



Original Article

The Dynamics of Politeness and Face-Threatening in Pakistani TV Entertainment Talk Shows: Analyzing Host-Guest Interactions

Ambreen Rahim (Corresponding Author)

Department of English

Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan

ambreen.eng@must.edu.pk

Sehrish Shafi (Ph.D)

Department of English

Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan

sehrishshafi02@gmail.com

Toqeer Ahmed (Ph.D)

Department of English

Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6077-3737>

toqeer.eng@must.edu.pk

Nabeela Khalid

Department of English

Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3560-5712>

nabeela.eng@must.edu.pk

JEL Classification: **Z11**

How to Cite:

Rahim, A., Shafi, S., Ahmed, T., & Khalid, N. (2025). The Dynamics of Politeness and Face-Threatening in Pakistani TV Entertainment Talk Shows: Analyzing Host-Guest Interactions. *Bulletin of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2(1), 33 –40.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15251844>

Publisher's Note:

International Research and Publishing Academy (iRAPA) stands neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in the published maps and institutional affiliations.

Copyright:

©2025 | Bulletin of Multidisciplinary Studies published by International Research and Publishing Academy (iRAPA)



This is an Open Access article published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

Creative Commons Attribution (CCBY): lets others distribute and copy the article, to create extracts, abstracts, and other revised versions, adaptations or derivative works of or from an article (such as a translation), to include in a collective work (such as an anthology), to text or data mine the article, even for commercial purposes, as long as they credit the author(s), do not represent the author as endorsing their adaptation of the article, and do not modify the article in such a way as to damage the author's honour or reputation.

Article history:

Received: January 15, 2025

Revised: February 13, 2025

Accepted: February 24, 2025

Published: April 01, 2025

Authors' Biography

Ambreen Rahim is a Lecturer at the Department of English, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan. She received her Masters in English Linguistics from the National College of Business Administration & Economics in Lahore – Pakistan.

Sehrish Shafi (Ph.D) is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan. She obtained her Doctorate in English Linguistics from the National College of Business Administration & Economics in Lahore – Pakistan.

Toqeer Ahmed (Ph.D) is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan. He obtained his Doctorate in English Literature from the International Islamic University in Islamabad – Pakistan.

Nabeela Khalid is a Lecturer at the Department of English, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir – Pakistan. She received her Masters in English from the University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir in Muzaffarabad – Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the pragmatic role of politeness in Pakistani TV entertainment shows, focusing on the strategies employed by the host and guests to navigate face-saving and face-threatening acts. To this end, six episodes from three distinct seasons of the Pakistani TV entertainment show 'Mazaaq Raat' were carefully selected, ensuring an inclusive representation of different hosts and guests. A descriptive and analytical research methodology was employed to examine the data taken from the show. The results established on the classification of politeness theory specified that all four strategies were used in interaction among the participants of the show for face-saving and face-threatening. Focusing on three different hosts, the study unfolded how politeness strategies, varied depending on the guest and context. The analysis also revealed that while the hosts of the first two seasons used a similar approach, the host of the third season adopted a more enthusiastic and interactive style, emphasizing positive politeness, especially with guests from the showbiz industry. Subsequently, it was concluded that both face-saving and face-threatening approaches were being engaged in the Pakistani TV entertainment show 'Mazaaq Raat' however, their use was arbitrary except for the use of positive strategy in the opening of the show by the host.

Keywords: *Dynamics of face-threatening, Dynamics of politeness, Entertainment talk shows, Host-guest interactions, Pakistani TV*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a complex human phenomenon which manifests remarkable diversity in its forms and meanings, ranging from verbal to gestural and emotional expressions, and is influenced by societal norms, the setting where it occurs, and even by an individual's perception. This multifaceted process of human communication goes beyond words or sentences. Various factors influence the change in meaning for instance, the speaker's intention, the environment, or the situation of conversation (King, 2014). The term 'context' is usually used to summarize all the related effects which contribute to create, re-create, shape, or re-shaping the meanings of words or sentences or sometimes whole utterances. The field of pragmatics provides a substantial framework to explore such effects in greater detail.

