

Politeness Strategies in Pakistani Business English Letters A Study of Opening and Closing Strategies

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Abstract

The present study explores the politeness strategies used in Pakistani business letters written in English. It benefits from qualitative and quantitative approach of research. The specialized corpus has been compiled on business correspondence and named 'Pakistani Business English Letters' (PBEL). PBEL consists of 1000 Pakistani business English letters collected from government and semi-government institutes e.g. banks, universities, private companies, factories etc in 2011. This study investigates the differences between Pakistani and American ways of using politeness strategies in *external* parts of business letters e.g. *Opening and Closing of the letter*. The Brown and Levinson (1987) model of politeness strategies has been adapted according to PBEL instances. The software ANTCONC 3.2.4 has been used as research tool in this study to calculate the frequent politeness strategies used within Pakistani Business English letters. This study is very insightful for teachers and learners regarding the usage of politeness strategies in business communication. It will also lend a helping hand to the textbook writers as it will acquaints them with the differences of using politeness strategies for intra-national and international business communication.

Keywords: cross cultural communication, Pakistani business English letters, external strategies, politeness strategies

1. Introduction

The present study is an exploratory enquiry to find out the politeness strategies in Pakistani business English letters. It also intended to point out the differences of American and Pakistani usage of politeness strategies in business communication. The model of politeness strategies given by Brown and Levinson (1987) has been used in this study as a major tool. The main focus of this study is on the core parts of the letter e.g. *Opening and Closing* of the letters. These core parts are called External Strategies (Paarlhati, 1997). The interpretations regarding this study have been generated on the basis of the results gathered from the mix method approach.

The bulk of research on various aspect of cross cultural communication is piling up rapidly since 1990's. The research on cross cultural communication has unwrapped many similarities and dissimilarities among cultures. Wierzbicka (1991) has defined that cross cultural communication regarding pragmatics and explained the differences among cultures and languages. Moreover, the variations mirror the classification of differences of values and the ways of communication. The cross cultural communication also gives rise to genre analysis that is also an attention-grabbing area to explore variations among language varieties and their different genres. English language is generally classified after its varieties which currently speakers are using even belonging from different origins. In the modern world of business the concept of world Englishes is very much popular and accepted around the globe and most importantly in business world. Recent developments in linguistics research have heightened the need of exploring different genres with new and advances tools of research. Business correspondence in comparison with cross cultural communication is quite a fresh and exciting genre to analyze variation among cultures. It is an important and significant area of ESP and genre analysis.

Pakistani English (PE) is a non-native variety of English and differs from the native varieties of English. Many studies have been conducted to trace out the differences between non-native and native varieties of English. Baumgardner (1987, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1995), Talaat (1988, 1993, 2002 and 2003) and Mahmood (2010a) Mahmood (2010b) have studied many differences and similarities among Pakistani English and native varieties of English. Mansoor (2000) has stated her views that as a non-native variety, (Rehman and Baumgardner 1990) have established the foundations of analysis and description of Pakistani English. Moreover, different areas of Pakistani English have been studied e.g. its morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics etc. Many researchers ventured to dig out the prominent features of Pakistani English as a different variety. Additionally, Pakistani researches are conducting different studies regarding issues in pragmatics like speech acts, implicature, conversational maxims, politeness etc.

Politeness theory is an appealing area to study the variation among languages and politeness strategies are leading the interest of the researches to the cultural and social analysis among various language varieties. Indirect speech has received much attention in linguistics. Politeness strategies regarding the cultural differences and cross cultural communication are very interesting areas to explore. Furthermore, these phenomena give rise

to investigate the socio-cultural and socio-pragmatics settings of the society. The studies of politeness strategies in business communication do not have a long history but the availability of new and advanced software has opened new horizons of such explorations and investigations. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in research of politeness strategies (Pilegaard 1997, Hong 1998 and Morand 2003). Various models and maxims of politeness strategies have been given by different scholars (Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983 and Brown and Levinson 1987). Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) has given the maxims of politeness whereas Brown and Levinson (1987) has given a full fledge modal of politeness strategies. Their politeness strategies are called universal model of politeness as they have given five main politeness strategies and further divided them into supportive strategies.

