

Apology Responses and Politeness of Pakistani English and British English Speakers: Culture and Gender Perspectives

Abstract

This study examines sociocultural, pragmatic, and gender differences between native speakers of British English (BritE) and Pakistani English speakers (PakE) in expressing apology responses (ARs). Based on a discourse completion task (DCT) using data from 60 speakers of both cultures, the study focuses on the variations in the use of apology response strategies in three severe and three non-severe situations. The findings show that the two groups use a variety of strategies in expressing apology responses. The majority of BritE speakers tend to use ARs with the relatively strong hearer-oriented strategies (Acceptance). PakE ARs, on the other hand, seem to be dominated by the frequent use of Acknowledgment, with speaker-oriented strategies. These results have proven that both male and female English-using Pakistanis are amazingly obvious and direct in their apology responses.

Keywords: *Apologies, Cross-cultural Pragmatics, Culture, Sociocultural, Speech acts, politeness*

INTRODUCTION

Culture and language are closely interconnected in a way that sociocultural conventions designate our way of thinking and speaking (Ngai & Janusch, 2015, 2018; Whorf, Carroll, & Levinson, 2012). Therefore, every culture has its own unique communicative patterns in its speech behavior. During intercultural interactions, people interpret the utterances of cultural “others” according to their own native sociolinguistic norms or the conventions of their own cultural settings. Many studies 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, have involved some of the pragmatic responses to the act of apology in their researches,

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investigations still lack the inclusion of socio-pragmatic subtleties and linguistic strategies. Gender, has an influence on using language in all cultures. Men and women differ in their linguistic styles: women in western cultures tend to keep their linguistic norms, even closer to the standard language than men do or are agents of upcoming linguistic changes. However, the vital aspect of how people belonging to different cultures, gender, and degree of imposition as well as languages express themselves while responding to an apology is missing in the previous researches. So, apology responses (ARs) are not among the major concerns of the investigations. In order to gain these results, the study poses the following research questions:

1. What are the relationships between gender apology responses in Pakistani English and British English speakers?
2. What gender and cultural differences in apology response strategies exist between Pakistani English and British English speakers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

An exploration into the literature that probes into ARs proves to be limited. There exist only a few studies about ARs which have mostly been conducted due to the analysis pertaining to the use of apology and not because of the prime emphasis on inquiry. Agyekum (2006) and Bataineh and Bataineh (2006) are of the view that apology responses perform an important part in corrective interchanges. Bataineh and Bataineh (2006) argue that apology responses regulate if the apologizee seems to be pleased with the excuse from the offender's admission of the misdemeanor. According to Pargament, McCullough, and Thoresen (2000), and Bachman and Guerrero (2006), other than pragmatic, linguistic and sociocultural components, AR studies have often been incorporated into studies of psychology and religious belief (as cited in Adrefiza, 2011; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Kitao & Kitao, 2014).

Gender Variations

Studies on language and gender have revealed the differences between male and female linguistic style. Classically, Lakoff (2004) concludes that men and women speak differently. Women use a large number of tags and fewer interruption forms in conversation than men do. In Western cultures, as stated by Holmes, 2008, Shaaban and Ghaith, 2000, and Mills, 2003, women often use prestigious expressions more than men do. Mills (2003, p. 49) further states that unlike men, women "have a more positive attitude towards standard language". The cultural dimensions are neither fixed absolutes nor contradictory, but they are relative and scalar; no culture is entirely individualistic or collectivistic or more collectivist than some other cultures, and precise realizations of the dimensions also depend on contexts. The current study investigates how cultural nuances and gender roles influence the use of apology responses of Pakistani English and British English speakers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This data-oriented study is based on a quantitative approach to investigate the apology responses of English-using Pakistanis and British English speakers in interactive situations. For data collection, a Discourse Completion Test (DCT, see Appendix A), having 06 items, was adopted from Thijittang (2010). Nevertheless, by using a written DCT as an experimental method, large quantities of data can be collected quickly and this is fewer costly in money or time. The procedure can enable researchers to identify the effect of different social factors on producing and perceiving apology responses by designing a sequence of situationally varied scenarios. In addition, data and results elicited by DCT are generalizable (Barron, 2003, cited in Ogiermann, 2009). The target population of this study was (30) Pakistani English speakers (15 males, 15 females) comprising of doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, army personnel and journalists, and (25) British English native speakers (15 males, 15 females). The only criteria for selecting the PakE participants from different organizations and institutions was that the respondent should be educated (at least up to the bachelor's level and have studied English as a compulsory subject) and should be in a job where the official written work is carried out in English. The sample of the current study was selected through *non-random, purposive and convenience sampling procedures*. The British English speakers were from the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL), University of Edinburgh, UK, and the Coventry University, UK. All the British English speakers were faculty members (English Department) of Coventry University, UK, Leeds University UK, and University of Edinburgh, UK. Pakistani English speakers' data was collected from their work places and British English speakers' data were collected through e-mail (as one of the limitations of data collection). The DCT data was analyzed by using SPSS-20, by assigning specific values (1-32, see table 1). One-way ANOVA was run to investigate the two groups' use of ARs. Nevertheless, in the present study, AR detailed strategies are grouped as follows:

Table 1
Apology Response Framework

	Coding Values	Strategy	Expressions in English
A		Acceptance (AC)	
	1	Absolution	"That's OK"
	2	Dismissal	"It doesn't matter", "Don't worry"
	3	Formal	"I accept your apology", "I forgive you"
	4	Thanking	"Thanks (for apologizing)"
	5	Intensifiers	"It's OK, really ", "It's Ok, It's Ok"
	6	Requests	"Please return it as soon as possible"
	7	Expressing Empathy	"I understand that stuff happens"
	8	Expressing Emotion	"I'm disappointed"
	9	Questioning/Surprise	"How could you do that to me?"

B	Acknowledgement (AK)	
10	Absolution plus	“That’s OK, but.....”
11	Dismissal plus	“It doesn’t matter, but.....”
12	Formal plus	“I accept your apology, but.....”
13	Advice/Suggestion	“You should be quite vigilant next time”
14	Accepting Remedies	“That sounds good”
15	Evaluating	“It’s ridiculous”
16	Accepting Promises	“I accept your words, but.....”
C	Evasion	
17	Deflecting/Explaining	“I have not seen you for a long time”
18	Providing Solution	“Go back and complete the task quickly”
19	Minimization	“Hey, it’s nothing buddy, just a carpet”
20	Expressing Concern	“Are you Okay”
21	Shifts of Topic	“Forget about that I’ll buy a new one”
22	Shifts of Blame	“It was a bad weather”
D	Rejection	
23	Refusals	“I don’t accept your apology”
24	Questioning	“What do you mean by sorry”
25	Complaining	“I was expecting this from you”
26	Warning	“I’m not gonna tolerate this next time”
27	Blaming	“You’re really carefewer and make me suffer”
28	Swearing	“You’re really shit”
29	Asking for Compensation	“You’ve to replace it with the new one”
30	Refusing Remedies	“No way, I just want the same camera”
31	Non-apology “Sorry”	“Sorry, I can’t forgive you”
32	Expressing Strong Emotions	“I’m getting mad, buzz off”

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

There were six situations based on severe and non-severe offenses from the DCT questionnaire.

Situation 1 *Employee forgot to pass on an urgent letter*

Table 1: S1 indicate that Pakistani English speakers, both male and female tend to use fewer Acceptance strategies ($M=.08$, $M=.12$). In contrast, British English speakers prefer to use more Acceptance strategies ($M=.40$, $M=.40$). The findings further elaborate that there is no significant mean difference between the male and female respondents of the groups. There is not a statistically significant difference in the use of Acceptance strategies in S1 ($p >.005$), though mean score highlights that British English speakers prefer the use of more Acceptance strategies than Pakistani English speakers.

