



**International  
Journal of Society, Culture & Language  
IJSCL**

Journal homepage: [www.ij scl.net](http://www.ij scl.net)  
ISSN 2323-2210 (online)

## **Politeness Orientation in Social Hierarchies in Urdu**

**Shazia Kousar<sup>1a</sup>**

### **ARTICLE HISTORY:**

Received November 2014  
Received in revised form February 2015  
Accepted February 2015  
Available online February 2015

### **KEYWORDS:**

Politeness  
Brown and Levinson  
Social status  
Social hierarchies  
Urdu

### **Abstract**

The present research is aimed at investigating how the politeness of the speakers of Urdu is influenced by their relative social status in society. The researcher took politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) as a model. To observe politeness of Urdu speakers, speech act of apology with different strategies was selected. A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was used as an instrument to collect data from a sample of 152 participants from different institutes. The analysis of data indicated that the speakers of Urdu employed negative politeness strategies mostly for the addressee of high social status and low social status. The addressee of equal social status was apologized by positive politeness strategies. The results showed that Pakistani society is non-egalitarian. Moreover, this study supports Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) claim for universality of politeness in preferring negative politeness to positive politeness; though, this preference for negative politeness is the outcome of the unequal social status of the addressee.

© 2015 IJSCL. All rights reserved.

<sup>1</sup>PhD Candidate, Email: [shaziakousar100@gmail.com](mailto:shaziakousar100@gmail.com)  
Tel: +92-412-422572

<sup>a</sup> University of Sargodha, Women Campus, Pakistan

## 1. Introduction

In the modern era, the tendencies for cultural studies have got momentum as maintaining good relations between the speaker and hearer is important in face-to-face conversation, particularly in cross-cultural communication (Lin, 2013). Among cultural discrepancies, social status is also one. No doubt, social status is a universal phenomenon; its perception varies from culture to culture. Each society and each individual has their own parameters for these hierarchies which lead to radical differences in their politeness system and misunderstanding in intercultural communication (Escandell-Vidal, 1998). So, the adult and competent members of society become polite either showing friendliness or deference to make their requests, apologies, etc. acceptable (Brown & Levinson, 1978) in asymmetric relation of social status. The present research is launched to investigate the role of the relative social status of the interlocutors in the politeness orientation of the speakers of Urdu. The researcher has chosen Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) seminal theory of politeness as a model for being the widespread and influential in stirring plentiful theories of politeness.

As politeness cannot be individually studied, the researchers have been exploring politeness patterns of different cultures through observing performance of different speech acts such as asking, apologizing (Aijmir, 1996; Alfattah, 2010; Fahey, 2005; Ogiermann, 2006), requesting, etc. In the current study, politeness orientation of Urdu speech community is investigated through observing the performance of speech act of apology. The rationale for selecting the speech act of apology is its ambivalent nature of face threatening and face saving on the one hand, and its realization by negative and positive politeness strategies on the other hand (Deutschmann 2003; Goffman, 1955). Being a complex speech act, its performance shows how the speaker manages his/her own face by employing a vast array of strategies while restoring the addressee's damaged face through apologizing. Moreover, this speech act tells whether the speaker was deferential (negative politeness) or friendly (positive politeness) in performing the act of apologizing.

The current study is significant as an appendage to numerous studies investigating Brown and Levinson's claim (1978, 1987) for universality of politeness orientation. This study is helpful to see whether Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978, 1987) is applicable to eastern societies such as Urdu speech community. Secondly, this study is helpful to get insights into cultural and social structures of Urdu speech community which is the dire need of the inter-cultural communication of the modern era.

The research questions of this study are the following:

- What are the realization patterns of apologizing in Urdu?
- What type of politeness is exhibited in apologizing in Urdu repertoire?
- What is the role of social status in politeness orientation in Urdu?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Lakoff (1972) was the first linguist who studied politeness being an important aspect of interaction. Her theory of politeness suggests that people follow a certain set of rules while interacting with each other to prevent the interaction from breaking down (Johnstone, 2008). She proposed that there are two rules of politeness: be clear, and be polite. Unlike Lakoff (1972), Leech (1983) found an "essential asymmetry in polite behavior, in that whatever is a polite belief for the speaker tends to be an impolite belief for the hearer and vice versa" (Leech, 1983, p. 169). However, Leech's politeness theory is parallel to Lakoff's (1972) notions of politeness in terms of universality where the interactants tend to be negatively polite rather than adopting positive politeness.