2. Previous Research

A few centuries ago, English was considered to be the language of British only, but time changed and it spread all around the globe. Jenkins (2003) divides this spread of English in two '*Diasporas*'. The first Diaspora when Britishers got settled in America, Australia and New Zealand was the first Diaspora of English and the second Diaspora which came in to existence when Britishers established their colonies in South Asia, Africa and in the various parts of the world. These two Diasporas gave rise to the various new varieties of English. English is not just one standard language but can be thought of as a 'family' which includes different varieties (Gunashekaret.al/2005). About the divisive concept of world Englishes Kachru (1985) has presented a paper on the hot debate of world Englishes and come across the fact that the rapid spreading of English as a communication language is, no doubt, interesting but at the same time a controversial topic of debate about the current status of English and different varieties of English, which are generally called 'world Englishes'.

As a dominant language of the world, English assumes different varieties and sub-varieties: British English, American English, Australian English, Sri-Lanken English, Singaporean English, Irish English, South African English, Indian English and Pakistani English etc. English language is generally classified due to its different varieties which currently speakers are using even belonging from different origins. These classifications of newly emerged Englishes have been given by many renowned scholars e.g. McArthur (1987) and Kachru (1988). Researchers have done many studies on present day English and many topics been tried to cover for the sake tracing out the significant differences. As Swan (2006) come across that the features of present-day English, taking General American and standard southern British English as representative dialects. The description covers the common core of these varieties, as well as significant differences between them. Topics covered are orthography, phonology, lexis, morphology, syntax, standardization, and present-day prescriptive attitudes towards English. For the very first time, British introduced English to Indo-Pak subcontinent in 16th century and announced as an official language in the year of 1853. Even after the independence of Pakistan, it maintained its status at official level in the country because of the inadequate lexicon in local or regional languages to be used in government or non-government institutions. That is why, till today, English is enjoying its supremacy in Pakistan. Kachru (1983) has discussed that there are many differences among various sub-varieties of south Asian Englishes. Pakistani English variety has its own unique features. Pakistani English is least researched area in the phenomenon of World Englishes. Baumgardner is one of the first researchers of Pakistani English. He discussed many things and wrote many articles on Pakistani English Baumgardner (1987, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1995). Local linguists who worked in the area of Pakistani English are Talaat (1988, 1993, 2002, 2003) Mahomood (2010a) Mahmood (2010b). All these studies were corpus based and the aim was to survey qualitatively. Additionally, in field of pragmatics Pakistani English is least explored area.

Pragmatics is rather new area of research in the field of linguistics. Language was generally studied as an isolated system of meaning separating from its context before the appearance of pragmatic in linguistics. Language philosophers go beyond simple semantics meanings to the contextual meanings. Hence, Pragmatics is the study of meaning in context. Leech (1983) has defined that Pragmatics is the study of how utterances have meanings in situations. He also says that Pragmatics also studies that how language is being used in communication. It is also called the study of relations between Language and the context. Within this respect, Levinson (1983) has stated that it is "the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of the language, in which the study of honorifics, diexiesetc are included" (p. 9). Leiwo (1992) has defined pragmatics in much broader term that pragmatics generally place the emphasis on language use in context and interactions. Verschuere (1995) claims that pragmatics can study any feature of languages, its words, its structures and even the tones of utterances and voice. People need to communicate with others and this communication should be very effective and meaningful if the speaker knows the lexical units which would help them to communicate in specific context. In the recent years, the scope of pragmatics has been expanded to the field of cross-cultural communication. This tool has been proved very important to study the differences and similarities among cultures. According to Paarlhati (1998) "...the scope of intercultural or cross-cultural communication has been expended" (p.13). The cross cultural pragmatics indeed is very much important in the study of differences of communication among different cultures. In the same way Piirainen-Marsh (1997) has defined cross-cultural pragmatics that it investigates how speakers of different

languages are different in their speech acts, how they apologize, request, or thank etc.

The speech act theory given by (Austin 1962 and Searle 1969) and the co-operative principle given by Grice (1975) are the major issues in the study of pragmatics. The concept of politeness cannot be understood in its real sense if these two theories are not in contact with politeness theory. Mey (1998) has stated that Austin's speech act theory (1962) has great impact on any research study under the umbrella of pragmatics. Austin (1962) has defined that some of the sentences are declarative clauses and used without any true or false intention; they not only state the things but also used to do things by words. He has named such clauses as performatives. These clauses do not have truth values. However, there are some other acts which are called felicity conditions in order to must have some validity. For example; I pronounce you husband and wife. This sentence is only valid if the person has the position in society to join people in marriage or in any legal contract.

