On the Persian Wedding Invitation Genre

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Abstract
The present study is an attempt to conduct a genre analysis of Persian wedding invitations. Drawing on the model of genre analysis proposed by Swales, a sample of 70 Persian wedding invitation cards has been analyzed in terms of their component moves, obligatory and optional moves, and move order. The results of the analysis have revealed seven generic components by means of which Iranian inviters ritually structure their wedding invitation texts in Persian. The results of the study will shed light on how the Persian wedding invitation genre is constructed drawing on the linguistic features of its generic moves and why the wedding invitation texts are structured in this particular way in Persian providing hints of the underlying socio-cultural conventions responsible for shaping this very genre in Persian. It is hoped that the results of this study will be illuminating for raising cultural awareness.

Keywords
wedding invitations, homely genres, genre analysis, component moves

Introduction
Over the years, genre studies have aroused a lot of interest among researchers, and in the past few decades, genre analysis has turned into one of the most promising areas of research.

The term genre has diverse meanings that span a number of fields. With regard to the field of language learning, the most commonly accepted definition of genre has been put forward by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) (Henry & Roseberry, 2001).

“These writers have stressed that a genre is, first of all, a cultural and interpersonal event making use of language” (Henry & Roseberry, 2001, p. 94). The two writers also maintain that a genre has a recognizable structure that is related to its social purpose. This generic structure is made up of “elements,” commonly called “moves” of the genre (Henry & Roseberry, 2001).

Among different types of genres, “homely discourse,” to use Miller’s (1984) terminology, has drawn scholars’ attention in recent years. Homely genres, according to Miller (1984, p. 5), are “the ‘de facto’ genres, the types we have names for in everyday language.” Examples of these particular genres are wedding announcements, birthday announcements, obituaries, and the like (Al-Ali, 2006). Wedding invitation genre, as a homely genre, can be applied as a means of enhancing language and cultural awareness. “This would add depth to what is known and may broaden the field of genre analysis research” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 711).

Invitation is “a commemorative social action having the function of informing and requesting the presence or participation of a person(s) kindly and courteously to some place, gathering, entertainment, etc., or to do something” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 691). Invitations are of two types: written and spoken forms. “Printed forms of invitation, in particular, share certain generic features that set them apart from other text types” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 691).

Among invitations of different kinds, wedding invitation genre is a ubiquitous genre that people around the world are well acquainted with. Published studies on this genre are not numerous: One study was conducted by Al-Ali (2006). Drawing on two discourse analytic frameworks, that is, genre analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA), Al-Ali (2006) examined a total of 200 Arabic written wedding invitations collected by 45 undergraduate Arab students at Jordan University of Science and Technology as part of an elective course in discourse analysis. A detailed genre analysis specified eight obligatory and nonobligatory generic components that generally appear in Jordanian wedding invitation cards.

CDA results, on the other hand, revealed “how religious affiliation and masculine kinship authority not only construct and shape text component selection but also color the lexical choices and naming practices” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 691).

Yet another study that is worth mentioning at this point is that of Clynes and Henry (2004) that was designed with the purpose of determining the extent to which Brunei university
students are able to identify and explain the linguistic features of the Brunei Malay wedding invitations. To fulfill this purpose, two groups of analysis were carried out, one by the authors and one by nine sophomore undergraduate students taking the English Genre Analysis course as part of their BA studies at University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD). The two groups were assigned to analyze at least three Bruneian wedding invitations in terms of identifying elements such as moves, obligatory and optional moves, move order and further to explain in terms of the communicative purpose of the genre why certain key linguistic features appear in the genre. The results of the study indicated that the students managed to accurately identify the related moves and move order; however, they were less successful at explaining the linguistic features in terms of the overall communicative purposes of the genre.