A new spirit to the concept of politeness was given by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) as they based their theory on face (Goffman, 1955), speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and cooperative principles (Grice, 1989). They proposed that 'face' is the public self-image that every rational member wants to claim for himself. 'Face' was further defined as "something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to

in the interaction" (1978, p. 66). They also claimed that face is a universal phenomenon but "in any particular society, we should expect [face] to be the subject of much cultural elaboration" (1978, p. 13). However, Bharuthram (2003) investigated this claim by taking data from English speaking South Africans and found that the concept of face of English speaking South Africans was indication of culture specificity of face, quite different from the notions of universality of face proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). He based his claim on the word 'please' in data which associated the English speaking South Africans with Asian culture not with the English culture where the speakers try to save their own face.

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) dealt with the face not as a homogeneous entity rather a twofold experience of negative face and positive face. Negative face was defined as the want of every adult member of a speech community that his/her actions be unimpeded by others; while, positive face was connected with the want of every competent adult member of a speech community to be desirable to at least some others. It is quite possible that in defending his/her own face, a person attacks someone else's face by the verbal or non-verbal act of communication which "runs contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 70); such acts are called Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Negative face is threatened when the speaker does not intend to avoid the impediment on their interlocutors' freedom of action such as speech act of ordering, asking etc. Contrary to negative face, positive face of the interlocutors is threatened when the speaker does not care for his/her interlocutors' feelings of group inclusion/approval such as speech acts of apologizing (FTA for speaker) and insulting (FTA for addressee).

The speaker employs different politeness strategies to mitigate the potential damage to the 'face' assessing the weightiness of FTA by the socio-pragmatic variables of power, distance, and ranking of imposition of an FTA in a given culture (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested a scale of different strategies ranging from less polite to most polite strategies. (a) Bald on-record

strategy involves doing FTA in the most direct, clear, unambiguous way possible (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 74) while (b) Off-record politeness strategies have "more than one unambiguously attributable intention" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 73-74). They are performed by giving hints, using metaphors, being ambiguous. (c) Positive politeness strategy is "oriented towards the positive face of H, the positive image that he claims for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). The speaker restores the positive face of the hearer by showing "interest in H", claiming "common grounds", seeking "agreement", "giving sympathy", asserting "mutual friendship" and by satisfying "a wide range of H's desires" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). The speaker intends to make himself/herself friendly and intimate to the hearer by using words like 'we' and 'us' in speech. By being optimist and giving offers, the speaker can also save the positive face of the hearer. (d) The negative politeness strategies are "oriented mainly towards partially satisfying (redressing) H's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). By deploying negative politeness strategies, the speaker mostly shows deference or respect taking hearer's rights of being unimpeded into consideration. The speaker can redress an FTA with negative politeness by "being indirect", "being pessimist", "minimizing the imposition", "apologizing", "using hedges or questions" (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Brown and Levinson (1978) claim that negative politeness is universally preferred approach to facework by stating that "it is safer to assume that H prefers his peace and self-determination more than he prefers your expressions of regard, unless are certain to contrary" (p. 74). Alfattah (2010) supported the claims of Brown and Levinson (1978) when he observed Yamani EFL learners' orientation towards negative politeness by attempting to avoid the positive politeness strategies such as expression of concern for the hearer and promise of forbearance while preferring Illocutionary Force indicating Devices (IFIDs such as I am sorry, I apologize) and explanatory strategies. On the other hand, Nureddeen (2008) went to the other extent of by observing that Sudanese Arabs attempted to preserve their positive face by avoiding the use of direct apology

strategies which were the most damaging to S's face (Nureddeen, 2008). In order to minimize the threat of a strong apology, the informants used face saving strategies as laughing, denial, and opting out in five out of six serious offense situations. Subiyanto and Allien (2012) concluded that the Javanese were positively polite towards their elders and superiors using the most formal lexical items (karma) for them. The Javanese were indirect when they were negatively polite towards the addressee. Ogiermann (2006) observed different evidences in her data collected from Polish, Russian, and English languages. The data showed that politeness orientation was culture specific as English apologies were characterized by a relatively strong focus on both of the interlocutors' negative face, while Polish apologies displayed a particular concern for positive face. For Russians, contrary to English and Polish cultures, apologies seemed to involve a lower degree of face threat than they do in the other two languages.

