

Transcultural Pragmatics Awareness in ESL Classroom: A Case of Pakistani English Speakers

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- Transcultural pragmatics
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- apology responses
- semantic content
- culture-specific
- policy makers

Abstract

The importance of transcultural pragmatics is not limited to the practice of structures and vocabulary in simple and complex exchanges. The basis for intercultural communicative competence is knowledge of transcultural pragmatics. Explicit pragmatic instruction in combination with intercultural communication training may lead to non-native English-speaking learners' professional growth. The current study investigated the transcultural pragmatics of Pakistani English speakers through the use of apology response speech acts in interactive situations. A discourse completion test (DCT) consisting of twelve real-life situations was used as an instrument to elicit data from 150 participants who were divided into three groups: 50 Pakistani English, 50 Pakistani Urdu, and 50 British English speakers. Findings reveal that British English speakers tend to use more Acceptance and Evasion ARs. In contrast, Pakistani English and Pakistani Urdu speakers prefer to use more often Acceptance and Acknowledgment ARs. In addition, three groups tend to use less Rejection ARs in the different severe and non-severe situation. The study also reports the occurrence of cultural-specific and language-specific ARs, especially in the speech behaviour of Pakistani English speakers. They tend to stick with their native cultural traits and values while interacting in different transcultural interaction; though their ARs fall into positive continuum (Acceptance and Acknowledgment) yet the semantic content is cultural-specific in nature. Overall, the participants of the three groups have demonstrated the positive intent of ARs.



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1. Introduction

English, as a lingua franca in the present globalizing world, is “turning into the language of transcultural movability, the language of the third space, and a language of hybridity” (Ngai & Janusch, 2018, p. 9). The test for English students in the present intercultural settings is that social principles are in continuous transition; what is proper relies upon the unique language and social experience of the speakers, and the particular setting where they are interacting (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019). Confusions and correspondence breakdowns are regularly realized by speech variance as built by culture (Dimitrov & Haque, 2020). Language instructors and students need to understand the importance of the relation between culture and language (Schwarzenthal et al., 2020). In this way, the objective of English language learning and educating in this day and age of unending and boundless social blending has moved from “communicative competence” (Canale and Swain, 1980) to “intercultural communicative competence” (Dias et al., 2020), which indicates “the ability of second-language speakers to mediate/interpret the values, beliefs and behaviors (the ‘cultures’) of themselves and of others and to ‘stand on the bridge’ or indeed ‘be the bridge’ between people of different languages and cultures” (p.1360). In other terms, both English as a second language (ESL) skills and intercultural communication skills are involved in intercultural communicative competence.

To address such rising educational requirements, Baker and Sangiamchit (2019) propose incorporating profound experiences from numerous related fields, to be specific, “interlanguage pragmatics, socio-cultural pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics, intercultural correspondence, and multifaceted correspondence, into another field of study transcultural pragmatics” (de Hei et al., 2020, p. 201). Transcultural pragmatics understanding is “the ability to decipher how cultures, cultural mixing, and contextual factors shape language use and communication in intercultural contexts” (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019, p. 479). Transcultural pragmatics insinuates an emphasis on interculturality. Interculturality is “a situationally emergent and co-constructed phenomenon that relies both on relatively definable cultural norms and models as well as continually evolving features” (Thapa, 2020, p.165). In the communicative process, “cultural norms and models brought into the interaction from the prior experiences of the interlocutors are blended with some of the features created ad hoc during the interaction in a synergetic way” (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020, p.47). Fantini (2020) suggests that in order to be interested in transcultural pragmatics, learners and teachers can no longer rely on the application of pragmatics norms in an SL and the foreign culture. Rather, teachers can directly encourage students to observe the similarities and differences between their culture(s) and the target culture (Fairchild et al., 2020) and discuss how the variations and common features shape each speaker’s distinctive language usage in particular multicultural communicative settings.

This exciting recent trend on interculturality stimulates us to connect not just language and culture, as well as language use and the complexities included the procedure of collaborating with various individuals whose correspondence styles are molded by context-dependent variables. Transcultural pragmatics understanding functions “as the foundation for intercultural communicative competence” (Klyuknov, 2020, p. 22). One of the most compelling notions in developing intercultural communicative competence is the notion of speech acts (Azam & Saleem, 2019). It is only because “speech acts have been regarded as a basic device of human interaction” (Searle, 1975, p. 79). Speech acts have been shown “to vary in conceptualization and verbalization across languages and cultures” (Al-Momani, 2009; p. 34; Saleem & Anjum, 2018; Sultana & Khan, 2014). It is for such reasons that the current study chooses apology response as a speech act to investigate how effectively

Pakistani English speakers demonstrate their intercultural communicative competence in interactive situations.