There seems to have been no systematic investigation of the wedding invitation genre in Persian, and this study is the first of its type. It is, therefore, of particular significance as it is an attempt to perform a genre analysis on Persian wedding invitation announcements to identify their typical generic component patterns, and further to understand how members of specific discourse communities in Iran construct, apply, and interpret this very specific genre to achieve their community goals, and why they write the genre in the way they do (Bhatia, 2004).

**The Persian Wedding Ritual Pattern**

Wedding is a joyous occasion wherein the bride and the groom celebrate their union and formally announce the beginning of their new life together. Among the myriads of wedding rituals around the world, the Persian marriage ceremony is an ancient and a beautiful tradition celebrated with glory and distinction among a large gathering of relatives and friends. The history of Persian weddings goes back to the Zoroastrian era (Cawasji Katrak, 1965), and it consists of a rich amalgam of traditions. To gain a better insight into the nature of Persian wedding ceremonies, “an understanding of the broader socio-cultural context related to the social norms and values of the conventionalized occasion” is necessary (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 693). In Iranian society, the influence of religion on most aspects of life is evident. The state religion in the country is Islam, with Muslims making up the majority of the population. The marriage practices are governed by Islamic prescriptions. Even in ancient Iran, the ideal of marriage used to be highly religious (Cawasji Katrak, 1965). Moreover, Persian weddings have been partially influenced by patriarchy. Although in modern times couples choose their spouse-to-be by themselves, family consent in marriage is still valued in Iran. That is to say, “usually the groom-to-be will ask the father of the bride-to-be for her hand in marriage. This is a tradition that many cultures keep in showing respect for the elderly” (Rezaei, 2009, para. 1).

Modern Persian weddings encompass subtle traditional elements, yet there are variations in some rural areas or smaller cities where some ethnic groups try to retain traditions and rituals that might deviate from the modern wedding (Rezaei, 2009). The typical Persian wedding consists of two phases: the *agh’d* (the ceremony) and the *aroosi* (the reception).

The *agh’d* is a legal ceremony conducted by an officiator in which the couple sign a contract and formalize their relationship as husband and wife. Dressed in a white gown, the bride sits next to the bridegroom wearing a suit. Before them, there is a *soreh-ye agh’d*, that is, a spread or a tablecloth to wish the couple well in their union. “Food and objects traditionally associated with marriage are arranged on the *soreh*” (Batmanglij, 2004, para. 5), all of which are used symbolically. As the officiator is performing the marriage ceremony, two women who are happily married hold a square of silk or tulle over the marrying couple’s heads, and other women, in turn, rub two sugar cones together to symbolize the raining of sweet joy and happiness down on the bride and the groom (Batmanglij, 2004). Having gotten the positive response from the bride, the officiator declares the couple husband and wife. At this moment, the newly-weds exchange rings and they are showered with small golden coins, sweets, or *noghl* (sugar-coated almonds) as a means of insuring the new couple good luck.

A follow-up to the *agh’d* is the *aroosi*, which is celebrated immediately after the *agh’d* or some time later. “The *aroosi* is a lavish meal, sometimes with a whole roast lamb as the centerpiece” (Batmanglij, 2004, para. 16). In addition to feasting, the reception usually includes a lot of dancing. The music band or the DJ can provide a festive mood and a lively atmosphere for this very special occasion. On the whole, the Persian wedding is an elaborate affair, especially among the affluent, requiring a lot of preparation. However, there are companies that are designed to assist the couples in getting their marriage arrangements, from catering to decorations, done.

**Theoretical Overview**

The present study draws on Swales’ (1990) genre analysis. “Researchers from diverse fields, like rhetoric, writing, literature, linguistics, anthropology, etc., have been trying to clarify the notion of genre. Each group has defined and characterized genre differently” (Shokouhi & Kamyab, 2004, p. 159).

The traditional approaches to the study of genre used to consider genre as a classificatory category consisting of stable members with similar textual features. However, in the new approaches to genre analysis, there have been attempts to reinterpret the notion of genre (Shokouhi & Kamyab, 2004).