Politeness is essential to effective communication. It enables speakers to manage social relations and negotiate potential conflicts (Blitvich & Sifianou, 2019). Politeness Theory offers a framework for analysing how individuals employ strategies to protect face and mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). While this theory has been widely applied to examine face-saving and face-threatening strategies across various settings, limited research exists on the interaction between hosts and guests in Pakistani TV entertainment shows. In these shows—where social and cultural expectations, humour, and community engagement intersect—the host's linguistic choices carry particular implications. This study explores this overlooked dimension, illustrating how shifts in host identity recalibrate face management tactics and reshape both the show's style and audience engagement in high-stakes, publicly broadcast

interactions.

The ongoing research explores the use of face-saving and face-threatening phenomena in Pakistani TV entertainment shows, applying the theory of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The focus of the study is one of the famous late night TV entertainment shows 'Mazaaq Raat'. This show is aired three days on one of the privately owned TV news channel 'Dunya News' (Zaheer, 2018). The show is considered a forerunner of introducing the new genre of entertainment shows, combining interviews, humour, song and skit performances, all presented in a single program. The current study aims to explore the politeness strategies used by the host, guests and other participants of the show. In addition, the research seeks to investigate whether or not the use of politeness strategies changes with a new host, considering that each new host brings their own exclusive style, influencing features such as audience interface, pacing, and the tone of the show.

Research Questions

- How face-saving and face-threatening strategies are employed by guests in Pakistani TV entertainment shows?
- What politeness strategies are stereotypically adopted by the host of Pakistani TV entertainment shows?
- What changes occur in the choice of politeness strategies when a new host takes over?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speech is more interactive than writing and it usually brings immediate response. In real time conversation, speakers often give immediate feedback like objection, refusal, approval, negotiation etc. Similarly, strings of

dialogues between speakers form a conversation. In other words, conversations are always co-constructed between or among the different parties having them (Jones, 2015). In everyday life we frequently encounter different sorts of discourse depending on the purpose and context of our conversation. For example, a violinist finishes his performance and audience responds it with boisterous applause. This reaction of audience can be explained as an expression of politeness. Politeness, in this broad sense, is a form of communicative behaviour found very generally in human languages and among human cultures; indeed, it has been claimed as a universal phenomenon of human society (Leech, 2014). Politeness is somehow related with the face wants of a person. Goffman (2017) in his book, explains face as the positive social image an individual claims for himself in a specific context. The face can be positive or negative: positive face is a desire of being seen as good person; whereas negative face is a desire to maintain independence.

The first theory of politeness was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). It provides a robust model for understanding how individuals sail across social interactions, primarily with respect to the concept of face—positive or negative. During conversations any act can threaten these faces, leading to face-threatening acts (FTAs). The actions like criticism or disagreement have the potential to damage the listener's social identity. Brown and Levinson elaborated the concept of face introduced by Goffman and presented their theory of politeness. Their chief concern was to study face-threatening acts and to find out ways to mitigate these acts. They proposed some possible strategies which speakers might use to reduce the fear of FTAs. These strategies are called politeness strategies: bald on record, positive, negative and off-record. The most threatening strategy is bald on-record as it is a direct mode to express something without reducing the FTAs of the listener. The imperative sentences are good examples of this strategy as in, 'do your job', 'get out of my office', 'leave the room', 'wash your face' etc. The use of expressions like 'please' or 'would you' can make bald on-record forms soft or polite. These expressions are known as mitigating devices in pragmatics (Brown, G., & Yule, 1983; Yule, 1996). The use of politeness strategy employs that speaker recognizes his listener's face wants. He is willing to share his identity and wants with listener and feels inclusive. This strategy shows friendly relationship between interlocutors, for instance, 'open the window honey', 'come with me dear', 'let's go for a walk' etc (Allott, 2010). The negative politeness is when speaker wants to be isolated or

excludes listener. The negative face is the indicator of a person's desire to be alone or independent. For example, a team member might suggest that 'I will prepare the introduction of the assignment'. This implies that he wants to perform his part alone. In negative politeness FTAs are performed with redressive actions, e.g. 'would you mind opening the drawer?' Negative politeness is just the opposite of positive politeness. It is an attempt to satisfy listener's face wants by not interfering in his territory. Moreover, negative politeness provides an opportunity to impose something but in a mild way by using deference. Apologies, hedges, or questions can make the statements less direct like, 'I will start the presentation if you don't mind'. Finally, the off-record strategy suggests an indirect way of using FTAs. For example, the use of irony, metaphor, hints, rhetorical questions etc. to convey the implicit meaning (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The off-record strategy results in implicature. Eventually, this implicature can be interpreted in different ways so it takes off the pressure of specific intent from the speaker and minimizes the possible FTA. Though the concept of face as explained by Brown and Levinson is still debatable, many researches are still going on and loads of studies have applied and tested their politeness theory in diverse cultures and various domains of discourse.