As some conversational acts (Speech Acts) are inherently face threatening for positive or negative face wants of the speaker or the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1978), apology is a face threatening and face saving speech act simultaneously. Brown and Levinson (1978) included apologies in negative politeness as the speaker acknowledges the offended's right of being unimpeded (Brown & Levinson, 1978) by apologizing which is "essential threat to S's face" (1987, p. 76). Holmes (1990) also states that apologies are addressed to offended's face needs and intend to remedy an offense for which the apologizer takes responsibility to restore equilibrium between offended and apologizer. On the other hand, sociologists (Benoit, 1995; Liebersohn, Neuman, & Bekerman, 2004) argue that apology is a positive politeness act in which S's positive face is central as if the apologizer does not bother to think what others think about him/her, he/she usually feels no need of putting things right and humiliating himself/herself. This emphasis on the positive politeness of apology is not only oriented towards the positive face of the apologizer but the offended's positive face is also taken into consideration as the apologizer assures the addressee that "he is being noticed, respected, and that the maintenance of a conflict free relationship is required" (Larina, 2003, p.

212). This breach between the philosophers on the issue of the status of apology as a negative or positive politeness act can be bridged up by synthesizing both these standpoints as apologies have a defensive orientation towards saving speakers' own face and a protective orientation towards saving others' face (Deutschmann 2003; Goffman, 1955). Taking this synthesizing view, the present researcher has categorized the speech act of apology a face saving act accomplished by employing positive and negative politeness strategies. That's why, the researcher has included various politeness strategies in the coding scheme on the basis of satisfaction of the face wants of the hearer's positive face or negative face (see Methodology section).

### 3. Methodology

The design of this study is descriptive as the researcher uses techniques of searching, collecting, classifying, analyzing the data, interpreting them, and finally drawing the conclusion (Surakhmad, 1998). Besides being descriptive, this study is quantitative for analyzing the data "in terms of numbers" (Best & Kahn, 2007, p. 89). The statistical procedures like frequencies and percentages are applied to the data to see the patterns of politeness and effect of the variable of social status on those patterns.

#### 3.1. Participants

The students of different academic institutions such as University of Management and Technology of Lahore, Govt. College of Sheikhpura, Commerce College of Shahkot and G.C. University of Faisalabad are the part of the cohort of the current study. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 25 year old. The gender of the participants was equal as 76 males and 76 females (n=152) responded to the Discourse Completion Task/questionnaire. The researcher applied the non-probability sampling technique to select the participants for data elicitation as the researcher chose "whatever subjects are available rather than following a specific subject selection process" (Best & Kahn, 2007, p. 31). However, the researcher has tried to overcome the shortcomings of the non-probability sampling technique by selecting a sample size of 152

students who issued 1824 speech strategies for apologizing.

### 3.2. Instrumentation

A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) is used as an instrument for data collection. A DCT is essentially a “series of short written role-plays based on everyday situations which are designed to elicit a specific speech act by requiring informants to complete a turn of dialogue for each item” (Barron, 2003, p. 83). DCT is used as it is feasible and time saving for collecting a large amount of data in a short period of time. Moreover, the data collected through this method provided an opportunity to the researcher to control and investigate the variable of social status easily. The scenarios in the instrument are designed in such a way as the socio-pragmatic variable of status is constructed in all of them. Social status of the interlocutors is determined by relative economic status, age seniority, and professional rank of the interlocutors. It is encoded in a trichotomous value: equal social status of the interlocutors (=S), lower social status of the addressee (-S), higher social status of the addressee (+S). The DCT with different offense situations is given in the Appendix section at the end of the paper.