2. Literature Review

Previous studies in the field of pragmatics have mainly focused on cross-cultural investigations. Kasper and Rose (1999), and Cohen (2006) argue that the noticeable aspect in numerous cross-cultural speech act investigations has been to evaluate how people belonging to different cultural environment speak in a divergent way. They further explain that compliments, requests, refusals, and apologies are among such speech acts that have been evaluated frequently in the studies. These studies have involved either a comparative analysis of two or more languages belonging to various cultures or have included mere a single language for the purpose of pragmatic analysis. Keeping in view the weaknesses of previous studies, the current study focuses on transcultural pragmatics in order to investigate Pakistani English speakers' aptitude to discern how societies, cultural overlap, and contextual variables influence language usage and correspondence in transcultural contexts. Hence, in order to study the transcultural pragmatic competence of Pakistani English speakers, apology response speech act is selected considering that this speech act has not attracted the attention of the researchers in the field.

In fact, many of the studies which are based on apologies have been carried out in isolation, and the interlocutor's possible reactions to the act of apology have not been considered. Though scholars including Waluyo (2017), Wu and Wang (2016), Adrefiza and Jones (2013), Robinson (2004), Owen (1983), Agyekum (2015), and Holmes (1990, 1995) have involved some of the pragmatic responses to the act of apology in their researches, the investigations are still lacking the inclusion of socio-pragmatic subtleties and linguistic strategies. The outcome of the studies such as that of Adrefiza and Jones (2013) reveal that the attention of the investigators towards the topic is incomprehensive and limited as interlocutor's social status, power, the severity of the offense, and possible reactions in such sociocultural aspects have not been the major concern of the studies.

Nevertheless, in past studies, the critical element of how individuals representing a variety of cultures, social influence, close relationships, and degree of imposition, along with languages, communicate themselves while reacting to an apology is lacking. Therefore, ARs, i.e. Apology Responses are not the target of certain investigations. The key focus of previous studies such as (Al Masaeed et al., 2018; Al-Sallal & Ahmed, 2020; Chang & Ren, 2020) is primarily to examine the production of different apologies, instead of to assess the behavior and reaction of individuals belonging to certain communities and speaking different languages to these apologies. Hussain and Aziz (2020) suggest that if the essential facet of the response of interlocutors to an apology in pragmatic research is given prime attention, not only would it complement transcultural pragmatics, but would indeed be a potential field for ongoing studies since this dimension of the response of the respondent to the regrets would not only shed light on transcultural pragmatics. Transcultural pragmatics studies may also recognize various socio-cultural characteristics from different cultures and languages, involving this critical aspect. In short, for potential investigations, this may serve as a critical field.

Research has specified three acts that might follow apologies. These acts are: (a) appreciation; (b) relief as well as (c) minimization. Goffman (1971) opines that utterances such as "You're welcome", "That's all right", "Think nothing about it", "No problem at all", "No worries", "That's okay", "That's alright" happen to be the most commonly occurred

decreasing remarks applied in American speech while ending the exchange. Owen (1983) asserts that such remarks show approval of regrets, whereas “OK” as well as “all right” without deictic “that’s” and “it’s” are recognized as an Acceptance of a regret (Adrefiza, 2011).

Adrefiza (2011) ascertains these comments as the acts of pardoning as these remarks show the speaker’s endeavor to terminate the misdemeanor by refuting its significance. Norrick (1978, as cited in Adrefiza, 2013) claims that there are other utterances such as “Never mind”, “It’s nothing”, “Don’t you worry at all”, “Nothing to excuse”, “No worries at all”, “Don’t excuse”, and “No harm was done” that may be deduced as approval of regret as these utterances indicate the offended person’s gratification over wrongdoing. Other studies about ARs conducted by Robinson (2004) as well as Holmes (1990, 1995) categorized the above-mentioned statements into appreciation, minimization, and relief. In the study of Holmes’ (1995), further probable responses include Rejection, evasion, and acknowledgement. The usage of hedging devices has the ability to function either as minimization or relief in the expression of speech act.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate how Pakistani English speakers demonstrate transcultural pragmatic competence in expressing their responses to an apology in the politeness of the degree of imposition, social relationships, power status and social distances between interlocutors. It examines how the act of ARs are realized, looking specifically at target cultural differences and commonalities in the use of strategies, linguistic expressions, and politeness patterns which are inherent within sociocultural variables.

3. Research Methodology

Cross-sectional field techniques were chosen which are based on the quantitative paradigm (Creswell et al., 2003). A discourse completion test (DCT) was used for collecting a substantial number of ARs, which can be generalized, and for analyzing them quantitatively. For data analysis, SPSS-21 (local version) was used in order to present a realistic description of quantitative data.