One of the most influential definitions of genre in the new paradigm has been set forth by Swales (1990). Swales (1990) has proposed the following definition for genre:
A genre is a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent community. The genre names inherited and produced by discourse communities and imported by others constitute valuable ethnographic communication, but typically need further validation (p. 58).

Accordingly, Swales (1990) conceives of genre analysis as “a means of studying spoken and written discourse for applied ends” (p. 1). In the study of written discourse, genre analysis is conducted with the purpose of finding out how writers conventionally sequence material to obtain particular goals (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). “The genre as a whole is made up of a sequence of component moves, obligatory and optional moves, each of which carries out a minor function in the global function of the genre text” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 696). “Not all the moves are essential in a genre, and conventions across disciplines and cultures may differ as to which ones are vital for achieving which purpose” (Kachru & Smith, 2008, p. 161). These component moves do not necessarily appear in the same order.

Data and Procedures

For the sake of data analysis, a corpus of 70 Persian wedding invitation cards was collected. The Persian data, published from 1995 to date in Iran, was accumulated from within the circle of the researchers’ relatives and friends. To ensure that regional and cultural variations were taken into consideration, the data were collected from among two different social strata: the upper social stratum and the middle-class group. The reason for not including the lower-class stratum in the data collection procedure was the scarcity of published wedding cards among lower-class families as they often cannot incur the great expenses of holding wedding celebrations or even sending invitation cards, and in case there is a wedding celebration, the guests are often invited over the telephone or by word of mouth for frugality considerations.

The Persian corpus was then analyzed following the framework proposed by Swales (1990), which considers any given genre as consisting of a series of component moves which, together, express the communicative purpose of the genre. This study, therefore, was directed toward analyzing the wedding invitations in terms of their component moves to determine how Persian inviters accomplish the communicative purpose of this particular genre as a socio-cultural event. The Persian invitations were further analyzed for their obligatory and optional moves, and their move order. The analysis revealed seven component moves within the generic structure of the Persian wedding invitations that will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the genre analysis of the corpus at hand is presented, along with explanations of the lexicogrammatical features of the move structure of the genre. Yet, prior to our discussion of the generic structure of the Persian wedding invitation texts, a brief overview of the nonlinguistic features of the wedding cards including the graphic images, decorative borders, visual organization of the text, to name just a few, seems essential for a comprehensive better understanding of the genre under investigation.

Non-Linguistic Features of Persian Wedding Invitations

Wedding invitations are the first glimpse guests might have of the magnificence of the celebration. Ranging from preprinted to custom-designed cards, Persian wedding invitation texts are printed on light cardboard of unique colors such as white, cream, golden, silver, beige, pink, and the like. The front page decorated with ribbon, pressed flowers, embossed images of wedding rings, hearts, roses, bouquets of mixed flowers, or a studio portrait of the bride and the groom almost always features either the first names of the bride and the groom in English or the formulaic phrase “Message of Happiness” (see Figure 1). Persian wedding cards are flavored with the beautiful art of calligraphy. The names of the bride and the groom, sometimes intertwined, are typed in a separate line using a larger font size. Another nonlinguistic element that attracts attention in Persian wedding cards is the presence of decorative borders, including floral and traditional borders. The color of the ink and the envelope are carefully selected to go with the invitation design.

Generic Structure of Persian Wedding Invitations

Component move structure analysis of our sample of Persian wedding invitation texts revealed seven generic moves that are as follows:

Opening. All the wedding invitation cards under scrutiny featured this obligatory element that appears in central position on the top of the invitations. In general, Persian wedding invitations open with “In the Name of God” phrases as *Bismillah Al-rahman Al-rahim* is “the formula recommended by the prophet for use when beginning any event” (Rippin,
1990, as quoted by Clynes & Henry, 2004, p. 235). A few examples of this component move, along with their English translation, appear below:

1. be nam-e peyvænd daehande-ye qælbha
   In the Name of the One Who Joins Hearts Together
2. be nam-e xaleq-e eshq
   In the Name of the Creator of Love
3. be nam-e xaleq-e hæsti
   In the Name of the Creator of the Universe

However, in 22.8% of the data under investigation, “In the Name of God” phrases were replaced by “Under the Auspices of God” phrases (dær pærtov-e enayat-e pærværdegar). This, in turn, is associated with Muslims’ belief to commence any event with a special mention of God.