### 3.3. Procedure

Even though the questionnaire was carefully designed, it was pilot-tested not because pilot-testing comes prior to analysis in the sequence of the research process; rather it is a powerful determinant of the final product (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Five volunteer students of graduation level were given DCT to respond to the given situations. The data elicited from these students were analyzed both as preliminary results and in terms of the structure of the DCT. The ambiguous words were removed to bring clarity. Different terms were changed and some additions were done to make the instrument apt and suitable for collecting the large corpus of realization patterns of politeness.

### 3.4. Coding Scheme of Apology Strategies

Before the analysis of the data, it was essential to codify the semantic/illocutionary force of the possible apology strategies in the Urdu repertoire. The empirical studies conducted on

apologizing (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1987, 1995) provide a good guideline for the categorization of realization patterns of semantic formulae discovered in different languages. In the present research, the researcher has applied the taxonomy of Trosborg (1987, 1995) with some modifications to make it suitable for the data elicited from the speakers of Urdu.

#### (1). *Negative Politeness Strategies*

The negative politeness strategies are “oriented mainly towards partially satisfying (redressing) H’s negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). The speaker can redress an FTA with negative politeness by employing the following speech strategies.

##### (a). *Downgrading Strategies*

The strategies of opting out and evasion are downgrading strategies. These are face saving strategies for the speaker but least satisfactory for restoring the damaged face of the hearer. Opting out strategy minimizes the responsibility of the offender, while the evasive strategy tends to mitigate the severity of the offense by showing the triviality of offense. These downgraders are negative politeness strategies where the speaker uses “hedged or questions” or “minimizes the imposition” or becomes “indirect” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 74) to attend the negative face wants of the addressee.

##### (b). *Acknowledgement of Responsibility/Explanation*

The strategy of acknowledgement of responsibility shows the willingness of the apologizer to accept the responsibility for the infringement. Sometimes, the apologizer explains the circumstances which became a cause of the offense. These strategies are “indirect” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 74) in restoration of the negative face of the offended.

##### (c). *Direct Expression of Apology (IFID)*

Direct expression of apology is also called Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) marked with an explicit illocutionary force

indicating device (Searle, 1969) which is, usually, a performative verb. This direct apology can be in form of expression of regret, an offer of apology, or a request for forgiveness. It is the most face threatening for the speaker and the most face saving for the offended.

## (2) Positive Politeness Strategies

Positive politeness strategy is “oriented towards the positive face of H, the positive image that he claims for himself” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). The speaker restores the positive face of the hearer by showing “interest in H”, claiming “common grounds”, seeking “agreement”, “giving sympathy”, asserting “mutual friendship”, by satisfying “a wide range of H’s desires” and by “giving offers” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75).

### (a). Expressing Concern for the Hearer

In the offense situation where the chances for the physical injury to the hearer are great, the apologizer expresses his/her concern for the offended person. This strategy is situation-specific as it cannot be used to remedy each type of offense. It is appositive politeness strategy by “giving sympathy” and showing “interest in H” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75).

### (b). Offering Promise of Forbearance

The apologizer offers a promise to forbear in the future when he/she is expected to repeat the offense and behave in a consistent fashion (Owen, 1983). This strategy proves the speech act of apology not only related to the past but also to the future.

### (c). Offering Repair/Compensation

When the offense is perceived so severe that

the verbal apology is not considered sufficient to placate the offended, the offer of repair or compensation is given.