Table 2*ANOVA Results of Situation1 (Employee forgot to pass on an urgent letter)*

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	Errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
AC	.08	.277	.12	.332	.40	.500	.40	.500	2(72)	5.221	.008	
AK	.60	.500	.52	.510	.12	.332	.12	.332	2(72)	5.778	.005*	
EV	.08	.277	.08	.277	.16	.374	.16	.374	2(72)	2.215	.116	
RJ	.36	.490	.40	.500	.28	.458	.24	.436	2(72)	.400	.672	

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

PakE speakers prefer to use more Acknowledgment strategies (M=.60, M=.52) than BritE (male and female) respondents (M=.12, M=.12). Nevertheless, we find the lower mean difference between Pakistani English speakers male and female respondents, similarly, there is no mean difference found between British English speakers’ male and female respondents. As a result, there is a statistically significant mean difference ($p = .005$) in the use of Acknowledgment strategies between the two language groups. Speakers of both languages tend to use fewer Evasion strategies in S1. None the fewer, Pakistani English speakers tend to use comparatively fewer strategies (M=.08, M=.08) than British English speakers (M=.16, M=.15). Both groups of male and female respondents are found using a similar number of ARs. Hence, there is not found a statistically significant mean difference ($p > .005$) in the use of Evasion strategies between two groups.

Pakistani English male and female respondents tend to use more Rejection strategies (M=.36, M=.40) in S1. Surprisingly, females are found using slightly more strategies than male, though the difference is not significant. In contrast, British English male and female respondents prefer to use fewer strategies of Rejection (M=.28, M=.24) in S1. Also, there is an opposite reaction and British English males prefers to use more Rejection ARs than female respondents though the difference is a statistically minor mean difference ($p > .005$) in the use of Rejection ARs in the current situation.

Situation 2 *A friend promised to return a laptop after a week*

In this situation, where the offender is a close friend and the situation is rated as non-severe the results presented in table 3 signal that British English speakers prefer to use Acceptance strategies (M=.40, M=.60) more often in this situation. On the other hand, PakE speakers’ tend to assign low mean scores (M=.28 and M=.30) to Acceptance strategies in this situation, despite the fact that there is no documented statistically

significant ($p > .005$) difference in the use of Acceptance strategies in non-severe situations.

Table 3

ANOVA Results of Situation 2 (A friend promised to return a laptop after a week)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
AC	.28	.458	.30	.438	.40	.500	.60	.516	2(72)	.558	.732
AK	.36	.490	.40	.516	.36	.490	.30	.483	2(72)	1.923	.104
EV	.16	.374	.16	.374	.16	.374	.40	.516	2(72)	.450	.811
RJ	.12	.332	.08	.277	.08	.227	.12	.332	2(72)	.450	.811

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

The results of Acknowledgment category, instead, indicate that PakE respondents as compared to the Acceptance category prefer to use more Acknowledgment strategies in this situation. The mean score of PakE male and female is (M=.35, M=.40). In contrast, BritE speakers as compared to Acceptance strategies prefer to use fewer (M=.36, M=.30) Acknowledgment strategies in this non-severe situation. Anyhow, there is not found statistically significant ($p > .005$) difference between the two culturally diverse groups. Results indicate that PakE respondents tend to use fewer (M=.16, M=.16) Evasion strategies in this situation. In contrast, the male respondents of BritE group tend to use fewer (M=.16) Evasion strategies as compared to females who prefer to use more (M=.40) Evasion strategies in this non-severe situation. Nevertheless, there is no reported significant difference ($p > .005$) in the use of Evasion strategies between two groups.

Similar to the Evasion category, the results of the Rejection category also exhibit that there is no difference in the use of Rejection ARs between the two groups.

Situation 3 *Head forgot to inform the junior to join the meeting*

In another severe situation, the offender, who is the head of an organization, forgets to inform the junior of a meeting. Results indicate that PakE respondents both male and female prefer to express more Acceptance ARs (M=.72, M=.60). Surprisingly, BritE speakers also tend to use more Acceptance ARs (M=.40, M=.48) in this situation. Eventually, there is not a significant ($p > .005$) difference in the use of ARs in this situation between the two language groups. PakE male and female tend to use fewer Acknowledgment strategies (M=.16, M=.16) in this situation. Similarly, BritE speakers prefer to use more Acknowledgment ARs (M=.50, M=.40) in this situation, where the offender is a boss. In any case, there is no reported significant ($p > .005$) difference in

the use of AK strategies in this situation. The results of Evasion strategy indicate that both groups' males and females tend to use fewer Evasion ARs. BritE speakers are found comparatively using more EV strategies than PakE speakers with a mean of (M=.28: M=.20: M=.12: M=.12) respectively. Hence, there is no statistically significant difference ($p > .005$) between the two language groups.