The speech act theory first given by Austin (1962) explains that language is a mode of action which conveys meaning and information. Austin (1962) has further elaborated that the meaning of utterance usually have three aspects in it which are also called the functional units of communication; locution, illocution and perlocution. Locutionary acts (literal meaning of the utterance) according to Austin (1962) are the acts of speech which involves the construction of speech. These acts are non-ambiguous and refer to the meaning of utterance. Illocutionary acts (function of the utterance) are done by speaking. Third aspect is called perlocutionary act (effect of the utterance), these acts refer to the consequences of speaking. It shows the effect of the speaking act on the hearer. He has also explained the performances of uttering words with purpose as "the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances thus far and in these respects the study of locutions or of the full units of speech" (p. 69). Searle (1969) has revised Austin's theory and explained that speech act theory explains how speakers of a language use it to complete the actions and how the hearers infer the intended meaning from what is said by the speaker. He has further developed Austin (1969) theory and made a distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. He has defined that when the syntactic form of a sentence matches with its given function, such acts are called direct acts and when the syntactic form does not match with its functions these acts are called indirect acts.

Indirectness in speech has received much attention in the field of linguistics. Austin (1962) has pointed out that the indirect nature of speech and Grice's cooperative principle plays a very important role in explaining that how people interpret the utterances. Moreover, indirectness, generally gives rise to the politeness. Speakers when in situations use indirect way to communicate, for this purpose of communication, researchers put forward the politeness principle. Theories about politeness are given by Goffman (1967), Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983) and Brown & Levinson (1987) play main role in the concept and further development of politeness principle. "Politeness is implicated by the semantic structure of the whole utterance (not sentence), not communicated by the 'marker' or 'mitigators' in a simple signaling fashion which can be quantified" (p.22). Paarlhati (1998) has defined the term politeness as it is elusive and it is almost hard to grasp its real meaning in pragmatics.

"Politeness in language is very complex and controversial phenomenon. It has been studied a great deal, but the term politeness itself remains elusive and hard to grasp.....Politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon should not be mixed with the common view of politeness, polite behavior, such as greeting or thanking."

(p. 15)

At present, we find many theories and models of politeness. Different scholars have worked on this theory (Goffman 1967, Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983, Brown and Levinson 1987, Fraser 1990). Politeness is an act performed by words to save hearer's face. According to Goffman (1967) face is "the positive social value, a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact"(p.5).Lakoff (1973) has defined politeness always contribute in communication to make it more effective. He gave three maxims of politeness:Don't impose, Give options, Make your receiver feel good.He further explained that the aim of politeness is to reduce the roughness and rudeness in personal interaction. Lakoff (1989) added advanced rules of pragmatic competency; these are Distance, Deference and Camaraderie. He views politeness as to be implicit and non-clear in meaning. Leech (1983) has presented the politeness principle, (Grand Strategy of Politeness). He has given his own maxims of Politeness e.g. Tact maxim, Generosity maxim, Approbation maxim and Modesty maxim. He defined that in communication, most benefits should be given to others and less to oneself. He further developed two more maxims of politeness namely Agreement maxim and Sympathy maxim. In these two maxims he explained that the agreement and the sympathy should be maximized between the self and others. All these maxims have sub-types in square brackets (Leech, 1983).

Politeness has also been defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) that people use to be indirect in their communication because of the face saving act. According to their theory of politeness, communication is a very dangerous act; that is why they present the notion of 'face' in their model of politeness. They explained this notion as "the public self-image that everybody wants to maintain". They further elaborate this notion with two sub-types, positive face and negative face. Face threatening acts, they defined, are the acts speakers perform to violate the hearer's self-esteem and self-respect. They have developed five politeness strategies for the purpose

of dealing with face threatening acts (FTAs). In FTAs they put forward five politeness strategies which are universal across cultures. These politeness strategies are: **On record, Positive Face, Negative Face, off record and Avoid**. The Bald/ on record strategy does not do anything to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. According to Fraser (2005) there is no politeness associated with on-record strategy. It is a straight forward act which a speaker performs. He also noted that on-record strategy corresponds to the Grecian maxims of cooperative principals. In off record the speakers try to avoid using direct FTA.

