**3.5 Politeness Framework**

Following the data collection, the main analytical framework of politeness theory was applied to analyze the data in the study. Certain language features used in the comments by both groups of users were analyzed. The Farsi data were compared with the English ones based on Brown and Levinson (1987) framework to see to what extent the comments given on the pictures by Iranian users match or differ from the ones given by the Americans in terms of the positive or negative politeness strategies and the frequency of language features, and also to determine what politeness strategies the Iranian and the American users applied more in their comments when discussing taboo topics on Facebook.

The five language features included in this study were: euphemisms, dysphemisms, bald-on remarks, off-the-record remarks and stance markers. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), off-the-record remarks are defined as statements with more than one potential intention. These include statements that are vague (e.g. another chick with too much damn time on her hand, yes... I said it.... so there), metaphors (e.g. whatever floats your boat. There are people who go overboard in every aspect of life.), understatements (e.g. clueless as to what those piercings will look like at 65), overgeneralizations (e.g. It’s a big world, and We ALL take it TOO far for somebody), and giving hints (e.g. as a mom who DID breast feed, WHY ON THE EARTH would anyone WANT to continue it that long?).

Stance marking is how people indicate their level of certainty about the statement they are making. Stance markers are labeled as either zero stance, a statement which lacks a hedge of any kind, (e.g. They should be weaned before age one), non-committal stance, a remark which suggests any kind of doubt on the part of the speaker, (e.g. perhaps he's got a skin disease and this is his way to hide it from stupid comments) and emphatic-stance, a statement in which the speaker asserts his/her certainty, (e.g. This man is definitely in sane).

Bald-on-remarks are defined as any statements that can be taken as distasteful, shocking or impolite (a fucking stupid way to waste money if you ask me).

Dysphemisms are counted as words which portray things in a more negative light than the neutral word (e.g. you people are seriously opinionated. Who gives a shit if you "wouldn't tap that.")?

Finally, euphemisms are defined as any word or phrase which tends to have a more positive way of expressing a taboo than the neutral word for the topic (e.g. speaking of urinating....let me pay a visit to the John, LOL).

Based on this framework, the number of the posts, which employed positive and negative politeness techniques, was counted and several examples were provided with a detailed analysis of the language used. Next, the frequency and percentage of the use of each feature were calculated in both languages, and the chi-square was used to determine if there were any significant differences between the comments by the Iranian and American users of Facebook regarding the language features included in the study.

## 3.3 Framework

One main instrument was used in the present study. The DMs classification model proposed by Belles-Fortuno (2006) was employed for analyzing the corpora of this study as presented in figure 3.1. The aim was to create a DM classification model which can be valid for both corpora under study (North-American and Farsi physics lectures). This taxonomy was used to determine and compare both corpora in terms of occurrences and frequency rate of each DM.

**Micro-markers**

*Internal (*ideational*) relations*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Additional | Temporal | Causal | Contrastive | Consecutive |

**Macro-markers**

*Overall discourse structural relations*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Starter | Rephrase | Organizer | Topic-shifter | Conclusion |

**Operators**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attitudinal | Pause filler |  | Elicitation | Acceptance | Confirmation Check |

*Relation speaker-speech Relation speaker-hearer*

*Figure 3.1: DMs classification model by Belles-Fortuno (2006)*

Previous classifications have failed to explain some categories or these were only valid for English DMs and not for other languages. Moreover, categories under micro and macro-markers proved unsuccessful as they did not obey any firm linguistic rule. Whereas some categories were miscellaneous, others were semantic, morpho-syntactic or even pragmatic (Belles-Fortuno, 2006).

In order to develop the DM classification model, Belles-Fortuno (2006) has departed from the concepts of relational and attitudinal DMs meanings and functions among discourse, without forgetting Redeker’s (1990) assumptions upon the discourse coherence model on the search for coherent discourse relations. Everyone can become acquainted with three different relational categories between discourse elements in the communicative act that can be detected easily; these are: i) relation part of discourse-part of discourse, ii) relation speaker- hearer or vice versa, and iii) relation speaker- speech. These three element relations can be conveyed in many different ways: kinesics, visuals or the most common, the use of linguistic units such as DMs. The main goal of these relations is to express meanings along the discourse utterances. In the 1990s, Halliday distinguished three functional components of meaning (Halliday 1994): ideational, interpersonal and textual (or discoursal in this particular case).

Belles-Fortuno (2006) developed a taxonomy of DMs based on the Hallidayan’s (1994) functional meanings, namely, ideational, interpersonal and textual, and the relations they can convey along the discourse utterances. His model consists of three categories: micro-markers, macro-markers, and operators. “Micro-markers express logico-semantic relations in the discourse. According to this model, these markers have lexical or descriptive meaning (Belles-Fortuno, 2006, p. 95). Therefore, categories such as causal, contrastive, consecutive or additional DMs would be placed under this part. “Macro-markers convey an overall structure of the ongoing discourse and aim at segmenting and structuring utterances. They enhance retention and recall in post-lecture tests” (Chaudron & Richards, 1986, p. 43). They play an essential role in activating content schemata (DeCarrico & Nattinger, 1988) and helping listeners to successfully follow the lecture (Khuwaileh, 1999). Operators are those DMs which rhetorically signal the speakers’ intentions and affect the illocutionary force. These markers are more specifically related to conversational, spoken discourse rather than written discourse (Llorente, 1996, p. 38). Belles-Fortuno (2006) narrowed the scope of his study by choosing a maximum of three DMs for each category. In the current study, Belles-Fortuno (2006) classification was used for contrasting the DMs application in both North-American and Farsi physics lectures.