In recent decades, Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness has been widely used to interpret real time communication across various cultural and social domains. The domain of mass media is no exception, as it also offers a rich diversity of contexts to apply this theory to examine communication strategies employed by users in this field. From newscasters and advertisers to dramatists and content creators, there is a vast area to explore how politeness is navigated and consumed to shape media discourse, both at the micro level of media exchanges and the macro level of public communication.

In the contemporary era, talk shows featuring interviews with people from various walks of life have become increasingly common and popular. New formats are being experimented to meet high level of competition and pressure of audience ratings (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). This growing competition and pressure have intensified the need of novel ideas. Many news channels have introduced entertainment talk shows which are blend of celebrity interviews, humour, discussion on politics, skit performances, etc. These shows are typically led by a host, who is often supported by a co-host and accompanied by comedians. Celebrities are generally from diverse professions and most of them feature a live audience as

well. The media represent the social constructions such as political, cultural and social norms, which contribute to shape the discourse of target audience and also the participants of the shows (Bartłomiejczyk, 2020).

The use of politeness strategies in media is not unusual. Research shows that advertisers in Iranian media use Off-record and Positive politeness strategies more often than Bold-on record and Negative strategies. Though, positive strategies are mostly used by English advertisers (Pishghdam & Navari, 2012). Rahastrri (2017) observed that both Ellen DeGeneres and U.S politicians employed all four strategies in 'The Ellen Show'. Another study indicates the frequent use of modality like could, would, should, etc. by Pakistani politicians during interviews in contrast to American politicians who mostly use 'will' and directives to show politeness (Sadia et al., 2020).

Beyond its immediate context, this study offers a deeper understanding of how media personalities contour their public face and discourse through tactical language use. The research highlights the diverse nature of interaction in Pakistani TV entertainment shows by revealing how change of host influence politeness, face management and overall format of the show. These insights not only enrich the study of linguistics and media discourse but also update broader discussions on communication in culturally diverse, exhibitory, and impactful settings.

METHODOLOGY

The show "Mazaaq Raat" is televised at 11:00 pm from Monday to Wednesday. The average duration of the show is 36 to 38 minutes, excluding commercial breaks. The first episode of the show was aired on August 8, 2013. More than, 1,600 episodes have been broadcast to date. Thus far, 'Mazaaq Raat' has completed three seasons, each hosted by a different person. Urdu is used as a primary language in the show; however, Punjabi and English languages are also incorporated occasionally. Initially, the show was hosted by Veteran actor Noman Ijaz. His run lasted from 2013 to 2015. After Noman Ijaz, Vasay Choudhry took over as anchor, leading the show from 2015 to 2023. Currently, the show is hosted by Imran Ashraf. In addition to the anchor, there is a female co-host, comedians, and a DJ in the show.

The nature of the current research is both descriptive and analytical. The descriptive line is used to identify, categorize, and present the politeness strategies and face-threatening acts (FTAs) employed by guests, hosts and other participants of the show. In

contrast, the analytical method, based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, is applied to interpret the participants' strategic choices which they make during interactions for face-saving and face-threatening. The qualitative data was collected from the popular Pakistani TV entertainment show "Mazaaq Raat", which is broadcasted on "Dunya News". This show airs three times a week. Identifying the required sample through a specific method was challenging due to the volume of the episodes. Consequently, six episodes hosted by different anchors were purposively selected from internet on the assumption that politeness strategies were frequently employed. To ensure comprehensiveness and precision, the research focused on a single show, drawing data from six episodes aired at different times, with different hosts. The primary languages used in the selected talk show are Urdu and Punjabi, indicating the linguistic choices of the target audience and the cultural background of Pakistani media. The theoretical framework of the research is grounded in Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). The theory's emphasis on face management aligns it directly with the way media personalities construct, maintain, shape, or challenge public relationships in televised public discourse. Given the multifaceted nature of the show, only the conversational parts of the show were taken for the present research.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The primary target of this study is to discover the variation in politeness strategies used in conversations on the Pakistani TV entertainment talk show 'Mazaaq Raat'. More precisely, this research aims to find out how these strategies vary depending on the host's communication style. The analysis is organized in three sections, each corresponding to two episodes of one of the hosts showcased on the show along with celebrity guests. The episodes chosen for each host offer insight into how the participants (featuring the co-host, guests, comedians, and a DJ) adjust their language choices and politeness strategies to the tone and style established by the host.

