In addition, as for the cultural value of ta'arof, all the participants concur with the idea that ta'arof is an integral part of Iranian culture. Longer-term and recent immigrants agreed that all the factors, namely social distance, age, gender and relationship proximity had some effects on the use of ta'arof. Of the four factors, the most noteworthy for both participant groups were 'relationship' and 'age'. The 'social distance' and 'gender' factors were somewhat more significant for recent immigrants, in comparison with longer-term immigrants.

There are many factors contributing to the attitudinal changes in ta'arof and its use among Iranian immigrants in Canada. These factors are among several possible explanations that can be offered to explain the changes in attitudes and values:

- 1) Acculturation,
- 2) Immigration motivation,
- 3) Restraint,
- 4) Social status and distance,
- 5) Complexity of ta'arof,
- 6) Gender role,
- 7) Changes in the Iranian social order,
- 8) The effects of global economy in Iran,
- 9) Economic burdens in Iran,
- 10) Culture erosion

In addition to these factors that account for changes in attitudes, the impact of the changes in immigrants' cognitive framework caused by a new language acquisition that develops an individual interlanguage, as well as the individuals' degree of cultural competence (interculture) in the process of acculturation are worth considering.

Unlike most Iranian immigrants in Canada and most immigrants in the United States, Iranian Americans are relatively unique with respect to practicing their cultural values. For example, Unlike Iranian Canadians, more acculturated Iranian Americans did not show a decrease in ta'arof use. However, both Iranian-Canadian and Iranian-American women did not use ta'arof more than men. Some difference between the participants in my study and the study in the United States may account for some of the differences in findings. For instance, unlike the participants in American study, all of the participants in my study in Canada were born in Iran. In addition to different participants, it is also suggested that different methodologies may contribute to some changes in my findings and the findings in the United States. The similarities and differences between my findings and the findings of the study in the United States can also be suggested as one of the significances of my study.

The limitations of the study did not allow me to compare the attitudes of Iranian Canadians towards ta'arof with those held by Iranians in Iran or explore the actual linguistic patterns of ta'arof, which is planned for future studies. The lack of control for localities of origin, ethnic and religious backgrounds among participants were other limitations of the study.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Section3: Acculturation

A) Cultural and social behavior

Circle one of the following:

1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=all the time

1. How often do you use English words while speaking Farsi?	1 2 3 4 5
2. How often do you speak English with Farsi-English bilingual friends daily?	1 2 3 4 5
3. How often do you speak Farsi with bilingual friends daily?	1 2 3 4 5
4. How often do you speak English with bilingual members at home?	1 2 3 4 5
5. How often do you speak Farsi with bilingual members at home?	1 2 3 4 5
6. How often do you consume Iranian food on holidays or special occasions?	1 2 3 4 5
7. How often do you consume Iranian food at times other than holiday and special occasions?	1 2 3 4 5
8. How often do you participate in functions like Iranian concerts, public lectures, dances, or picnics?	1 2 3 4 5
9. How often do you participate in Iranian personal networks like friendship?	1 2 3 4 5

Circle one of the following:

1=Not at all 2=A few 3=Some 4=Many

1. How many close Iranian friends do you have?	1 2 3 4
2. How many objects of Iranian art do you have at home?	1 2 3 4

B) Attitudes and feelings

Circle one of the following:

1= Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree/neutral 4=Agree

5= Strongly agree

1. It is important to teach Farsi to children.	1 2 3 4 5
2. It is important for me to help and support my Iranian friends.	1 2 3 4 5
3. It is important for me to help and support my Iranian friends.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix 2. Gender * Self-identification Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.046 ^a	3	.790
Likelihood Ratio	1.431	3	.698
Linear-by-Linear Association	.544	1	.461
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .48.

Appendix 3. Gender * Self-identification Crosstabulation

			Self-identification				Total
			Iranian	Ir-Ca	Ca-Ir	Canadian	
D	Male	Count	24	5	1	1	31
		Expected Count	24.8	4.7	1.0	.5	31.0
	Female	Count	24	4	1	0	29
		Expected Count	23.2	4.4	1.0	.5	29.0
Total		Count	48	9	2	1	60
		Expected Count	48.0	9.0	2.0	1.0	60.0

Appendix 4. Ta'arof use

1. Do you know when to use Ta'arof?
2. How often did you use ta'arof in Iran?
3. Any difficulties with Iranians in Iran because of you not using ta'arof?
4. How often do you use ta'arof with Iranians in Canada?
5. How often do you use ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada?
6. Any difficulties with Iranians in Canada because of you not using ta'arof?
7. Any problems when people from other traditions/nations have interacted with you in Canada because of you using ta'arof?
8. Do you sometimes feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Iran?
9. Do you sometimes feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Canada?

Appendix 5. Ta'arof attitudes

1. Ta'arof is an efficient tool for communication.
2. Ta'arof is a characteristic of good manners.
3. I enjoy using ta'arof.
4. I hate using ta'arof.
5. I enjoy when people use ta'arof.
6. I hate when people use ta'arof.
7. Ta'arof makes communication too difficult.
8. Ta'arof makes communication more exciting.
9. For an Iranian person, it is important to be able to use ta'arof.
10. Ta'arof is an important part of Iranian culture.
11. It is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada.
12. Ta'arof needs to be preserved in the families of Iranian Canadians.
13. People of Iranian descent living in Canada should discard ta'arof.
14. Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof.
15. Ta'arof is influenced by social distance.
16. Ta'arof is influenced by age difference.
17. Ta'arof is influenced by gender.
18. Ta'arof is influenced by nearness in relationship/proximity.