Table 4

ANOVA Results of Situation 3 (Head forgot to inform the junior to join the meeting)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
AC	.72	.458	.60	.516	.40	.516	.48	.510	2(72)	.558	.732
AK	.16	.374	.16	.374	.50	.527	.40	.516	2(72)	1.923	.104
EV	.12	.332	.12	.332	.28	.458	.20	.408	2(72)	.450	.811
RJ	.28	.458	.12	.332	.12	.332	.16	.374	2(72)	.450	.811

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= "Acceptance" strategy, AK= "Acknowledgement" strategy, EV= "Evasion" strategy, RJ= "Rejection" strategy.

Unsurprising, the results of Rejection ARs show that PakE male respondents tend to use more Rejection ARs than female respondents with a proportion of (M=.28, M=.12). In contrast, BritE female respondents prefer to use comparatively more RJ strategies (M=.16) than male participants (M=.12). Anyways, there is no statistically significant difference ($p > .005$) between the two language groups.

Situation 4 *A colleague stepped foot on another colleague's foot in a crowded elevator*

In this situation, a colleague stepped on another colleague's foot in a crowded elevator. Here, there is no power difference between the interlocutors. Both interlocutors have equal social power and neutral social distance, and the situation is also non-severe. We can see in the table that English-using Pakistanis both male and female are found using fewer Acceptance ARs (M=.24, M=.32) as compared to British English speakers who tend to use more Acceptance ARs (M=.56, M=.40) in this situation. There is no significant ($p > .005$) difference in the use of Acceptance ARs in this situation between two culturally diverse groups.

Unsurprisingly, English-using Pakistanis both male and female tend to use more AK strategies in this non-severe situation (M=.52, M=.50) as compared to British English speakers who are found using fewer AK strategies (M=.12, M=.12). Hence, there is significant (P=.03) difference in the use of AK strategies between the two groups in this situation.

Table 5

ANOVA Results of Situation 4 (A colleague stepped foot on another colleague's foot in a crowded elevator)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	Errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
AC	.24	.436	.32	.476	.56	.507	.40	.516	2(72)	3.089	.052	
AK	.52	.510	.50	.527	.12	.332	.12	.332	2(72)	6.349	.003*	
EV	.12	.332	.12	.332	.16	.374	.24	.436	2(72)	.111	.895	
RJ	.16	.374	.12	.332	.16	.374	.12	.332	2(72)	.111	.895	

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

In terms of Evasion category, results show that speakers of both PakE (M=.12, M=.12) and BritE groups (both male and female) (M=.16, M=.24) tend to use fewer EV strategies in this situation and there is no significant ($p > .005$) difference within the two groups. As concerns the Rejection ARs, alike Evasion strategies both PakE (M=.16, M=.12) and BritE (M=.16, M=.12) tend to use fewer RJ strategies in this situation. There is no significant ($p > .005$) difference in the RJ strategies within two groups.

Situation 5 *Junior copied an article from a website for his/her presentation*

In another severe situation, the transgressor is a junior officer and there is a social power difference between the interlocutors. Both male and female speakers tend to use a fewer Acceptance (M=.12, M=.32) ARs though English-using Pakistani females comparatively prefer to use more Acceptance ARs as the mean score indicates. In contrast, British English speakers prefer to use more AC strategies (M=.40, M=.52) though British English females tend to use more AC strategies in this situation as the mean score shows and there is no significant ($p > .005$) difference within the groups.