## 4. Results

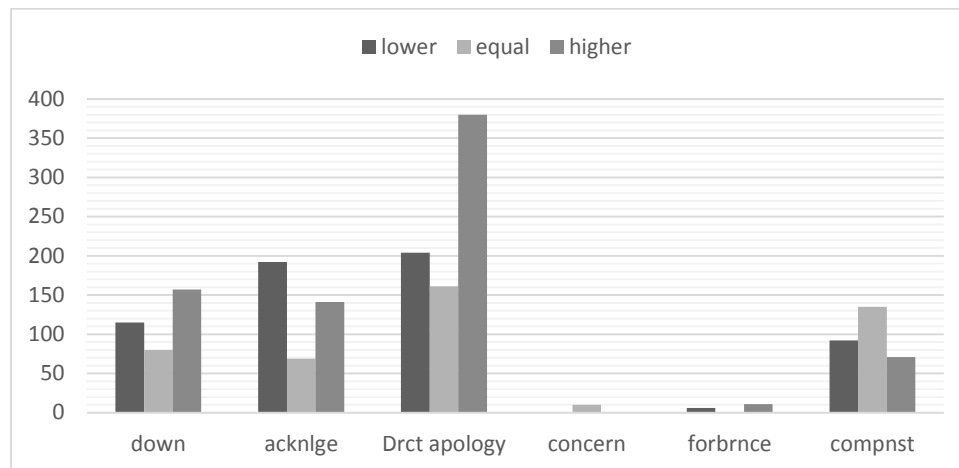
The results of the data analysis manifest that different strategies are unevenly distributed ranging from 40.5% to 0.5% in the data under discussion. Data analysis shows that the preference for strategies of negative politeness is strikingly higher than the strategies encoding as positive politeness strategies. The direct expression of apology (IFID) is marked with an occurrence number of 745 amounting to 40.5% in the corpus elicited from the speakers of Urdu. Acknowledgement of responsibility (n=402) which is indirect expression of apology is the second most preferred strategy in the data with 22% of preference. The downgrading strategies (n=352) are the third most preferred strategies selected by the informants with a percentage of 19.3%. On the other hand, the strategies encoding positive politeness such as offer of repair, promise of forbearance, and expressing concern for the offended are relatively less preferred by the speakers of Urdu. Among these, the strategy of offer of repair/compensation has 298 occurrence number with 16.3%. The strategy of promise of forbearance has 0.9 % occurrence ratio. The least preferred positive politeness strategy is expressing concern for the offended (n=10, 0.5%). The distribution of the apology strategies shows that the apology strategies (acknowledgement, explanation, direct expression of apology) and downgrading strategies are preferred more than the remedial strategies (concern for offended, promise of forbearance, offer of repair). Table 1 illustrates this uneven distribution of apology strategies and the speakers’ orientation to negative politeness in the data.

**Table 1**  
*Distribution of Realization Patterns of Politeness in Urdu Repertoire*

Politeness	Apology strategies	Distribution of strategies (frequency)	Percentage
Negative politeness	Downgraders	352	19.3%
	Acknowledgement of responsibility/ Explanation	402	22%
	Direct apology	745	40.5%
Positive politeness	Offer of Repair	298	16.3%
	Promise of forbearance	17	0.9%
	Expressing concern	10	0.5%
Total		1824	100%

This preference for a particular strategy and less concern for other strategies is an indicator of sensitivity of the data to social status of the interlocutors in the given offense situations. No doubt, the variables of severity of offense and social distance among the interlocutors are

considered influential, but relative social status of the interlocutors plays a pivotal role in their communicative behavior. The following figure amply describes the influence of social status in selection of and preference for particular apology strategies.



**Figure 1**

*Preference for Negative and Positive Politeness in Relation to Social Status of the Addressee*

The figure given above illustrates that the speakers of Urdu employ negative politeness strategies (downgraders, acknowledgement of responsibility, direct expression of apology) when they interact with people of asymmetric relation having higher status and lower status. The people having equal status mostly employ positive politeness strategies (expression of concern, promise of forbearance, offer of repairment/compensation) to show integrity and solidarity in their interpersonal social relations (Ogiermann, 2006). Besides discussing overall distribution of apology strategies and politeness orientation in relation to social status, it is also required to elaborate the apology strategies and accompanying politeness in relation to specific situations where the hierarchies of social structures are at full play.

The distribution of direct apology strategy accompanying negative politeness in the current data is general, but the offense of misunderstanding the order of customers in the hotel (situation 2 in DCT) is associated with 156 formulae of ‘muazrachahta/chahtihoun’ (I apologize) and ‘I am sorry’ which is the maximum occurrence number in the data. In this scenario, the addressee has socially and

professionally high status (+S). The informants perceived this offense so much regrettable that they used maximum intensifying devices (multiple strategies and internal intensifiers) “to strengthen even more the force of apology” (Fahey, 2005). This use of intensified apology manifests the apologizer’s need to emphasize his/her sincerity in performing the act of apologizing (Fahey, 2005) without which the apologies would seem neutral for merely being ritual (Aijmer, 1996). Hence, the association of intensifiers with direct expression of apology reflects that the informants take the professional superiority and the ensuing embarrassing situation so serious that they try to “give face to the addressee” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 74) by employing redressive strategy of apology.