Circumstances determining choice of strategy:

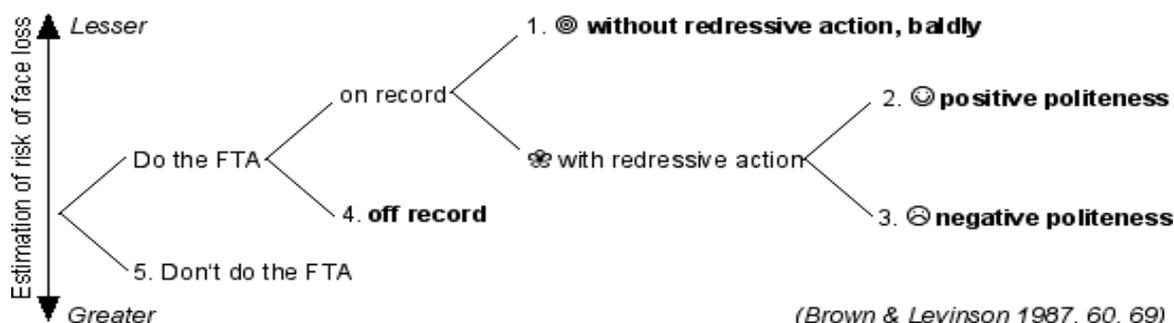


Figure 2.1: Politeness Strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987)

Brown and Levinson (1987) have also given three main points for the analysis of politeness strategies, as they are very much important in being polite and saving the face. These factors are:

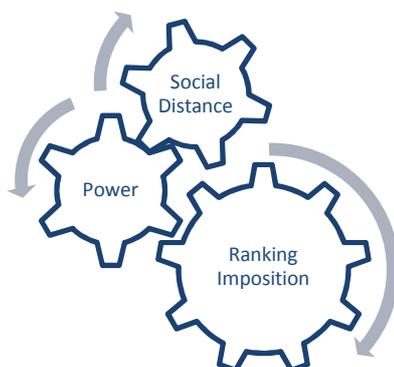


Figure 2.2: Face Saving Factors

3. Research Questions

This research answer the following questions

Q1- What are the linguistic choices used by Pakistani writers in business letters written in English to convey politeness?

Q2- Which opening and closing politeness strategies are more frequent within Pakistani Business letters written in English?

Q4- What are the major differences in the use of politeness strategies between Pakistani and American business letters?

4. Methodology

The present study is a corpus-based research which aims to find out the politeness strategies in Pakistani business English letters. This study is exploratory in its nature. This specialized corpus for the current study has been borrowed from earlier researchers in the year of 2011. This corpus has been named 'Pakistani Business English Letters (PBEL)'. Ethical issues have also been considered in this study. Secrecy of the letters has been maintained and no individual could ever be known from the data which have been used in this study. In addition to, the participant's individuality has been remained hidden. This corpus consists of 1000 Pakistani English business letters collected and categorized in four types:

Table 4.1 Categories of PBEL Corpus

Banks	BNK	66
Government Institutions	GOV	283
Private Institutions	PVT	131
Universities	UNI	541

Mixed method approach has been used in this study. Qualitative approach has been used for the in-depth analysis and interpretations of politeness strategies in Pakistani business letters while quantitative approach has been used for frequency lists of the instances collected from the ANTCONC 3.2.4. ANTCONC 3.2.4 and checklist of politeness strategies were the major tools for this study. Checklist on the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) model of politeness strategies has been adapted and tailored for the data analysis. Other tools for data analysis were software to find out frequencies of politeness strategies in Business English letters. Scanner has been used to scan all letters. Abbey Find reader 8 has been used to convert all scanned letters to text form. Microsoft Excel spread sheets has been used for data presentations. The similarities and differences of using politeness strategies between Pakistani and American business letters have been explored and pointed out with the help of checklist on the model and insight gathered from books.

5- Data Analysis

The analysis of politeness strategies in Pakistani business English letters reveals that politeness strategies used in PBEL corpus are different from the American usage of politeness strategies. This study mainly focuses on the core aspect of business letters that is called External Strategy which further falls in to two main parts of the letter e.g. *Opening and Closing* of the letter. The following discussion focuses on the four categories of corpus e.g. Banks, Government institutions, Private institutions and Universities. Opening and Closing of the letter create a courteous atmosphere in business writing and try to pay special concentration on the addressee's wants and needs. Opening and closing strategies usually make an act less threatened to the addressee's face wants.

5.1- External Strategies in Pakistani Business English Letters

5.1.1 Opening Strategies

The letter opening part contains of formal greeting, honorary names, generic names, specific names and different address forms were dealt in External opening strategies. Different institutions have been used different ways of address forms according to their need and desire.

Table 5.1.1 Opening strategies

Text	Frequency	Main Strategy	Supportive Strategy	Tags
dear sir	275	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
respected sir	42	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear student	6	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear madam	6	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear candidate	4	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear (names)*	3	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Specific names
dear customer	3	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear applicant	3	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
worthy vice chancellor	4	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
worthy club members	3	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear valued customer	1	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear members	1	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics
dear colleague	1	Positive Face	Use in group identity markers	Honorifics

Table 5.1.1 has shown different instances of letter opening which contains greetings, generic and specific names

and honorifics etc. it can be seen that the trend of 'dear' with other names and different address forms are more frequent. Mostly these instances are falling in the main strategy of positive face and supportive strategy of intensify interest to others. Tags have been given to these items according to their nature. The very first item 'dear (names)' has shown that the trends of using dear with specific names are more frequent in universities rather than other categories.