Identifying the bride and the groom by first name. This generic move that almost always (94.2% within our corpus) appears immediately after the opening identifies the bride and the groom by their first names. In 54.2% of the analyzed data, the first name of the bride was mentioned on the right side before the forename of the groom on the left side (see Figure 2), whereas in 30% of the data the name of the groom preceded that of the bride (see Figure 3). The first name of the bride on the right side was specially observed among the wedding announcements collected from upper class people, while the first name of the groom on the right side was more rampant among the wedding cards from middle-class families. The appearance of the bride’s name prior to that of the groom might express the very fact that the position of the Iranian wife is one of the equality with her husband and “the wife ranks ... more as the equal of the husband than his dependant” (Cawasji Katrak, 1965, p. 5). On the other hand, precedence of the groom’s name over the bride’s name probably has its roots in the Islamic belief that “a man is thought to be the guardian of a woman and remains the instrument of social control after she marries” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 702). It might be considered as an indicator of patriarchy in some families as well.

Unlike the groom who is most often identified by his first name, the bride’s forename is not always mentioned in the wedding invitation. Instead, the brides are identified by the title “dooshizeh” (Miss) plus last name. This was observed in 7.1% of the data and especially among religious middle-class families.

This tendency (i.e. the deletion of the feminine proper names) most likely indicates an inherent preference on the part of the groom and the bride’s families to avoid mentioning the names of the females in the invitations, either for religious or personal preferences. This practice is often witnessed among the nomadic and rural wedding ceremonies and in conservative urban circles as well as religiously-minded men. (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 708)

Announcing the couple’s marriage. This obligatory move which, except for 4.2% of the data, appeared in third position announces that the bride and the groom will soon be united as man and wife exchanging marriage vows. Below are two examples of this move:

1. ba tærænnom-e hæsti hæmrah mishævim væ peyman mibændim ke hæmisheh asheq bemanim.
   We join the melody of life and pledge to stay in love with each other for ever.
2. dær aseman-e zendegi-e xod jostejugær-e setareh-i budim be deræxshandegi-e xorshid væ yaftim ancheh ra mixastim.
   In the sky of our life, we were seeking after a star as bright as the sun, and we found what we wished for.

Requesting the participation of the recipients. This element is, in fact, an integral part of the wedding invitation genre that enables the inviters, usually the bride and the groom, or sometimes their parents to cordially and courteously request the honor of the guests’ participation in their celebration.

This move was identified in 84.3% of our corpus of analysis, and in the rest of the data (15.7%) there was no explicit
request of participation as the function of this part is self-explanatory, and sending wedding cards make the communicative purpose of the genre self-evident.

It is also noteworthy that, within the corpus, 87.1% of the wedding invitations were issued by the bride and the groom, 7.1% by their families, and finally 5.5% by their fathers. As Cawasji Katrak (1965, p. 11) puts it, this is probably due to the fact that since ancient times in Iran "the girl or the youth [has] had the freedom to choose with the consent and approval of parents her or his companion in life." Therefore, issuing the invitation on the part of the marrying couple is a good indicator of this liberty. On the other hand, some couples prefer their wedding invitations to be issued in the name of their fathers or their parents for two reasons: first, "according to Prophet Mohammad, there is no marriage without a guardian" (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 700, quoting from Al-Asghalani, n.d., p. 347); second, it is often the case that the funding for the wedding is provided by the couple’s families.