3.1. Population and Sampling Procedures

In order to investigate the transcultural pragmatics competence of Pakistani English speakers, Al-Momani (2009) mentions a need for three sets of data. These three samples consist of (1) samples of English as foreign language learners (PakE, interlanguage data), (2) samples of EFL learners’ native language (PakU, L1 data), (3) samples of the target culture language as performed by native speakers (L2). Native speakers act as “control groups to determine to what extent learner performance approximates or differs from native speaker performance and whether the differences are traceable to transfer from the L1” (Al-Momina, 2009, p.92). Kasper and Dahl (1991) say that “absence of L1 controls precludes examining observed variation for transfer effects” (p. 14).

Adopting this canonical design and aiming to increase the reliability of results, 150 participants divided into three groups were selected using *purposive, convenience, non-random sampling procedures*. The participants who took part in this study included: (a) 50 Pakistani English speakers (PakE), (b) 50 Pakistani Urdu speakers (PakU), and (c) 50 British English speakers (BrE). The Pakistani English and Pakistani Urdu speakers were recruited from different professions including teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and army personals (as mentioned in Rahman, 1998) and the British English speakers from Coventry

University, UK, Leeds University, UK, and British Association of Applied Linguistics (BALL) members. All the participants were graduates between the ages of 25 and 65. The PakE group consisted of 25 males and 25 females and the PakU group consisted of 25 males and 25 females. Just one criterion for selecting individuals (both PakE and PakU) from different institutions and organizations was that the participant should be educated (at minimum up to the standard of the BS degree and also have learned English as a compulsory subject) should have been in a role at which formal document work is performed in English or English and Urdu and therefore can demonstrate transcultural language proficiency. The BritE group also consisted of 25 males and 25 females.

3.2. Instrumentation

A discourse completion test (included twelve situations DCT) adopted from Saleem and Anjum (2018a) was used as a data collection instruments. Keeping in mind the purpose of the study, ARs are situation-oriented. However, the researchers added gender, social status, the degree of imposition and social distance as another affecting social factor alongside the situation. The purpose was to explore how those ARs might differ in the same situation due to social factors. The twelve situations dealt with the following ARs contexts:

The adopted DCT is constructed in the form of an open-ended survey which is recommended in certain cases like this, as the respondents can provide numerous types of reactions without limitations as acknowledged by Baker (2020a). The benefits of open-ended surveys that generally begin with ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘how, and so on is that they can get specific reactions about the subject under consideration (Baker, 2020b). This would be of help in discovering different types of ARs Pakistani English, Pakistani Urdu and British English speakers realize in different situations

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Before administrating the DCTs for data collection, we first sought permission from the heads of the organizations and institutions selected for this study. All the institutional heads asked me to show them the ‘permission letter’ which I had collected from my supervisor in order to carry on the data collection procedure. Having acquired permission from the institutional heads, all the responses were collected from participants.

In order to collect data from teachers, we visited (1) Punjab University, Lahore, and (2) National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. The data collected from doctors included participants from (1) Jinnah Hospital, Karachi, and (2) Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar. The participants from Engineering were from (1) NESPAK, Peshawar, and (2) SMEC, Karachi. The data from Lawyers included participants from (1) Islamabad Bar Council, Islamabad, and (2) Baluchistan Bar Council, Quetta. Army participants who filled DCTs were from Pakistan (1) Military Academy, Kakul, and (2) Military College, Jhelum (armed cadre/not teaching cadre). For British English speakers’ data collection, I approached some of my acquaintances (Facebook friends, especially Dr Hilry and Dr Bennet Vincent) in the UK, who are professors and lecturers in Coventry University, the UK for data collection. Dr Bennet Vincent suggested sending DCT to the British Association of Applied Linguists (BAAL) for data collection. I received completed DCTs from Coventry University, UK, Leeds University, UK, and BAAL members, total fifty (50) including (25 males and 25 females) British English speakers provided data through e-mails.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

A quantitative inquiry in this research was the analysis of techniques respondents use when reacting to an apology. As opposed to the majority of the past studies that concentrated on communication speech act production, the present examination is an endeavor at not just finding the recurrence of various types of ARs of PakE and BrE, and in Urdu of PakU speakers, but also at the different ways these types combine when responding to apology in situations with various sociocultural factors. For the investigation of data, the study based its data analysis of ARs on Adrefiza and Jones' (2013) apology response classifications. In addition, for data analysis, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21 IBM local version) was utilized for the data analysis.