Acknowledgement of responsibility is the second most preferred strategy in the Urdu repertoire. The speaker admits the impediment made on the addressee and tries his/her utmost to restore the damaged negative face of the addressee by expressing lack of intent, self-deficiency, embarrassment, acceptance of blame or giving explanations. The use of the strategy of acknowledgement of responsibility

including explanations is situation specific in the current data. The apologizers of Urdu speech community acknowledge their responsibility for the offense where the addressee has low social status (-S) as this preference for the strategy of acknowledgement of responsibility is not as humiliating for the speaker as the strategy of direct expression of apology, which is used for the socially high-status people. Moreover, the speakers of Urdu attend to negative face of the addressee but it is not as intensified and deferential as was direct expression of apology used for addressee of high status.

The respondents in the corpus of Urdu preferred the downgrading strategies next to acknowledgement of responsibility. Downgraders are negative politeness strategies (Ogiermann, 2006) for “minimizing imposition on the addressee” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 74). The results reveal that the speakers of the Urdu language deny or evade their responsibility interacting with people of high status (+S). The scenario dealing with social gaffe of yawning in front of the would-be father-in-law is evaded frequently. This attempt to minimize the severity of social gaffe is to save face not only of the addressee but also of the speaker. But the deference is there to maintain the status of the addressee. The realization patterns of the strategy of opting out and evasion are keeping silent, implicit/explicit denial of responsibility, justification, blaming someone/something else, blaming the hearer, showing obstinacy to offend again, minimizing the severity, querying precondition, giving suggestion, expressing sense of humor, offering compliment, use of if/or etc.

Offer of repair/compensation being a positive politeness strategy satisfies a wide range of H's desires and giving offers (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). This strategy has 19.3% preference ratio in the Urdu repertoire. This strategy is employed in response to those offense situations where repairment and compensation is possible. In the data under discussion, the offense of occupation on space is considered the most compensable by the informants by leaving the space for the stranger making “a bid to carry out an action” (Cohen & Olshtain, 1994, p. 144). This repairment/compensation shows the sensitivity

of the speakers of Urdu to the rights of territory of others. Notably, the negative face wants of the addressee of being unimpeded by others (Brown & Levinson, 1978) is satisfied by positive politeness strategies. The reason is the equal status (=S) of the person waiting to stand in the queue. Moreover, the apologizers have not accompanied their offer of repairment/compensation with intensifiers taking the compensation sufficient to placate the offended person.

The strategy of promise of forbearance is “directed to the addressee’s positive face, his perennial desire that his/her wants should be thought of as desirable” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 101). It is preferred with 0.9 % in the data under analysis. This positive politeness strategy is aimed at assuring that the offended’s desires would be cared of in the future. In the current situation, the respondents do not frequently use this strategy. However, it is used for the people with high social status just as father-in-law but the ratio is very low.

The strategy of expressing concern for the offended attends to positive face of the addressee by “giving sympathy” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 75). The use of the strategy of expressing concern for the offended is context specific. The respondents issued the strategy of expressing their concern when the offense caused the physical damage to the offended (Ogiermann, 2006). The situation of road accident involves the offended’s physical injury and, therefore, the apologizer expressed his/her concern for the offended. The offended is a person with equal social status of the apologizer. That is the reason that the respondents used positive politeness strategy though the severity of offense was alarming.

## 5. Discussion

The results illustrated in the Results section give insights into the cultural values and social norms of Urdu speech community of Pakistan. The analysis of the data answer the research questions asked in the beginning of the study. We can discuss the results and their implications as follows.

### 5.1. Universality of Politeness

The present research tested the universality of politeness principles investigated in different



cultures to determine to what extent they vary or coincide from language to language and from culture to culture (Maha, 2014). The apology strategies issued by the Urdu speakers indicate that the speakers of the Urdu language prefer the negative politeness strategies to positive politeness strategies for apologizing. Strategy of direct expression of apology, acknowledgement of responsibility, and downgraders (negative politeness strategies) are extensively found in the Urdu repertoire in contrast to positive politeness strategies. This high frequency of negative politeness strategies proposes that the members of Urdu speech community generally save the negative face of the interlocutors in a concrete speech situation. However, the Urdu speakers also try their utmost to save their own face by selecting least face threatening strategies such as 'offering compliments', 'paying thanks' and 'giving suggestions'.