Table 6

ANOVA Results of Situation 5 (Junior copied an article from a website for his/her presentation)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	Errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
AC	.12	.332	.32	.476	.40	.500	.52	.510	2(72)	2.962	.058	
AK	.60	.500	.52	.510	.16	.374	.16	.374	2(72)	6.338	.003*	
EV	.08	.277	.12	.332	.32	.476	.20	.408	2(72)	3.789	.027	

RJ	.20	.408	.12	.332	.12	.332	.08	.277	2(72)	.361	.698
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Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

English-using Pakistanis prefer to use AK strategies more often ($M=.60$, $M=.52$) in this severe situation. On the other hand, BritE speakers tend to use fewer AK strategies ($M=.16$, $M=.16$) in this situation. Eventually, there is found significant ($p >.005$) difference within groups in the use of AK strategies in this situation. Unlike AK strategies, PakE speakers prefer to use fewer EV strategies ($M=.08$, $M=.12$) as compared to BritE male and female speakers who tend to use more EV strategies ($M=.32$, $M=.20$) Thus, there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use EV strategies within the groups. In terms of Rejection ARs, results indicate that PakE male respondents tend to use more RJ strategies ($M=.20$) as compared to female ($M=.12$) in this situation. Similarly, though BritE speakers prefer to use fewer RJ strategies yet BritE male respondents tend to use slightly more RJ strategies in comparison to female respondents ($M=.08$) in this situation. Anyways, there is no significant difference ($p >.005$) with these groups.

Situation 6 *Workmate came almost half an hour late to see a colleague*

In this situation, the offense is non-severe as the colleague comes almost half an hour late and there is equal social power. We can observe that PakE both male and female prefer to use an almost similar number of Acceptance ARs ($M=.36$, $M=.40$). In contrast, quite surprisingly BritE male tends to use fewer AC strategies ($M=.36$) as compared to female respondents ($M=.64$) in this situation. In any case, there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use of AC strategies within these groups. We can see that PakE speakers prefer to use more AK strategies ($M=.44$, $M=.48$) in this situation. Contrastively, BritE speakers tend to use fewer AK strategies ($M=.12$, $M=.16$) in this situation. Hence, there is found significant ($p <.005$) difference in the use of AK strategies within these groups in this situation.

Table 7

ANOVA Results of Situation 6 (Workmate came almost half an hour late to see a colleague)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
AC	.36	.490	.40	.500	.36	.490	.64	.490	2(72)	3.089	.052
AK	.48	.507	.44	.510	.12	.332	.16	.374	2(72)	6.349	.003*
EV	.12	.332	.12	.332	.12	.332	.20	.408	2(72)	.111	.895
RJ	.20	.408	.12	.332	.20	.408	.04	.200	2(72)	.111	.895

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

It can be noticed that both PakE and BritE speakers tend to use fewer EV strategies in this situation. The mean score of PakE both male and female is (M=.12, M=.12) and BritE speakers is (M=.12, M=.20) though BritE females prefer to use slightly more EV strategies in this situation, although there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use of EV strategies within these groups. In accordance with EV strategies, results of RJ strategies are also quite similar. Both PakE and BritE prefer to use fewer RJ strategies in this situation, although PakE male respondents prefer to use slightly more RJ strategies (M=.20) than female respondents (M=.12) in this situation. In the same vein, BritE male respondents also tend to use more RJ strategies (M=.20) as compared to females (M=.04) in this situation. Nevertheless, there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use of EV strategies within these groups.

It can be noticed that Acceptance strategies are expressed through a number of subsidiary speech acts as mentioned by researchers (Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Holmes, 2008; Waluyo, 2017), and similar responses can be noticed in the current study. Both male and female participants' responses have similar illocutionary indicating force device (IFID) as Acceptance apology responses are represented through Absolution including dismissal based on the terms of “That’s OK”, “That’s alright”, “It’s fantastic”, “That’s fine”, “No issue”, “No problem” and “Don’t need to worry”. Wu and Wang (2016), Adrefiza (2011), and Adrefiza and Jones (2013) suggest that such an expression is uttered quite frequently as it indicates an Absolution comprising an indexical term “That’s” followed by an evaluation “OK”, “Fine”, “Alright” etc. including dismissal remarks signaling that the respondent does not agree with the wrongdoer's claim to have triggered a transgression (Waluyo, 2017; Wu & Wang, 2016; Saleem & Anjum, 2018a, 2018b). Another aspect is the use of religious and cultural-specific AR expression of PakE. The respondent is found using the religious term ‘Inshallah’ and cultural-specific term “Chan G” to show harmony with the interlocutor. It also shows Islamic teachings’ impact (or the term “*Inshallah*” is overstated in daily interactions in Pakistani culture) on the respondent to display solidarity and concern for the offended person. These utterances depict that the offender has not done any harm or damage. These utterances entail that the wrongdoer’s negative face is saved and balance is recovered.