5.1.2 Main Strategy

PBEL corpus has shown the frequent use of positive face in the opening section of letter which shows the intimacy in social groups and also the positive face minimize the distance among social groups. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) positive face always uses to minimize the threat to the hearers' face. In PBEL corpus, letter opening is minimizing the social distance as well as make the reader feel good by joining them with honorary terms.

5.1.3 Supportive Strategy

The sub-strategy which is used in opening section is 'Use in group identity markers', this is the way to start their communication with social groups. There are numerous ways to communicating e.g. address forms. Brown and Levinson (1987) has defined that social groups communicate with each other in innumerable ways regarding language and dialect, register and jargon etc. In PBEL corpus, this supportive strategy is very often to see in which the writers have been used different address forms to communicate with their readers.

5.1.4 Tags

5.1.4.1 Honorifics

Honorifics are the more frequent tag in the opening section of letters. In PBEL corpus, honorifics are given much importance for making the letter opening more polite and make the reader feel good in the very beginning of the letter. Instances like 'worthy vice chancellor' 'dear members' 'dear applicant' 'dear colleague' etc are less frequent but shown the honorary terms between the writer and the reader to avoid any FTA in letter writing.

Table 5.1.4.1.1

Dear Sir

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
47%	36.74%	49.61%	13.86%

The percentages have shown that the tendency of using 'dear sir' is higher than other categories. Private sector has shown more politeness than other institutions. Banks also have shown the tendency of using dear sir instead of any other generic names. The less frequent use has been noticed in universities because either they used specific names on certificates or they simply use sir / madam in their letters.

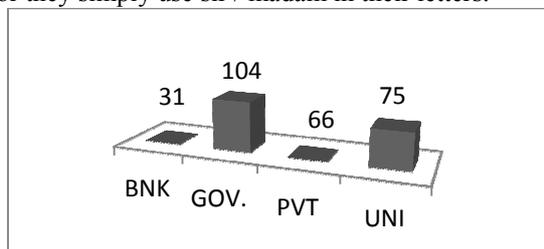


Figure 5.1.4.1.1: Data presentation of Frequency 'dear sir'

Table 5.1.4.2

Respected Sir

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
0%	0.70%	1.52%	7.20%

Compare to 'dear sir' the tendency of respected sir is less frequent. Banks have not used it in letters at all, in government and private institutions the frequency is very low. However, universities have used 'respected sir' frequently to show the honor and respect to the higher authorities.

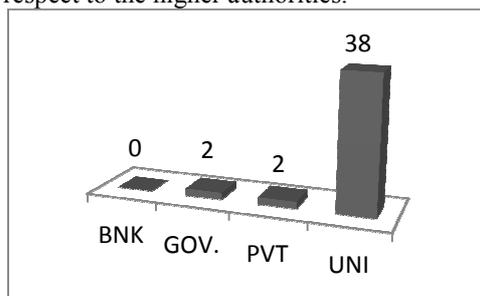


Figure 5.1.4.2: Data presentation of frequency 'respected sir'

5.3- Closing Strategies

The letter closing part deals with the ending complimentary phrases as gratitude, obedience etc. these closing strategies give another good taste to the letter writing. In addition to, the closing of letter also shows the distance and power relationship. The table shows the closing section of the letter and also the politeness strategies in which the instances fixed in to.

Table 5.3.1
Closing Strategies

Text	Frequency	Main Strategy	Supportive Strategy	Tags
yours faithfully	125	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Give Deference
yours sincerely	121	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Give Deference
Thanks	64	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Gratitude
yours obediently	31	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Give Deference
best regards	23	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	
yours truly	22	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Give Deference
thanks & best regards	20	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Gratitude
with best regards	17	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	
sincerely yours	16	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Give Deference
with regards	11	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	
thanks and regards	11	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Gratitude
Sincerely	5	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Give Deference
Thanks in anticipation	1	Negative Face	Don't Coerce the Addressee	Gratitude

The table has shown the frequency of closing strategies which are more frequent in PBEL among all categories. Moreover there can be seen a large difference in frequency among all instances of closing strategies.