Host 1: Episode 1 and Episode 2

The host of the first two episodes for analysis is Noman Ijaz (NI). The DJ is Mohsin Abbas and co-host is Saamia Khan. The comedians include Amanullah, Sakhawat Naz, Iftakhar Thakor, Mujahid Abbas. In the first episode, the guests are Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Mian Shahbaz Sharif (SS) and actor Sohail Ahamed (SA). While in the second episode, PMLN leader Azma

Bukhari (AB) and Singer Fakhar (F) are guests. The first episode was aired on 2nd December, 2013, whereas second aired on 14th of July, 2015. The first episode opens with birthday celebration of Dunya News. Noman Ijaz (NI) greets the guests by using positive politeness. As one of the guests is CM Punjab so politeness is slightly higher than usual:

NI: *aaj jo personality hamaare sath studio mein mojud hein or hamaari mehman ha wo kisi taraf ki mohtaaj nahi han sirf on k liye ye kahoon ga k ham on k shokargozaar hein k wo apni masroofiat mein se waqt nikal ker hamare iss program Mazaq Raat ko chaar chand lagane k liye aye. aap sb ki bharpoor taliyoon mein welcome kijiye khadim-e-aala Punjab janab Mian Shahbaz Sharif sahib. (Clapping by the audience)*

NI: *or on k sath tashreef rakhte hein her dil aziz Azizi saheb hasb e haal k wo bhi kisi taraf k mohtaaj nahi janab Sohail Ahamed saheb.*

Clearly, the introduction of second guest is not as elaborated as the first. As the show proceeds, NI keeps the similar tone of profound deference with positive politeness strategy. Almost every question of the host starts with “sir” and even some of them end with “sir” as well:

NI: *sir, choti choti baatein hein bachpan aap ka zada porane Lahore mein gozra.... sir... jo aaj bhi aap yaad ker k enjoy kerte hoon sir...*

In this episode, the frequent use of positive politeness is observed. However, there is very rare use of rest of the three strategies:

NI: *aap ka aik impression ha bere dabang administrator hein aap to officers ko moatil kerne k ilawa kiya shoq hein sir aap k?*

In the above example, the host uses off-record strategy to avoid FTAs which eventually creates humour. However, on some occasions bald-on record strategy is detected as well:

Comedian 1: *acha ji Mian saheb sardioon mein aik wasket or garmioon mein aik khaddar ka korta? shopping k liye time nahi milta ya kharche kerne se derte hein?*

Positive politeness is dominated throughout this episode, evidently because of one of the VIP (SS) guest. Furthermore, extra attention is given to SS by engaging him more in conversation. The interaction between NI and SA is nominal. The second episode which is selected for the research aired on 14th July, 2015, where PMLN leader Azma Bukhari (AB) and Singer Fakhar (F) are guests, greater use of bald on-record strategy is

observed. Although, NI starts show with regular positive politeness but later he frequently uses off-record and bald on-record strategies without considering the face wants of his guests, for instance at one place he uses off-record strategy to make fun of Fakhar:

NI: *tabiat k hawaly se bataiye wo ab theak rehti ha?*

F: *kiya matlab?*

NI: *beri romanvi tabiyat k malik hein shadi k baad koi behtri ayi shadi k baad koch stable hoye?*

In another occasion, NI poses a direct question without showing deference and one of the comedian also does not tries to save the certain FTAs:

NI: *ye kis ne kaha ha k aap do hazzar pachees mein bhi hoonge?*

AB: *ham log perform kereinge to kon rokega hamein aap rokeinge ham perform kereinge log vote deinge haemin.*

Comedian Amanullah: *aap siastdaan hein aap to sawarioon ki tarah ler rahi hein*

The analysis of this episode reveals that all the four strategies of Brown and Levinson are used. However, bald on-record apparently dominates the interactions between participants. Unlike CM Punjab, more direct questions are asked to AB and in return, she also gives bold and aggressive answers. However, the political guest is given more attention and time than the other guest who is a singer. This indicates the stereotypical behaviour just as it is observed in the case of SS and SA. In a nutshell, AB dominates throughout the show. Comedians and even NI use off-record and bald on-record strategies to create humour and criticism at the same time.