Table 1

AR Framework adopted from Jones and Adrefiza (2013)

Strategy	Estimated Expressions in English	Estimated Expression in Urdu
Acceptance (AC)		
Absolution	“That’s OK”	ٹھیک ہے۔
Dismissal	“It doesn’t matter”, “Don’t worry”	اس سے کوئی فرق نہیں پڑتا، فکر نہ کرو۔
Formal	“I accept your apology”, “I forgive you”	میں نے آپ کی معافی قبول کی۔ میں تمہیں معاف کرتا ہوں۔
Thanking	“Thanks (for apologizing)”	معاف۔ ی مانگنے کا شکریہ
Intensifiers	“It’s OK, really”	یہ بالکل ٹھیک ہے۔
Requests	“Please return it as soon as possible”	براۓ مہربانی جتنا ممکن ہو جلدی سے واپس کر دو۔
Expressing Empathy	“I understand that such stuff happens”	میں سمجھتا ہوں ایسی چیزیں ہو جاتی ہیں۔
Expressing Emotion	“Oh! Its awful, its paining!”	اہ! مر گیا، بٹری درد ہو رہی ہے۔
Questioning/Surprise	“How could you do that to me?”	تم یہ میرے ساتھ کس طرح کر سکتے ہو۔
Acknowledgement (AK)		
Absolution Plus	“That’s OK but ……”	ٹھیک ہے لیکن....
Dismissal Plus	“It doesn’t matter but……”	اس سے کوئی فرق نہیں پڑتا، لیکن...

Formal Plus	“I accept your apology but....”	میں نے آپ کی معافی قبول کی، لیکن....
Advice/Suggestion	“You should have called me”	تمہیں مجھے فون کرنا چاہیے تھا۔
Accepting Remedies	“That new model sounds good”	سننے میں تو اچھا لگ رہا ہے۔
Evaluating	“It’s ridiculous”, “You’re horrible”	یہ مضحکہ خیز ہے، "، آپ تو خوفناک ہیں۔
Accepting Promises	“OK, I believe you”	ٹھیک ہے، میں تمہارا یقین کرتا ہوں۔
Evasion (EV)		
Deflecting/Explaining	“Let’s now complete the report”	چلو اب رپورٹ مکمل کرتے ہیں۔
Evasion with Thanks	“Don’t buy a new one, and thanks for apologizing”	نیا خریدنے کی ضرورت نہیں ہے اور معافی مانگنے کا شکریہ۔
Questioning/Surprise	“Why didn’t you write your own article”	کیا آپ خود آرٹیکل نہیں لکھ سکتے تھے۔
Evasion with Request	“Could you return my laptop ASAP”	کیا جتنا جلدی ہوسکے آپ میرا لپٹ ٹاپ واپس کر سکتے ہیں۔
Advice/Suggestion	“Don’t blame others for your fault”	اپنی غلطی کا الزام دوسروں کو نہ ٹھہراؤ۔
Expressing Emotions	“Can you please spare me”	کیا آپ میری جان چھوڑ سکتے ہیں۔
Rejection (RJ)		
Refusals	“I don’t accept your apology”	میں آپکی معافی قبول نہیں کرتا۔
Questioning/Surprise	“What do you mean by sorry?”	معافی کا کیا مطلب؟
Complaining	“I wasn’t expecting this from you”	مجھے آپ سے یہ امید نہیں تھی۔
Warning	“I’m not gonna tolerate this next time”	میں اگلی دفعہ یہ برداشت نہیں کروں گا۔
Blaming	“You’re really careless and make me suffer”	تم بہت ہی لاپرواہ ہو اور تمہاری کوتاہی کا خمیازہ مجھے بگھٹنا پڑتا ہے۔
Swearing	“You’re really shit”	تم واقعی بے پرواہ ہو۔

Asking for Compensation	“You have to replace it with the new one”	تمیں اس کی جگہ نئے والا/والی دینا/دینی ہو گا/گی۔
Refusing Remedies	“No way, I just want the same camera”	بلکل بھی نہیں۔ مجھے وہی کیمرہ چاہیے۔
Non-Apology “Sorry”	“Sorry, I can’t forgive you”	معذرت، میں آپ کو معاف نہیں کر سکتا۔
Expressing Strong Emotions	“I’m getting mad! Buzz off!”	میں پاگل ہو رہا ہوں۔ دفعہ ہو جاؤ۔

4. Results and Discussion

The Apology Responses employed by Pakistani English speakers (PakE), British English (BrE), and Pakistani Urdu (PakU) speakers are presented into main apology response techniques including Acceptance (AC), Acknowledgement (AK), Evasion (EV), and Rejection (RJ), revealing ostensible variations in the realization of four main strategies (for extended ARs strategies, see Appendix C). The results are reported and specific interesting variations and resemblances are mentioned. A detailed discussion follows this by highlighting possible relations between apology response technique realization, politeness pattern variations, and sociocultural differences in PakE, BrE, and PakU. Table 4 and figure 1 illustrate the results of three groups showing Acceptance as the most favored strategy with a proportion of (45.1%) by PakE, (44.3%) by PakU, and (63.3%) by BrE. As expected, the second strategy which the Pakistani English and Pakistani Urdu speakers’ groups tend to use is Acknowledgement with a frequency of (35.3%) by PakE and (35.0%) by PakU.