The significant mean differences in the score of Acknowledgement ARs (see tables 2, 5 and 7) can be proof of a diverse demonstration of politeness and face principles in the two groups’ conversation styles. Allowing the perpetrator free completely, for most of PakE participants, may be looked at as harm to their immodesty and self-esteem, whereas for many British English speakers it can be looked at as differently, i.e. a

means of saving face by not permitting a severe transgression. As a result, both male and female PakE speakers, in a way, may agree to regret weakly in their Acknowledgements, making the violators feel a certain type of face-risk manifestation. As noted, Acknowledgement category clearly exhibits PakE speakers' preference for the use of cultural-specific and socio-religious ARs. In the current study, Acknowledgment ARs are expressed through a number of subsidiary speech acts. The Acknowledgement category that is illustrated through such face-risk utterances, somewhat, weakens the level of Acceptance in the ARs (Adrefiza, 2011; Saleem & Anjum, 2018). Such ARs, primarily, signal that the speakers depart from those of complete "Acceptance". The example in the table illustrates the responses from PakE and BritE data and the Absolution speech act is expressed through "It's OK", "Okay" at the start of the utterances. The speech act of expressing emotion (disappointment) "*but amazing thing for me is that you didn't even bother to tell me about it*" by PakE speaker and (suggestion for upcoming event) "*but please return it tomorrow*" uttered by the BritE speaker in the above example depict a face-risk toward the transgressor and denote the AR as an instance of Acknowledgment.

Female speakers also tend to use the Dismissal "*Ma'am, no worries at all*" from PakE and "*no worries*", from BritE data show their intent to approve the excuse. Nevertheless, the Elaborative term comprising "*Please you go, don't worry about me*", from PakE respondent, in fact, undermines the Acceptance as they risk the transgressor's public image. One exciting trend noticed here is that English-using Pakistanis female speakers tend to use elaborate expressions to show solidarity with the speakers. But one thing that needs to be kept in mind is that this response has occurred to the addressee of higher status, and the speaker has used the honorific "*Ma'am*" to mitigate the face loss of the interlocutor. On the other hand, if we see the response of BritE female speaker that is quite simple and short, the "*No worries, I'm Ok*" indicates that the speaker is not influenced by the status of the addressee, and still defuses the situation by protecting the offender's public self-image, although the use of "Dismissal" in addition to "Requesting" indicates the reply as an Acknowledgement.

In the current study, Pakistani English speakers seem to use fewer Evasion ARs as compared to British English speakers who are found favoring the use of this strategy. Though PakE speakers are supposed to be uncertain and unclear in their responses yet this trend is not observed in their AR behavior. They prefer to use more direct strategies even though their ARs are elaborate and prolonged than BritE speakers' responses. In the current study, BritE speakers are found using more Evasion ARs than PakE speakers whereas BritE respondents do not offer obvious or direct approval or Rejection in their reactions. Rather, they attempt to deviate their reactions through different manners, such as by expressing cultural-specific religious term "Oh God" by