Host 2: Episode 1 and Episode 2

The second season of the show ‘Mazaq Raat’ was hosted by Vasay Choudhry (VC). He successfully hosted from 2015 to 2023, leaving a lasting impression on the audience. The two episodes being analysed are hosted by him. The DJ of the show is Aoun Ali Khan (AAK), with Ayesha Shakoor (AS) as the co-host, alongside Akram Udass (AU), Iftikhar Thakur (IT), and Qaisar Piya (QP) as comedians. It is observed that the style and format of the show remain largely the same under the new host, VS, as they were with the previous host, NI. Though, balder on-record and off-record strategies are noted to be used by the comedians against the host to create sarcasm and humour.

The first episode in the scope of this research features the cast of the movie Chakkar, which aired on May 2nd, 2022. The episode hosts four guests, namely

Yasir Nawaz (YN), Nida Yasir (NY), Neelam Munir (NM), and Ahmed Hassan (AH). The show starts with a DJ's performance and then VS greets the audience. The comedians interrupt with sharp jokes directed at the host. In return, VS also crack joke on them:

VS: *dekhte ankhon sonte kanon darakte delon ap sabko assalam-o-alaikom or chand raat mobarak.*

IT: *masha'allah itna peyara korta per apko phir bi nai jacha, mene pochha Vasay bhae chand raat no ki pao ge, kende ne je soreyan ne eid na na deti me waqta pava ga—*

QP: *bada doodh vechan wala korta paya*

VS: *aap ka banta nai ha kiyonk aap ne khod dressing ki vi ha na, tawade warge monde na halafbardari peeche sirf frame vich an de chakar vich khalote honed ne (clapping by the audience)...*

As the show progresses, it is noted that VS frequently uses bald on-record and off-record while talking to his guests. As in one instance, he directly accuses to YN and NY deliberately not bringing Ahsan Khan (the hero of the film) in order to steal the spotlight themselves:

VS: *ap Ahsan ko kiyon nai le kar ae... kya is ki waja ye nai k aap dono spotlight ap dono larko pe rahe?*

YN: *...mere right pe Neelam left pe Nida aesa ho sakta tha Ahsan k hote ve!*

QP: *Ye qeyamat ki nashani ha (uproarious laughter follows the Qp's satire)*

In the current episode, off-record approach is also commonly used to create humor most of the time. As in the following instance, one of the comedians QP employs off-record strategy to flatter Ahmed Hassan:

VS: *sir, acting kar k maza aya aapko?*

AH: *zabardast experience tha, kiyon k badi zamadari wala character tha air phir jis tara inho ne usko tune up sara karvaya tou wo he enough tha.*

QP: *aur next film ap khod likh rahe hain masha'allah phir dobara— jacket bohat achi ha tavadi waise.*

In the second episode, featuring Humayun Saeed (HS) as the guest, similar pattern is observed with the use of more bald-on record and off-record strategies. This episode was aired on 9th August, 2023. The participants of the show included Vasay Choudhry as host, Rukhma Maryam co-host, DJ Aoun Ali Khan, comedians Qaiser Piya and Iftikhar Thakur. The host starts the show with a few set phrases, which he uses in almost every show. The politeness strategy is mostly employed to greet the guest at the beginning and at the end of the show to sign off. This pattern is similar to that of the previous host NI. VS starts this episode with

greetings but QP interrupts him by making fun of AAK's outfit. QP explicitly employs bald on-record strategy without considering the face-threatening acts (FTAs):