5.3.1.1 Main Strategy

The corpus has shown frequent use of negative face in closing strategy which denotes that Pakistani business letters have shown the great tendency of giving deference and respect to the reader. Moreover, in many places the writers have shown the submissiveness to their readers whether for the sake of social distance or for the sake of power relationship. In PBEL corpus, the letter closing is showing the gratitude and respect at many places. Furthermore, this symbolize that Pakistani shows more polite behavior in their writings to their readers.

5.3.1.2 Supportive Strategy

In closing section of the letter, the instances are falling in to the category of ' don't coerce the addressee' which indicates that one should not impose anything on the hearer or the reader. Brown and Levinson (1987) has given many supportive strategies of negative face in which they have discussed that negative face is most conventionalized face to redress the action and to avoid FTA. In addition to it, they have discussed that always make your hearer or reader feel good give them respect, show then deference and gratitude.

5.3.1.3 Tags

5.3.1.3 Give Deference and Gratitude

The researcher has adapted the model according to the need and the nature of instances founded out of the PBEL corpus. In closing strategies many instances are falling in to two categories which are 'give deference' as to show respect and the social distance and 'gratitude' to pay thanks to the reader or the authority to whom letter is written. Moreover, it also stands for the polite behavior of Pakistani culture.

Table 5.3.1.3.1

Yours faithfully

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
10.60%	26.50%	26.71%	1.29%

The table shows that the percent of government and private institutions are higher than the banks and much higher than the universities. These drastic differences can also be studied in the way that government and private institutions give deference to their readers while banks and universities shows intimacy and make them dutiful and submissive to their readers.

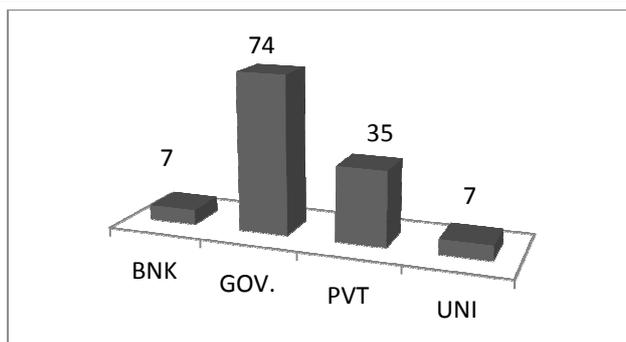


Figure 5.3.1.3.1: Data presentation of frequency of 'yours faithfully'

Table 5.3.1.3.2
Yours sincerely

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
7.57%	18.37%	46.56%	1.47%

The trend of using 'yours sincerely' in letter closing can be seen in private institutions rather than other categories of letters. 46.56% of private institutions have shown the tendency of using yours sincerely, the less percentage can be seen in universities' letters and the second less percentage can be seen in banks. PBEL corpus has shown less frequency of universities in closing strategies as they use 'with regards' and 'regards' at the end.

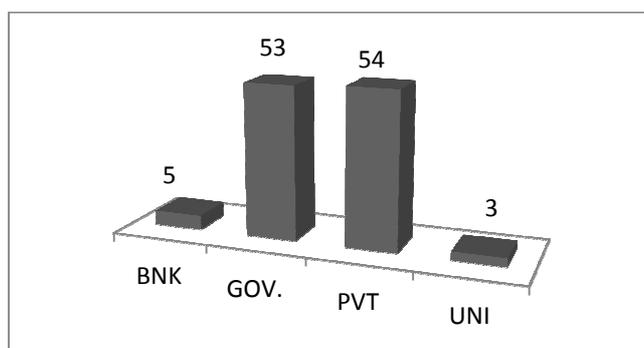


Figure 5.3.1.3.2: Data presentation of frequency 'yours sincerely'

Table 5.3.1.3.3
Yours truly

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
6.06%	0.35%	0.75%	1.10%

Table 5.3.1.3.4
Very truly yours

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
3.03%	0%	0%	0%

The PBEL corpus have shown that many letters of banks have used 'your truly' and 'very truly yours' instead of other closing remarks. These closing instances are very near to Americans as they use these items as the closings of the letters to show the deference and also it denotes the social distance among the reader and the writers or the social groups.