**Identifying the bride and the groom by last name.** This obligatory move identifies the bride and the groom formally by mentioning their last names. In 82.9% of the data, this move was placed in the fifth position, while in 17.1% of the invitations it occupied a second position.

It is often the case that the couple’s first names and last names are arranged in a crosswise manner resembling the letter X, that is to say the bride’s last name is written beneath the groom’s first name with the groom’s surname placed below the bride’s first name. This might imply the fact that the wedding is “to some extent an alliance not only of two
individuals but of two extended families” (Clynes & Henry, 2004, p. 228, citing from Haji Mohd Yussop Bakar, 2003). Of the analyzed data, 25.7% manifested this criss-cross name arrangement.

One point that attracted attention in the corpus was the substitution of the couple’s fathers’ names, in their full forms, for the couple’s last names by 10% in the data to indicate the people issuing the invitation. As in modern time the groom’s father or the bride’s father or both sides communally finance the marriage arrangements, the fathers are identified as the inviters in the wedding cards.

Another point that was noteworthy was that 7.1% of the cards used the titles Mr. and Miss prior to the couple’s last names. This was exclusively observed among middle-class families.

**Situating the wedding ceremony.** This component move contains explicit information regarding the day, the date, the time and duration, the place of the wedding celebration, in addition to the reception. These variants are all obligatory, and always appear in the sixth position. An example of this move is presented below:

1. pæzirayi: pænjshænbeh ^١٢⁄٤⁄٦٨٠٢^ ta pas-i æz shæb be saæf-e shirini væ sham

neshani: xiaban-e qæsrodæsht bashgah-e æfsæran

Reception: Thursday, 86.4.21 from 8 p.m. until the wee hours of the night for refreshments and dinner

Address: Afsaran Club, Ghasrodasht St.

Each of these variants is going to be discussed in detail:

**Day variant.** Among the days of the week, Thursday and Friday, in turn, had the highest frequencies of being selected for the wedding ceremonies within the corpus of our study (31.5% for the former and 15.7% for the latter). On Thursdays, working people in Iran work part-time; as a result, Thursday evening is a convenient time to party all night long and to take it easy the next day, on Friday, on which day people are off from work. As mentioned before, in the analyzed data Friday had the second highest percentage due to the very fact that it is a holiday in Iran and “a traditional day to get married, according to Islamic tradition” (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 703).

It is often the case that if religious holidays or occasions in Iran happen to fall on a Saturday through a Wednesday (i.e., the other days of the week except for Thursday and Friday), marriage celebrations will be extremely frequent then. As a matter of fact, a perfunctory glance at the calendar revealed that this was especially true for our analyzed data. This coincidence with a religious occasion is thought to bring the marrying couple good luck, and it is believed that they will be granted blessings if they begin their connubial life together on a sacred day.

**Date variant.** In the Persian wedding cards studied, besides the day of the week, there was a further specification of the date that is based on the Muslim solar calendar (Hejri) including the day, the month, and the year from right to left.

One point that was of special interest in the analyzed data was that summer, with the frequency of occurrence of 42.8%, was the Iranians’ most favorite season for wedding festivals as during the summer people have more spare time, and summer is the time of rejoicing, trips, parties, and so on.

**Time and duration variant.** As for the time and duration variant, it must be pointed out that Persian wedding rituals are usually held in the evening and take long for 5 or 6 hours on the average (see Figure 2). The formulaic phrase *ta pas-i æz shæb* (until the wee hours of the night), which...
sometimes appears in wedding invitations, might be an indicator of a ceremony with lots of music and dancing. This is while in rural areas, in northern part of the country, and especially among the nomadic tribes weddings are sometimes celebrated early in the afternoon, and the guests are invited to lunch (see Figure 3). In this study, 81.5% of the cards identified the evening as their time variant, and 18.5% of the invitations featured the afternoon for situating the time of the ceremony.