PakE male speaker, and “Oh gosh” by BritE male speaker, and clarifying or explaining the importance of the task as the response from PakE speaker illustrates “*It was not just writing a report. It was our only hope to win the trust and annual appraisal from the committee members*”, and BritE respondent’s expression is “*I really wasn’t expecting you to be late*”, and expressing an expectation about past events as in PakE “*Honestly speaking, I have very little hope upon you*”, and BritE “*Let’s haste now, we got to be honest with our job*”. In the second example of females’ data, it can be noticed that there is no sign of acceptance and rejection of apology, rather female speakers prefer to use Evasion ARs with the question, “why did you do this?” from PakE data, and “how could you do that?” from BritE data. The “Evasion with Deflection and Questioning” responses expressed here do not clearly reveal whether the excuse is approved or denied. The responses in this category are speaker-oriented not hearer-oriented (Bippus & Young, 2019; Holmes, 2008; Jones & Adrefiza, 2017). The responses are negative in nature and remain face-threatening for the interlocutors, though an effort is made to restore equilibrium between the speakers.

The response from one female PakE speaker is quite elaborate and seems face-threatening for the addressee as well. It begins with address term “Gentleman” and Advice “*You got to make it sure that such stuff is not going to happen in future*” including “*if it happens again, mind you, without delay even for a moment, I will dismiss you from job*” further explaining the Warning “*I will not keep in mind, how many kids you have to feed*” adding the extremely face-threatening idiomatic expression “*Buzz off*”. The following response indicates quite positive pragmatics attitude of the speaker but seems negative as far as socio-pragmatic target language culture knowledge is concerned because the speaker has typically displayed the native nature of handling the situation and has translated the Urdu language strings in the target language. In contrast, the BritE response begins with Advice “*Be mindful of your responsibility*”, including a Warning “*I’m not gonna tolerate this ignorance next time*”. The BritE response does not seem as face-threatening as PakE speaker’s response is, and the BritE response is quite short as compared to the PakE response. It suggests that the English-using Pakistani speaker has displayed the kind of intent that is more negative in nature than the British English speaker’s response triggering the phenomenon of negative socio-pragmatic transfer in the target language.

CONCLUSION

The difference between the two groups, particularly the realization of AR strategies, do not appear to carry out the recognized misconception regarding the conversation variations of the two societies. As past studies of Aziz, 2000; Bippus & Young, 2019; Makarova & Pourmohammadi, 2019; Saleem & Anjum, 2018a claim, Asians, such as Pakistanis are uncertain, implied, and oblique in their conversation behaviors, that sometimes becomes difficult to understand what in fact they try to communicate.

Nevertheless, the results have proven that certain conversation functions/styles are not significant in their apology response acts, and both male and female English-using Pakistanis are amazingly obvious and abrupt. From a Gender perspective, in general, individuals in the two groups' data do not reveal different AR techniques, although in many cases the variations were relatively small or minimal.

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Appendix A

Apology Response Scenarios

Instructions

Please put yourself in the following situations and assume that in each instance you will have to say something. Write down what you would say in English in the space provided.

1. At the office, your employee forgot to pass on an urgent letter to you. The next day you complained to your employee that he/she did not pass it to you. He/she says.

Employ: Sorry Sir/Ma'am, I forget to pass it on to you. It won't happen again.

You: _____

2. Your friend promised to return your laptop after a week. However, he/she kept it for almost two weeks. Then you asked your friend to return it. He/she says.

Friend: O' Sorry yar, forgot, really I'll give you tomorrow, promise.

You: _____

3. You are a junior officer in an organization. Your head forgot to inform you to join the meeting so you missed it because of your head's negligence. Your head talked to you about his fault. He/she says:

Head: I'm really sorry dear; it just skipped out of my mind.

You: _____

4. In the officer's mess, a senior officer stepped on your foot passing by you. Senior officer says?

Senior officer: Ouch! Sorry dear, I didn't see you coming. Are you OK? Hope I didn't hurt you.

You: _____

5. You are a senior officer, your junior copied an article from a website for his/her presentation, which you found out. Your junior officer says:

Junior officer: I beg pardon Sir/Ma'am, forgive me this time, and assure you it won't happen again.

You: _____

6. You were assigned to do a report with your workmate. You were told to see him at the main door of the meeting room but your workmate came almost half an hour late. The reason of being late was because he missed the first bus. He says:

Workmate: Sorry yar I missed the train. Mom didn't make me to wake up early. And buses you know mostly come late but today came well in time and I was late.

You: _____