## 5.2. Cultural Values of Pakistani Society

The social norms exhibited in data are the outcome of cultural values of the members of Urdu speech community and the impact of these social norms on the surface form of speech behavior reflects the underlying cultural values of speakers (Wolfson, 1989). The values indicated by the data can be summarized by individualism, non-egalitarianism, and high contextuality of culture.

**Individualism:** The preference for the negative politeness strategies indicates that the Pakistani society is individual-oriented like the western societies. The strategies which mark the individuality of the societal members (IFID, opting out etc.) indicate that the rights of individuals have precedence over the interests of social group. The virtues of personal independence are recognized marking the distinctive line between "you" and "I" though it is not as sharp as is witnessed in the western societies. This emerging individualism is reflected not only in speech behavior but also in the whole living style; the age old joint family system is being discarded in most of the families.

**Non-Egalitarianism:** The members of Urdu speech community respond differently with different people in different contexts; this variation is a sign of heterogeneity and stratification of Pakistani society in different

layers which lead to non-egalitarianism. All the individuals are not treated equally as social superiority of the individuals is given much importance. Whenever a person acquires a high social status, he/she inherits a certain set of obligations and expectations. All the societal members are committed to these obligations and meet the social expectations to maintain this social order.

**High-Contextual Culture:** Context dimension introduced by Hall (1976) accounts for predominant communication style in a given speech community. If we apply his dimension to Pakistani society, it is a high context culture. In Pakistani society, "most of the information is encoded in the physical context not in the explicit transferable part of communication" (Hall, 1976). The variation in frequency and preference for realization of politeness in data are affected by the contextual variable of social status and the speech behavior can be interpreted in light of this factor. This dependence on the physical context implies that the interlocutors have close social connections over a long period of time. Different aspects of their behavior are not explicitly voiced because most of the members know how to interpret them.

The in-depth analysis and discussion of the apology strategies issued in the language under consideration is proved helpful to answer the research questions. However, the current study has its delimitations. The research instrument of this study is DCT which is helpful for collecting a large amount of data but it is not much authentic for capturing the spontaneous and natural expressions. Moreover, the data were elicited from some cities of the Punjab, a province of Pakistan. The culture of the other provinces is different from the traditions and lifestyles of the province of the Punjab. So, the generalizations cannot be made to the all speakers of Urdu in Pakistan. The researcher recommends the replication of the study in an oral mode (observation method, role play, etc.). Triangulation method of data collection would also lend authenticity to the findings. The variables of age, education level, the gender of the addressee, and locality can also be included in the study to see where the difference and correlation lies. Furthermore, the comparison of politeness patterns in

different languages would definitely give an authentic and genuine picture of politeness.