**Reception variant.** The reception variant immediately follows the time and duration variants. Generally, wedding guests in Iran are either invited for refreshments and dinner (see Figure 2), or merely for refreshments. Occasionally, the wedding reception is for refreshments and luncheon if the wedding is celebrated in mid-day or early afternoon (see Figure 3). Within our data, 87% of the invitations had been made for refreshments and dinner, 10% for refreshments only, and 3% for refreshments and lunch.

“The wedding refreshments will be the focal point for many that attend the reception” (Brown, 2008, para. 1). “Wedding receptions are often long and guests will be looking forward to something they can eat or drink while making conversation” (Judkins, n.d., para. 2). “Many wedding guests will choose to attend the reception that follows the ceremony because they know there will be entertainment and refreshments” (Brown, 2008, para. 1).

Often candies and pastries, fruits, and sometimes tea, juice, or ice cream are served as refreshments. More extravagant weddings even serve coffee, nuts, dried fruits, finger foods, or light snacks as refreshments. However, families who are tight on budget usually cannot afford the high expenditures of wedding feasts; therefore, they entertain their guests by refreshments only. In Persian weddings, dinner is served buffet style (Rezaei, 2009). “Jeweled rice, or sweet rice is always served, along with many other dishes and an elaborate wedding cake” (Batmanglij, 2004, para. 16). Nowadays, the wedding refreshments and the feasts are prepared by caterers who provide food and services for social events.

**Place variant.** Except for those invitations that contain optional components, other Persian wedding announcements draw to a close with the place variant. In Iran, wedding celebrations are held in the residence of the groom’s parents, gardens, wedding halls, hotels’ reception halls, or large houses. As data analysis revealed, 34.3% of the Persian marriage rituals took place in wedding halls, 28.5% in private gardens or gardens specially prepared for wedding celebrations, and 37.2% in the groom’s parental domicile or the house of a relative. The address given usually includes the number and the name of the street but not the name of the city or town.

**Other optional components.** The data analysis revealed that almost 67.5% of the cards contained optional elements including one or more of the following components.

One optional element that constituted 6% of our corpus was an overt appeal to the invitees requesting them not to bring video cameras of any kind to the wedding party for religious considerations. Devout Muslim women would not like others to take their photographs, for it is religiously prohibited for men who are not close relatives to see the picture of a woman without hijab (head covering). A typical example of this move has been presented below:

1. lotfen æz averdæn-e hær guneh durbæn-e filmbærdæ xoddæ konid.

Please avoid bringing video cameras of any kind.

Another optional component that appeared in the analyzed wedding cards was the name of the publishing company where the cards had been published, along with its address or telephone number. This might be considered as a well-publicized attempt on the part of the publishing companies to advertise for their cards. 50% of our corpus of analysis made a mention of the locale wherein the wedding cards had been published. It is also worth mentioning that in some cases, 3% in our data, the publishing companies wished the newly-weds well congratulating them on their marriage. The example of this move is as follows:

2. peyvænd-ætan mobaræk.

Congratulations on your marriage!

Sometimes, a map is included in the wedding cards as well, with arrows indicating the best route to the place where the wedding celebration is held. 8.5% of the analyzed data contained this optional component move.

The results of data analysis have been tabulated in Table 1 that appears in the appendix.

**Conclusion**

This study, adopting a genre analysis approach, has identified seven generic component moves based on which Iranians, as members of a discourse community, construct and interpret wedding invitation texts in the Persian language. Of these identified moves appearing in a virtually fixed order, the first (opening), third (announcing the couple’s marriage), fifth (identifying the bride & the groom by last name), and sixth (situating the wedding ceremony) moves seemed to be obligatory, with the rest (identifying the bride and the groom by first name, requesting the presence of
the recipients, and other optional components) conceived of as optional moves.