Table 2

Overall Distribution of ARs of PakE, BrE, and PakU

	Accept		Acknowledge		Evasion		Reject	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PAKE	271	45.1	212	35.3	87	14.5	30	5.0
BrE	380	63.3	60	10.0	140	23.3	20	3.3
PakU	266	44.3	210	35.0	96	16.0	28	4.6
Average	305.6	50.9	160.6	26.7	107.6	17.9	24.3	4.3

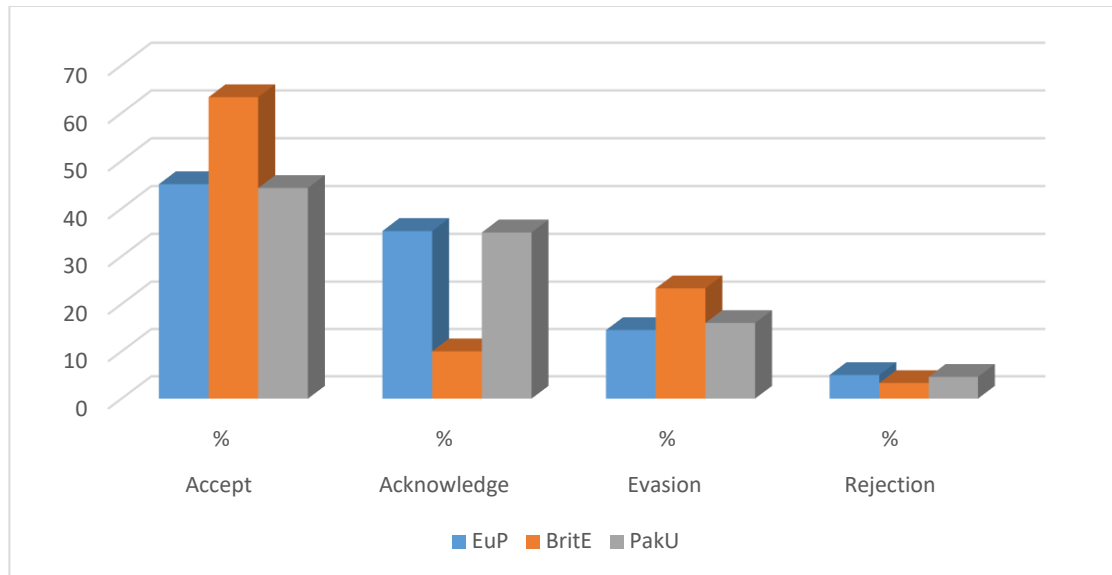


Figure 1 Main AR Strategy Distribution in PakE, BritE, and PakU

In contrast, British English speakers tend to use fewer Acknowledgement strategies with a proportion of (10.0%). Further, the third strategy which is not liked by Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers is Evasion with a proportion of (14.5%) and (16.0%). Unsurprisingly, British English speakers tend to use more Evasion strategies than the other two groups, it is the second strategy that is used by the majority of BrE speakers with a frequency of (23.3%). It is noticed from the table 4 and figure 1, that Rejection is less favored strategy by all three groups with a proportion of (5.0%) by PakE, (3.3%) by BrE, and (4.6%) by PakU.

Table 3

Samples of ARs from Data

AR categories	Sample ARs
Absolution	“That’s OK”, “Its OK”
Dismissal	“It doesn’t matter”, “Don’t worry”
Formal	“I accept your apology”, “I forgive you”
Thanking	“That’s ok. Thanks for apologizing”
Intensifiers	“That’s pretty fine”, “That’s really ok”
Requests	“No worries, Please return it as soon as possible”
Expressing Empathy	“That’s fine, I understand such stuff happens”
Expressing Emotion	“Oops! it’s awfully painig”
Questioning/Surprise	“How could you do that to me? Anyhow that’s ok”
Absolution Plus	“That’s okay but I hope you won’t do this blunder again ”
Dismissal Plus	“No worries, but you got to be vigilant hereafter ”
Formal Plus	“I accept your apology but avoid such stuff again”
Advice/Suggestion	“Buddy try to lose your weight please don’t mind my words ”

Accepting Remedies	“This <i>new model</i> sounds good, I like this”
Evaluating	“It’s <i>careless</i> ”, “You’re <i>pathetic</i> ”
Accepting Promises	“OK, I <i>believe</i> you”
Deflecting/Explaining	“ <i>Let’s complete our report</i> now, we’re already late”
Evasion with Thanks	“Don’t buy a new one, and <i>thanks for apologizing</i> ”
Questioning/Surprise	“ <i>Why didn’t you</i> write your own article”
Evasion with Request	“ <i>Could you return</i> my laptop ASAP”
Advice/Suggestion	“Be mindful and <i>try to plan your things accordingly</i> ”
Expressing Emotions	“You hurt me badly, <i>spare me for a while</i> ”
Refusals	“I <i>don’t accept</i> your apology”
Questioning/Surprise	“ <i>What do you mean</i> by sorry?”
Complaining	“I wasn’t <i>expecting</i> this from you”
Warning	“I’m <i>not gonna tolerate</i> this next time”
Blaming	“You’re <i>really careless and make me suffer</i> ”
Swearing	“You’re <i>really shit</i> ”, “ <i>Oh! God</i> ”
Asking for Compensation	“You <i>have to replace</i> it with the new one”
Refusing Remedies	“ <i>No way, I just want</i> the same camera”
Non-Apology “Sorry”	“ <i>Sorry, I can’t forgive</i> you”
Expressing Strong Emotions	“I’m <i>getting mad!</i> Buzz off!”