Appendix 6. Age * Self-identification Crosstabulation

			Self-identification				Total
			iranian	ir-ca	ca-ir	ca	
Age	22.00	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	23.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	24.00	Count	3	0	0	0	3
		Expected Count	2.4	.5	.1	.1	3.0
	25.00	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	26.00	Count	4	0	0	0	4
		Expected Count	3.2	.6	.1	.1	4.0
	27.00	Count	6	0	0	0	6
		Expected Count	4.8	.9	.2	.1	6.0
	28.00	Count	3	0	0	0	3
		Expected Count	2.4	.5	.1	.1	3.0
	29.00	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	30.00	Count	3	0	0	0	3
		Expected Count	2.4	.5	.1	.1	3.0
	31.00	Count	3	1	0	0	4
		Expected Count	3.2	.6	.1	.1	4.0
	32.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	33.00	Count	2	1	0	0	3
		Expected Count	2.4	.5	.1	.1	3.0
	34.00	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	35.00	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	36.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	37.00	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	38.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	39.00	Count	3	0	0	0	3
		Expected Count	2.4	.5	.1	.1	3.0
	40.00	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	41.00	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	42.00	Count	1	1	1	0	3
		Expected Count	2.4	.5	.1	.1	3.0
	43.00	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	44.00	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.6	.3	.1	.0	2.0
	45.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	46.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	47.00	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	48.00	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	50.00	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	.0	.0	1.0
	Total	Count	48	9	2	1	60
		Expected Count	48.0	9.0	2.0	1.0	60.0

Appendix 7. Age * Number of objects of Persian arts Crosstabulation

			Number of objects of Persian arts			Total
			a few	some	many	
Age	22.00	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	23.00	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	24.00	Count	0	3	0	3
		Expected Count	.2	2.1	.8	3.0
	25.00	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	26.00	Count	0	4	0	4
		Expected Count	.2	2.7	1.1	4.0
	27.00	Count	0	6	0	6
		Expected Count	.3	4.1	1.6	6.0
	28.00	Count	0	3	0	3
		Expected Count	.2	2.1	.8	3.0
	29.00	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	30.00	Count	1	0	2	3
		Expected Count	.2	2.1	.8	3.0
	31.00	Count	1	2	1	4
		Expected Count	.2	2.7	1.1	4.0
	32.00	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	33.00	Count	0	1	2	3
		Expected Count	.2	2.1	.8	3.0
	34.00	Count	0	1	1	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	35.00	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	36.00	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	37.00	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	38.00	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	39.00	Count	0	3	0	3
		Expected Count	.2	2.1	.8	3.0
	40.00	Count	0	1	1	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	41.00	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	42.00	Count	0	2	1	3
		Expected Count	.2	2.1	.8	3.0
	43.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	44.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		Expected Count	.1	1.4	.5	2.0
	45.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	46.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	47.00	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	48.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	50.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.1	.7	.3	1.0
	Total	Count	3	41	16	60
		Expected Count	3.0	41.0	16.0	60.0

Appendix 8. Correlational relationships between social variables and ta'arof use

TA'AROF USE	Age r(p)	Gender r(p)	Education r(p)	English proficiency r(p)	Length of stay in Canada r(p)
How often did you use ta'arof in Iran?	.29(.03)	-.30(.02)	.62(.00)		
How often do you use ta'arof with Iranians in Canada?	-.02(.90)	-.01(.92)	.24(.06)	-.09(.51)	-.26(.04)
How often do you use ta'arof with non-Iranians in Canada?	-.45(.00)	-.22(.10)	-.05(.70)	-.55(.00)	-.78(.00)
Any difficulties with Iranians in Iran because of you not using ta'arof?	-.07(.60)	.25(.05)	-.34(.01)		
Any difficulties with Iranians in Canada because of you not using ta'arof?	.10(.43)	.05(.72)	-.05(.70)		
Any problems when people from other traditions interacted with you in Canada because of you using ta'arof?	.14(.27)	-.33(.01)	.35(.00)		
Do you sometimes feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Iran?	.22(.09)	-.19(.14)	.43(.00)		
Do you sometimes feel the pressure of using ta'arof with other Iranians in Canada?	.09(.51)	.15(.24)	.15(.25)		

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Appendix 9. Correlational relationships between social variables and participants' attitudes about ta'arof

TA'AROF ATTITUDES	Age r(p)	Gender r(p)	Education r(p)	English Proficiency r(p)	Length of Stay in Canada r(p)
I enjoy when people use ta'arof	.12(.37)	-.40(.00)	.09(.50)	-.14(.28)	-.11(.40)
I hate when people use ta'arof					.09(.47)
Ta'arof makes communication too difficult	.10(.46)	.15(.26)	.4(.78)	.22(.09)	.19(.13)
Ta'arof makes communication more exciting			-.26(.04)		-.26(.04)
For an Iranian person it is important to be able to use ta'arof	-.24(.07)	.08(.55)	-.04(.77)	-.25(.06)	-.28(.03)
Ta'arof is an important part of Iranian culture	-.01(.94)	-.10(.43)	-.02(.90)	-.12(.35)	-.18(.17)
It is important to teach ta'arof to Iranian children in Canada	-.25(.05)	-.04(.74)	-.03(.79)	-.35(.01)	
Ta'arof needs to be preserved in the families of Iranian Canadians	- .11(.40)	.01(.95)	-.02(.88)	-.23(.08)	-.11(.40)
People of Iranian descent living in Canada should discard ta'arof	.17(.18)	-.10(.45)	.15(.26)	.17(.19)	.11(.39)
Iranians in Iran should discard ta'arof	.39(.00)	-.29(.03)	.42(.00)	.36(.00)	.34(.01)
Ta'arof is an efficient tool of communication					-.42(.00)
Ta'arof is a characteristic of good manners					-.30(.02)
I enjoy using ta'arof					-.22(.09)
I hate using ta'arof					.32(.01)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*