Furthermore, taking the verbal presentation and the visual organization of the Persian wedding invitation cards into account, attempts were made to explain each of the selections made on the part of the users in the construction of this communicative event. The organizational details of this communicative event are embedded in the cultural beliefs and social values of the society in question. Focus on socio-cultural norms related to wedding rituals has ascribed the most influential role to religion in shaping the wedding invitation genre in Persian in the way it is.

In summary, it would be worthwhile to compare and contrast similar genres across different cultures to come up with their “universal or language specific tendencies,” to use Swales’ (1990) terminology (p. 64). Finally, it is hoped that the results of this study can be considered as a stride, though trivial, toward cross-cultural understanding.

Appendix

Table 1. Observed Frequency of Component Moves in Persian Wedding Invitation Cards by Percentage.

| Move                          | Linguistic features of the moves                                                                 | Frequency by percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Opening (obligatory)       | 1. “In the Name of God” phrases                                                                | 77.2                    |
|                               | 2. “Under the Auspices of God” phrases                                                          | 22.8                    |
| 2. Identifying the bride and the groom by first name (optional) | 1. The bride’s name prior to the groom’s name                                                   | 54.2                    |
|                               | 2. The groom’s name prior to the bride’s name                                                    | 30.0                    |
|                               | 3. The title Miss + last name for the bride                                                      | 7.1                     |
|                               | 4. No first names identified                                                                    | 7.7                     |
| 3. Announcing the couple’s marriage (obligatory) | 1. Announcing that the bride and the groom are tying the knot                                   | 100.0                   |
| 4. Requesting the presence of the recipients (optional) | 1. Explicit requesting                                                                        | 84.3                    |
|                               | 2. No explicit requesting                                                                      | 15.7                    |
| 5. Identifying the bride & the groom by last name (obligatory) | 1. The bride & the groom’s last names                                                          | 82.9                    |
|                               | 2. The title Miss/Mr. + last name for the bride & the groom                                     | 7.1                     |
|                               | 3. The bride & the groom’s fathers’ names                                                       | 10.0                    |
| 6. Situating the wedding ceremony (obligatory) | 1. Day                                                                                  | 31.5                    |
|                               | 1. Thursday                                                                                   | 31.5                    |
|                               | 2. Friday                                                                                     | 15.7                    |
|                               | 3. Sat through Wed                                                                            | 52.8                    |
|                               | 2. Date                                                                                       | 100.0                   |
|                               | 1. Muslim solar calendar                                                                      | 100.0                   |
|                               | 3. Time & duration                                                                            | 18.5                    |
|                               | 1. Early afternoon                                                                            | 18.5                    |
|                               | 2. Evening                                                                                    | 81.5                    |
|                               | 4. Reception                                                                                  | 10.0                    |
|                               | 1. refreshments                                                                               | 10.0                    |
|                               | 2. refreshments & dinner                                                                       | 87.0                    |
|                               | 3. refreshments & lunch                                                                        | 3.0                     |
| 5. Place                      | 1. Wedding hall                                                                               | 34.3                    |
|                               | 2. Private garden                                                                             | 28.5                    |
|                               | 3. The groom’s parental residence                                                               | 37.2                    |
| 7. Other optional components (optional) | 1. Requesting the invitees not to bring video cameras                                            | 6.0                     |
|                               | 2. The name of the publishing company                                                           | 50.0                    |
|                               | 3. Wishing the newly-weds well                                                                  | 3.0                     |
|                               | 4. Map                                                                                       | 8.5                     |
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Notes
1. It must be noted that Al-Ali’s (2006) study has to do with the Jordanian society. As Jordan is a Muslim country, most of his findings can be extended to the present study conducted in Iran as an Islamic country as far as religious values are concerned. However, we must bear in mind that there are certain culturally bound differences between the two countries in question.
2. “dooshizeh,” used as a title for the bride in Persian, is further specified to refer to the chastity of the bride. The term is generally used for the bride’s first marriage and is not common for women who are remarrying.

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