The results provided in table 4 and Figure 1 present an overall view of AR techniques used by the speakers of PakE, BrE, and PakU. The reactions indicate how the three groups respond to the wrongdoers’ regret in their efforts to recover individual connections and balance. In spite of individual and social aspects, the selection of apology response techniques may signify the speakers’ desire for keeping individual connections and balance in the community. The results demonstrate both individual and social aspects of respect and harmony; both these aspects are surprisingly involved in the choice of the apology response techniques. Past studies (Adrefiza, 2011; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Wu & Wang, 2016; Waluyo, 2017; Saleem & Anjum, 2018a; Saleem & Anjum, 2018b) have also acknowledged this idea, which consider that these aspects together with additional aspects, like level of social power and distance between speakers, level of imposition, age of speakers, and gender of the respondents, perform an important part in apology responses. Certain elements of these factors also appear to apply in the performance of apology responses. Though the speakers are different in relations to social power and status, the apology response technique choice differs from participant to participant. However, it needs to keep in mind that the information embodies only a small segment of Pakistani and British cultures; so, a little variation of apology response realizations in the three groups that are apparent here may only be interpreted as a signal of the kind of language behavior trend which may be anticipated from three groups, especially in performing apology responses. The results also display that there is variation in the use of ARs, British English speakers tend to use more Acceptance strategies than Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers. As table 4 illustrates, both Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers have used an almost same proportion of Acceptance strategies, indicating the transfer of cultural norms from L1 to the target culture. The other reason of similar type of responses by both PakE and PakU can be attributed to the fact that Pakistanis both in English and Urdu over-use the words like ‘It’s Ok’ (*Khair he*), ‘It’s alright’ (*theek he*) etc. Moreover, Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers tend to use almost equal number of Acceptance strategies, providing evidence that the Urdu language influences Pakistani English speakers in producing and perceiving ARs inappropriately while keeping in mind transcultural competence. As the data

from British English speakers demonstrate that they prefer to use the expressions “That’s OK” while Pakistani English speakers tend to use AR expression like “It’s OK” (see table 5). It happens because of the translation from Urdu language (*Theek he*), the word “*he*” motivates Pakistani English speakers to translate it in English into copula verb “it” instead of the indexical term “That” which British English speakers have used in their responses. Malik (2017) argues that the use of “*it*” translated from “*he*” of PakE speakers is an indicator of a fundamental problem in bilingual speakers’ second language learning (syntactic knowledge). So, this wrong perception of exact translation of expression in target culture language strengthens the concept of negative transfer of pragmalinguistic knowledge to the target culture language. Apart from the negative transfer, Urdu language, to a great extent provides its users the equivalent expressions in English.

The results, however, display a few extra phenomena of interest. First, three groups are generally rather self-denying and other-oriented in their apology replying actions. It is manifested by the percentage of Acceptance realized by the participants in each of the three groups. This technique is realized more often as compared to others, subsequently, that looks to be in line with the previous studies of Waluyo (2017), Wu and Wang (2016), Kitao and Kitao (2014), Adrefiza and Jones (2013), Robinson (2004), who all report that approval of a regret is the most recommended AR. Simultaneously, the recurrence of Acknowledgement is clearly rich in PakE and PakU data signaling that in Pakistani culture, positive politeness has prodigious domination in apology responses (Gillani & Mahmood, 2014). It seems that the participants absolutely limit their self-oriented actions. The degree of frequency at which Rejection ARs have occurred in the current study seems to acknowledge the claim of Thomas et al. (2008), who recommended that apology is hardly ever refused to indicate. Though Pakistan is a non-egalitarian society as claimed by Kousar (2015), but still social and religious aspects play quite a significant part in responding to apologies. The data of PakE and PakU groups exhibit that both group respondents tend to use less Evasion and Rejection strategies, and preferring the use of more Acceptance and Acknowledgement strategies also indicate that Pakistani English speakers incline to use ARs while keeping in mind social and religious norms and values, as Islam teaches and believes in forgiving and restoring relationships (Adrefiza, 2011) and exhibiting positive aspects of transcultural pragmatics competence.