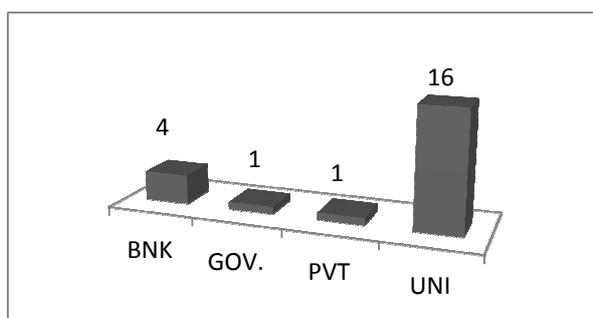


Figure 5.3.1.3.5: Data presentation of frequency 'yours truly'

Table 5.3.1.3.6

Thanks

BNK	GOV	PVT	UNI
1.51%	0.70%	27.48%	4.25%

The use of ‘thanks’ and ‘thanks and best regards’ is very common among all categories but it is more frequent in letters of private institutions. Private institutions have used this pattern in their letters rather than other categories of this corpus. Moreover, Pakistanis are tend to be more gracious and demonstrate more gratitude in the closing of the letters for the sake of being polite to the addressee and to save his/her face wants.

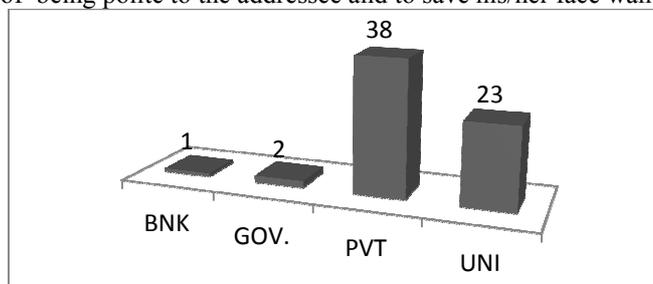


Figure 5.3.1.3.7: Data presentation of frequency ‘thanks’

6- Discussion

This study has described different features of politeness strategies of Pakistani business English letters. The results of the present study show that there is a great deal of differences in the use of politeness strategies in business communication between Pakistani and American letters. The findings of this study cannot consider being unexpected as it is demonstrated from previous researches that there are differences and similarities between native and non-native varieties and their usage of politeness strategies.

6.1 Comparing Opening and Closing Strategies

The opening strategies of most of the Pakistani letters are quite different from Americans. There has been found a great deal of discrepancy in the frequency of salutations used in Pakistani letters. As shown in table 4.3.1, the frequency of ‘*dear sir*’ is much higher than any other address form. This shows the intimate relationship between the writer and the reader. The frequency of ‘*Respected sir*’ is less than the frequency of *dear sir*. It also shows that the slavish attitudes of Pakistanis are gradually diminishing from the mirror. There is a great distinction of 275 and 42 respectively.

The tendency of government institutions in salutations is a bit different from other PBEL categories. Universities are more likely to address their readers with ‘*respected sir*’. Where private institutions and banks are used to write specific names. The difference among these categories shows that these institutions are more likely to maintain their relationship with their addressees. As government institutions do not demonstrate an informal relationship with their addressee but the banks and private institutions somehow tried to make their reader at ease with their respectful attitude. Government letters are tending to be more commanding than other letters found in the corpus.

In salutations, there is a big transaction of using honorifics instead of using specific names. On the other hand, Americans use the specific names instead of any other address form. This difference makes a divergence between the cultures and social norms as Pakistanis are more polite than Americans in using address forms. It is investigated through the instances that Pakistanis maintain their social distance and power ranking with more polite attitude. PBEL corpus instances make it more clearly with the frequency that the social norms of Pakistanis are more polite and the social distance has a little bit of intimacy between the reader and the writer.

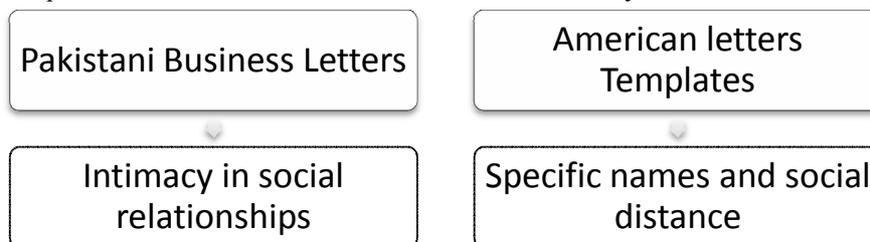


Figure 6.1: Opening Strategies Relationship

Moreover, in Pakistani letters, the closing strategy of the letters shows that Pakistanis give deference to their readers but on the other hand, the frequency of ‘*yours faithfully*’ is higher than the other closing strategies. Mostly in government institutions this pattern can be seen. It demonstrates that Pakistanis illustrate the difference in using closing strategy and show the submissive behavior by using ‘*yours faithfully*’ where as Americans use just a single word ‘*faithfully*’ instead of ‘*yours faithfully*’.