## References

- Aijmer, K. (1996). *Conversational routines in English: convention and creativity*. London, NY: Longman.
- Alfattah, M. (2010). Apology Strategies of Yemeni EFL University Students. *MJAL*, 2(3), 223–249.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Benoit, W. L. (1995). *Accounts, excuses, and apologies: A theory of image restoration*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Bergman, M. L., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1993). *Perception and performance in native and nonnative apology*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. V. (2007). *Research in education*. New Dehli: Prentice-Hall of India.
- Bharuthram, S. (2003). Politeness phenomena in the Hindu Sector of the South African Indian English speaking community. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35, 1523-1544.
- Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, 5(3), 196-213.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (Eds.). (1978). *Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, A. D., & Olshtain, E. (Eds.). (1994). *Researching the production of speech acts*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Deutschmann, M. (2003). *Apologies in British English*. Umea Universiteit: Umea.
- Escandell-Vidal, V. (Ed.). (1998). *Intonation and procedural encoding: The case of Spanish interrogatives*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Fahey, P. M. (2005). Speech acts as intercultural danger zones: A cross-cultural comparison of the speech act of apologizing in Irish and Chilean soap operas, *Intercultural communication*. Retrieved (10.01.09) from: <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/>
- Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1955). On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry*, 18, 213–231.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Holmes, J. (1990). Apologies in New Zealand English. *Language in Society*, 19(2), 155-99.
- Johnstone, B. (2008). *Discourse analysis*. Meldon, M.A, USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Kasper, G., & Dahl, M. (1991). Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 215-247.
- Lakoff, R. (1972). Language in Context. *Language*, 48, 907-927.
- Larina, T. V. (2003). *Kategorija vežljivosti v anglijskoj i ruskoj kommun ikativnyh kul'turach*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Rossijskogo Universiteta Druž by Narodov.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Liebersohn, Y., Neuman, L., & Bekerman, Z. (2004). Oh baby, it's hard for me to say I'm sorry: Public apologetic speech and cultural rhetorical resource. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36, 921-944.
- Lin, Y. L. (2013). Vague language and interpersonal communication: An analysis of adolescent intercultural conversation. *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language*, 1(2), 69-81.
- Maha, L. (2014). Cross-cultural perspectives on linguistic politeness. *Cross-cultural Communication*, 10(1), 56-60.
- Nureddeen, F. (2008). Cross-cultural pragmatics: Apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40, 279-306.
- Ogiermann, E. (Ed.). (2006). *Cultural variability within Brown and Levinson's politeness theory: English, Polish and Russian apologies*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela Publicacións.
- Owen, M. (1983). *Apologies and remedial interchanges: A study of language use in*

*social interaction*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.  
 Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 Subiyanto, A., & Allien, A. (2012). *Linguistic politeness in Javanese*. Retrieved (10-9-2013) from <https://www.buletin.tripod.com>.  
 Surakhmad, W. (1998). *Pengantar penelitian ilmiah, dasar metodedan teknit*. Bandung: Tarsito.

Trosborg, A. (1987). Apology strategies in native/non-natives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11(2), 147-167.  
 Trosborg, A. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints, apologies*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.  
 Wolfson, N. (Ed.). (1989). *The social dynamics of native and nonnative variation in complimenting behavior*. NY: Plenum.

**Appendix**

*The Translated Version of DCT in English*

Gender of the Respondent....., Age.....

**Dear Respondent!**

This research study is being conducted to study the various ways of apologizing in Urdu as a project of a student of M. Phil in UMT, Lahore. The researcher hopes that this study will help to understand the societal norms in Pakistan. Some situations of offense are given below. Imagine yourself in the position of the offender and apologize in different ways. Your cooperation would be appreciated.

1) Your classmate was suffering from fever. He/he gave you application to submit it to school. Unfortunately, you forgot to submit it. Consequently, your friend is fined Rs. 50 and his/her important test is also missed. Now what would you say to him?

.....

2) Suppose you are working in a hotel as a waiter. You are ordered to bring pizza and cock for ten youngsters but you forgot their order and brought biryani only for five persons. Having realized your mistake what would you say?

.....

3) You are standing in a queue to submit the bill. You are in hurry and take place of a person who has just gone to drink water. When she/he returns back, what will be your response?

.....

4) A student is called to principal office. You are engaged with your colleagues obstructing her/his way to office. On realizing your position, what would be your response?

.....

5) During study, you have forgotten to switch off your mobile. Suddenly your mobile rings and the students studying in the library frown upon you. How would you control the situation?

.....

6) Your peon could not follow your instructions due to overload of work. When you came to know, you rebuked him/her mercilessly. Afterwards you felt guilty for your harshness. How would you console him?

.....

7) You have called your sub-ordinates for an important meeting. But you are late for half an hour for the meeting. What would you say to the awaiting workers?

.....

8) You had an appointment with a professor for the submission of an assignment. But you could not submit the assignment due to a domestic problem. What would the appropriate way for your apologizing?

.....

**9)** You have to yawn in the presence of your would be father-in-law/mother in law. How would you apologize for it?

.....

**10)** In a hotel, you take ice-cream but there are some traces of ice-cream on your face. When you are realized this thing by a child, how will you express your guilt?

.....

**11)** While you were taking coffee, your hand trembled and the coffee split on your elder brother's white shirt. How would you excuse?

.....

**12)** You drove your car in a carefree style. Your car rushes into the car that is going running on normal pace. The front part of the car is damaged. How would you apology in this situation?

.....