It is interesting to note that the three groups’ results demonstrate that Acceptance strategy is the most favored response of the four strategies. This appears to be in line with the Pakistani society’s cultural characteristics, who are believed to belong to two fundamentally diverse types of cultures. According to Hofstede (2011), Sawir (2013), Klopff and McCroskey (2006) and Rahman (2006), Pakistan is generally associated with Eastern and collectivist culture, while the UK is commonly thought to be Western and individualist. The two cultures are said to vary from one another in many characteristics, such as the way personal and social relations in society are preserved. According to Rahman (1998), in Pakistan, as a collectivist society, social and personal relations are customarily powerful than those in individualist nations such as the UK, because public encounters are discussed in meeting much more regularly than in an individualist community. Jin and Cortazzi (2006) claim individualist culture is believed to be less tolerant than the collectivist culture. Unsurprisingly, as one may think Acceptance to happen quite frequently in PakE (45.1%) and PakU (44.3%) than in BrE (63.3%) groups. Nevertheless, such a discrepancy is not evident here. Instead, both cultures seem to be equally “polite” while responding to apology behaviors as highlighted through their realization of Acceptance.

One more exciting trend that is noticed in the findings is the percentage of Evasion techniques in use. The reason that Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers

display the least occurrence in EV than the British English speakers seem to encounter one of the typical generalizations about the conversation designs of the three groups. These generalizations develop in a typical difference made about interaction behaviors between High Context Perspective and Low Context Perspective societies (Hofstede, 2011). Basically, Pakistan is believed to be HC, thus, their conversation behaviors seem to be regarded uncertain, implied, and indecisive (Wouk, 2006); Westerns, in contrast, are usually supposed LC and direct, open, and candid (Rahman, 2006; Hofstede, 2011). Evasion actually is an HC attribute as it reveals a large degree of intricate and indirectness on the part of the speaker (Hofstede, 2011; Adrefiza, 2011). Thus, individuals from an LC lifestyle sometimes find it tough to understand individuals from HC as their conversation purpose can be uncertain (Adrefiza, 2011). Rahman (2009) claims that such conversation functions are popular in the Pakistani community. The current research, however, reveals that such functions do not operate noticeably in Pakistanis responses both in English and Urdu. Amazingly, Pakistani English speakers seem to go to express themselves less evasively than regular. In contrast, British native speakers tend to express their ARs evasively (23.3%) more frequently than usual. The findings are in line with Jones and Adrifiza (2013) who state that Australian English speakers also favour the use of more evasive ARs, exhibiting the traits of being more implicit, indirect, and unforeseen than usual.

The relatively significant number of EV technique in British English may associate to the realization of politeness principles and face works. This is likely that, for many British participants, an Evasion is a technique designed to give regard and display harmony in order to decrease face-threat or the face-loss towards the recipients subsequent of a painful occasion (Dhami, 2016). They may reflect explicit reactions as too immediate and face-threatening in the certain conditions. Hence, deflecting the reaction is believed to be the quite suitable technique. In Pakistani community, in comparison, such concepts are possible to be recognized rather in a different way. Most of them do not look to understand EV as an approach to display regard or harmony which has the possibility to decrease face-loss, but relatively as something that designates uncertainty. As table 4 displays, Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers choosing to realize their ARs more directly and more explicitly than British English speakers challenge the HC stereotype of Pakistani culture.

One more noticeable trend is the fact that three groups' apology response techniques do not fall between positive and negative scales. Basically, Acceptance and Acknowledgement AR categories signify a positive behaviour, whereas Evasion and Rejection represent the opposite that is a negative behaviour of the speakers (Strickland et al., 2017). It is obvious that the ARs of British English speakers fall more into Acceptance and Evasion continuum (positive and negative), in contrast, Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers tend to use an equal proportion of Acceptance and Acknowledgement (only positive), showing a discrepancy in this continuum. This result may suggest that British English speakers have shown a mixture of positive and negative behaviors in demonstrating their ARs while Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers have revealed only positive behaviour negating the findings of Jones and Adrifiza (2013), who suggested that individuals from LC culture tend to be less positive and more negative.

As mentioned previously, the both Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers tend to use more frequently "Acknowledgment" strategy than the British speakers with a ratio of (35.3:35.0:10.0). The incidence of this technique reveals individual or social positioning aspects existing in the Pakistani lifestyle. For many Pakistanis, acknowledging an apology can be observed as individual pride, signaling a feeling of unwillingness not to let the perpetrator entirely out of trouble. For them, allowing the perpetrator completely off the hook after a painful occasion can be recognized as tough, and cause harm to their self-

esteem, pride, reliability, or authority. Thus, they frequently recognize their reactions with some face-risk appearance such as advice, recommendation, warning or caution, that signals a poor approval of the regret (Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Wu & Wang, 2016). This trend, nevertheless, does not look to be popular or recommended in European cultures, as can be believed by the low portion of Acknowledgement in British English speakers ARs.