Pakistani letter writers might not be very sure about using the politeness strategy accordingly because in salutation, they showed intimacy and right at the moment in closing strategy they showed the submissive behavior. Moreover, Pakistanis had used 'yours sincerely, yours truly, truly yours, sincerely yours' while Americans do not use the word 'yours' with closing strategies. In contrast to Americans, Pakistani writers are using a bit of different strategy in closing of the letter as the American use deference with 'sincerely yours' 'cordially' 'sincerely' 'truly yours' etc (Guffey 2004).

In PBEL these instances compare to American letters can be seen but in a different way as the frequency of these very instances are less frequent in all categories of PBEL corpus. Additionally, just banks are following the pattern of Americans in closing strategies.

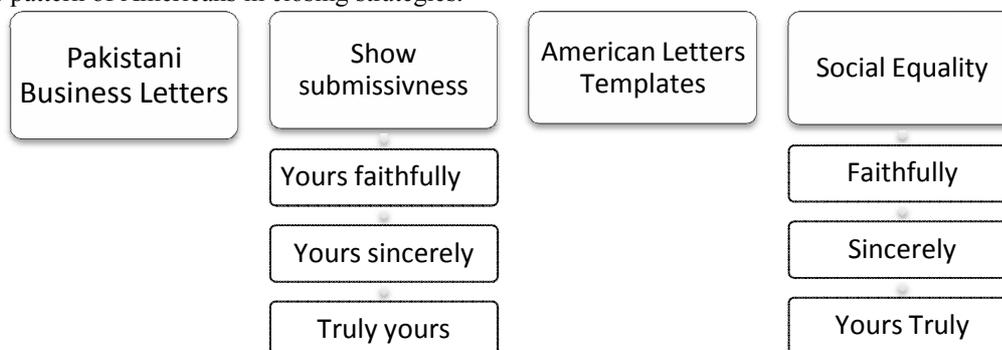


Figure 6.1.2: closing strategies

PBEL corpus has shown more politeness strategies in results than the American used. In Pakistani business English letters, the trend of using Positive face and Negative have been observed in external strategies. PBEL writers have been observed using an indirect attitude in their business letter writing. They try to mitigate the threat to the addressee's face and avoid doing FTAs. The results of this study found a number of variations of using politeness strategies in American letters and PBEL corpus. As Pakistani letters have shown submissive behavior in closing strategies rather Americans are used to show the social equality. Differences can be found in the sum of main strategies used in PBEL corpus and American business letters. Pakistani letters are used to redress the salutations and gratitude more than American letters. They use more politeness strategies in their address forms than American business letters and tend to be more polite as they make their addressee feel good. In main strategies Pakistanis avoid the FTAs in opening and closing and in the body of the letters. These differences between Americans and Pakistanis business correspondence are due to the cultural values and the social norms of both countries. Pakistanis are seems to be more polite in their writing attitudes than Americans. They have used their own unique strategies which are not even available in the model of politeness given by Brown and Levinson (1987).

CONCLUSION

This study has utilized the corpus based methodology of corpus linguistics to attain the objectives of the research. This present study started with a key objective of exploring politeness strategies in 'Pakistani business English letters (PBEL)'. The other objective of the study was to find out the frequent politeness strategies within Pakistani business letters. The present study has evenhanded fulfilled the aims and objectives of tracing out different politeness strategies used in PBEL corpus. This study investigated and described the politeness strategies in PBEL and also compared it with American business letters template given by (Murphy 1984 and Guffey 2004). The data has been manually scrutinized and quantities have been found with the help of ANTCONC. 3.2.4. The tools for this research were checklist of politeness model given by Brown and Levinson (1987) and corpus based methodology. Many tags have been added in the checklist because according to the Pakistani letters instances, the model of politeness strategies was not fulfilling the slots of the investigation of the instances. It has also been defensible that the PBEL corpus of 1000 Pakistani business English letters have different politeness strategies than American letters. As Pakistanis have tendency to use salutations with the generic address form like 'dear sir', on the other hand, Americans use specific names frequently. Moreover, at the closing strategy, Pakistanis are used to show submissiveness to the reader or the authority, while Americans are less frequent in showing submissive attitude. These differences between Americans and Pakistanis business correspondence are due to the cultural values and the social norms of both countries. Pakistanis are seems to be more polite in their writing attitudes than Americans. They have used their own distinctive strategies which do not even exist in the model of politeness given by Brown and Levinson (1987).

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