Lastly, the incidence of the least proportion of Rejection in PakE, PakU, and BrE data reveals another exciting trend. As Acceptance symbolizes the speaker's other-oriented and self-denying actions (Holmes, 1995; Jones & Adrefiza, 2017), Rejection can be considered as the other (self-oriented and other-denying). These unexceptional occurrences of Rejection in the findings of the current study indicate that Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers are self-denying and other-oriented; they are able to cover up their harm emotions subsequent of a transgression or violation dedicated by their interlocutors (Waluyo, 2017). They prefer to show their positive behaviour while using the face-saving expressions and have a tendency to have the patience of an interlocutor's wrongdoing.

It is significant to note that the frequency at which Rejection occurs in PakE and PakU groups is slightly higher than in BrE with a ratio of (5.0:4.6:3.3). While the data is inadequate to make a generalization, the findings could indicate that Pakistani English speakers and Pakistani Urdu speakers tend to be more rejecting. This can defy the postulation that, in Pakistani society, a prodigiously and religiously perceptive society, the percentage of Rejection ARs need not be lesser than British English speakers, keeping in view that Rejection AR is a serious affront. As mentioned by McCullough et al. (1998), Rejections of apology are against religious principles, hence, they are less frequent in religious communities. It is a directing concept in Islam to exercise absolution, that is the exact reverse of Rejection. Nevertheless, it is likely, according to Dhami (2016), that the level of rudeness of the injury, the relation between the transgressor and the offended individual, and the circumstances in which the offence happened may have influenced the characteristics of the reactions here (Dhami, 2016).

5. Conclusion

The result of current study demonstrates that Pakistani English speakers tend to use cultural-specific and language-specific semantic formulaic expressions of ARs. Findings indicate that Pakistani English speakers' responses were based on their own cultural norms, values, and standards. Given that BriE respondents tend to express Evasion ARs most frequently than PakE respondents and PakU respondents; both Pakistani English speakers and PakU respondents seem to favour Acknowledgment apology responses than BritE respondents. In addition, it is incredible to see BritE respondents showing a greater usage of less abrupt techniques. At least at some level, this discrepancy may relate to a distinct display of politeness and face principles within the three groups in their apology response performance. This trend is recognized by scholars (Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Wu & Wang, 2016), who assert that cultural and sociolinguistic differences are susceptible to the comprehension and demonstration of politeness and face in conversation functions. In any case, according to researcher like Hofstede (2011) and Sawir (2002) opine that the two cultures are supposed to be two different societies, "West compared to East", "individualism compared to collectivism", and alongside the two cultures are usually believed to contrast from each other with regards to keeping individual and public good-will, the findings of the existing research reveal that majority of individuals usually prefer to keep harmony in a relationship, even though the misconduct of one individual in the scenarios which are utilized in the current research. As far linguistic terms or expressions are concerned, most responses are not

demonstrated in the form of isolation, shown by, “That’s OK” or “We’ll see the matter later on”, however are representative of a number of extended responses. The demonstration of extended communicative roles and terms bear a resemblance to Adrefiza (2011), Adrifiza and Jones (2013), Kitao and Kitao (2014), Wu and Wang (2016) AR designs, that carry “main categories” implicating a number of subsidiary speech acts. Nevertheless, most apology response expressions are intricate and complicated, manifesting the participants’ efforts to display implicitness and respect and many different feelings. The use of elaborated expressions, in most situations, can also be designed to manage face-risks being enforced on the wrongdoer.

Pedagogical Implications

In spite of the present understanding on the importance of improving both “transcultural pragmatics and linguistics competence”, the two primary components of communicative competence, into language teaching programs, the major focus in many Pakistani EFL classrooms still remains the teaching of linguistics competence (syntax, morphology, and phonology) over the significance of teaching interculturality. This approach does not inevitably “a lack of know-how of the importance of transcultural pragmatics knowledge” (Saleem & Anjum, 2018); rather, it may be “a direct effect of the paucity of empirical research updating teachers and course designers in the areas” in which socially appropriate language use is challenging for foreign or second language learners (Al-Momina, 2009).

Pakistani English textbooks currently taught underrepresented authentic dialogues and the transcultural pragmatics knowledge of the target culture (Saleem & Anjum, 2018; Sultana & Khan, 2014). Eventually, curriculum and material designers can integrate the recommendations and conclusions of the current research into English curriculum. Not only can English instructors get benefit from this study but also Urdu language curriculum as well. Up to this point, viewpoints on Urdu correspondence styles have been constructed on individual perceptions and generalizations unverified by observational research. Recommendations and conclusion with respect to the Pakistani Urdu speakers in this investigation can profit those associated with educating and learning Urdu as a foreign/second language.

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