VS: *kaya bat ha aaj to (pointing to AAK)—*

QP: *aj te sir thand vich ande vechan ala koot paya e*

VS: *nai magar aap dekhein kaya zabardast koot pehna ha inho ne aur —*

QP: *itna mazboot koot paya show to bad danghan khaniyan to...*

VS: *jee, to phir bolate hain apne aaj ke mehman ko, khas tor per hamari dawat pe Karachi se tashreef lae hain, bari moshkal se hath lage... the one and only janab Humayun Saeed.*

The host predominantly uses positive politeness with his guest HS, however, co-host and comedians employ bald on-record and off-record strategies. For instance, the co-host, RM, subtly asks about a controversy, using an indirect approach to save face and avoid causing discomfort to his guest (HS), though QP takes the advantage of the situation and make fun of the host:

RM: *Humayun, recently Shan sir ne ap ki films per comment kiya, ider nai jaon ge uder nai jaon ge se niklein ge tabi hamari film industry prosper kare ge, jis ke reply me apne kaha ke, " ider be jain ge oder be jain ge or Zarrar film be dhekein jain ge —*

HS: *mere is tweet ka matlab ye tha ke me yahan nai jaon wahan nai jaon type filmein choron ga nai...*

QP: *aap ache fankar hain or har kam aap kar sakte hain Allah ki meharbani se, jo sirf aik tara ka kam kar sakta ha na wo das saal se phir hamare pass he rehta ha (QP pointing to VS).*

Host 3: Episode 1 and Episode 2

The third season redefines the dynamics of the show by offering a new lineup to its longstanding appeal. Unlike the earlier seasons, which were led by Noman Ijaz and Vasay Choudhry, the new team brings a diverse approach to the show's style and format. In this season, the new team features Imran Ashraf (IA), as the host, supported by Ayesha Shakoor (AS) as the co-host and Aoun Ali Khan (AAK) as DJ. Comedians Honey Albela (HA), Sakhawat Naz (SN), and Sardar Kamal (SK) bring humour to the show.

The significant shift has been observed in this season with the arrival of new host. Unlike the previous hosts, IA leads the show from start to end dominating the floor most of the time. The set-up of the show has moved from a structured and formal format to a more relaxed and playful one. The new host experiments

with impromptu interactions and creative segments for instance, engaging the audience with their questions and asking every guest to share poetic lines. The first episode under analysis, aired on January 4th, 2024, features Nayyar Ejaz (NE). This episode highlights prominent interaction dynamics and shift in style of the show. The host starts the show with a stand-up comedy style:

IA: ... *Mazaaq Raat me, dunya news ki taraf se, hamari is ssssssssss sizzling team ki taraf se, Imran Ashraf ki taraf se khosh amdeeed.*

Following this, he reaches out to comedians, musical band, and DJ and greet them with high-fives and handshakes. He then invites his guest with an expounded introduction, jam-packed with complimentary remarks:

IA: *hamare aaj ke mehman jis be kirdar me thakhal hote hain aesa lagta ha ke usne phool becha ke, anar saja ke, atashbazi ka intezam kiya hota ha. Kya hee sadi soni gae aj, eda wada fankar sano karan agaya ee (clapping by the audience), wah hamare molk me ya baresaghir me.... Pora Pakistan kahe ga a great performer, a great human being, har dil aziz, adakari ke champion... Nayyar Ejaz sahib.*

The guest is welcomed with standing ovation and a shower of flowers as a gesture of deep respect and admiration. IA then presents bouquet to guest while kneeling. He uses 'sir' to address his guest. He asks serious questions mostly and relevant to the guest's field of expertise. This implies that host predominantly uses positive politeness, especially when interacting with his guest. However, comedians and guest employ bald-on record and off-record strategies throughout the show, as in the following instance NE uses bald on-record strategy to counter the pun of the comedian:

SN: *tosi actor na honde, tawada bal'a ve sade char fot da honra se.*

NE: *nae, koi ik fot or wada le.*

In continuation of the previous analysis, the next selected episode aired on 5th November, 2024. This episode features Imaran Ashraf (IA) as host, Ayesha Shakoor (AS) as co-host, and Naeema Butt (NB) as guest. The comedians for this episode include Honey Albela (HA), Sakhawat Naz (SN), and Akram Udas (AU) and finally Aoun Ali Khan (AAK) as DJ. A similar style of interaction and humor is observed in this episode as well. For instance, IA opens the show with a short story conveying a moral lesson for audience. He then enthusiastically greets the comedians, DJ and musical ensemble. Subsequently, he extends a warm welcome to the guest, maintaining the same complimentary

tone:

IA: *Performer, performer, performer, real performer, aesa nai ke sirf Pakistani darame me kam kiya, Pakistan se bahar Amrika jahan sab ka ja ke kam karne ka khab hota ha, na sirf on logo me kam kiya balke wahan direction be ki (The host initiates clapping, which is promptly joined by the audience)...*

As the guest makes her entry, a shower of flowers adds to the celebratory ambiance, and a bouquet is presented to her. This suggests that welcoming a guest with such gestures has become a regular ritual in this season of Mazaaq Raat. However, the host consistently employs politeness strategies with the guest, and his questions are more thoughtful in nature, especially when compared to the previous seasons where the questions were more humorous and general.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aimed to explore three key questions regarding the use of politeness in face-saving and face-threatening phenomenon in Pakistani TV entertainment shows. A detailed analysis of the selected episodes from three seasons of 'Mazaaq Raat', provides valuable insights into each. The first research question focused understanding the politeness strategies employed by the guests of the show. The analysis reveals that guests use all four-politeness strategy according to question and situation, though negative and off-record strategies are frequently used to save their face wants. This indicates a deliberate effort from guests to maintain face wants. The second question of research explored the politeness strategies stereotypically adopted by the host of Pakistani entertainment shows.

The results indicate that the host employs polite and structured strategies predominantly while interacting with his guests to avoid possible FTAs. Though the choice of strategies varies significantly among three hosts (NI, VC, & IA) across different seasons. Meanwhile, comedians often rely on bold on-record and off-record approaches to create humour and to engage the audience. Turning to the third and last question, which addressed the changes occur in the choice of politeness strategies when a new host takes over. The analysis highlights that hosts of the first two seasons NI and VC exhibit a similar use of strategies and keep a comparable layout. However, their choice of politeness strategies varies depending on the guest, reflecting power dynamics. For instance, in the case of CM of Punjab SS as a guest, the host consistently employs positive politeness. Furthermore, both hosts across

the two seasons predominantly use bald-on-record and off-record strategies, mostly with comedians and occasionally with guests.

In contrast to the hosts of the first two seasons, the third host IA brings a more enthusiastic and interactive style to the show. Unlike the previous hosts, he steadily employs positive politeness with everyone, primarily with the guests, creating a more appealing atmosphere. Nearly every guest he invites hails from the showbiz industry, contributing to the entertainment-driven nature of the program. These findings contribute to the theoretical scope of Brown and Levinson's politeness model by situating it within a culturally specific, televised media environment, illustrating how variations in hosts and societal norms influence face-saving strategies.

In a nutshell, this research provides valuable insights into the politeness and face-saving and face-threatening strategies across different seasons of the Mazaq Raat. While the findings contribute to the understanding of how hosts, comedians and guests interact, they also highlight areas for further investigation. Future research could examine the long-term impact of these politeness strategies on audience engagement in the context of different demographic groups. In addition, discovering how power dynamics between hosts and guests influence the choice of strategies, as well as the cultural inferences of these strategies in numerous media contexts, would provide a deeper understanding of their part in determining the show's success. Such study could supplement the broader understanding of humour in Pakistani TV entertainment talk shows and its societal impact.

Competing Interest

The authors had no competing interests.

References

- Allott, N. (2010). *Key terms in pragmatics*. A&C Black.
- Bartłomiejczyk, M. (2020). Parliamentary impoliteness and the interpreter's gender. *Pragmatics*, 30(4), 459-484.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.18064.bar>
- Blitvich, P. G. C., & Sifianou, M. (2019). Im/politeness and discursive pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 145, 91-101.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.03.015>
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge university press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (Vol. 4). Cambridge university press.
- Clayman, S., & Heritage, J. (2002). *The news interview: Journalists and public figures on the air*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goffman, E. (2017). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Routledge.
- Jones, R. H. (2015). Creativity and discourse analysis. In *The Routledge handbook of language and creativity* (pp. 61-77). Routledge.
- King, J. C. (2014). Speaker intentions in context. *Noûs*, 48(2), 219-237.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43828870>
- Leech, G. N. (2014). *The pragmatics of politeness*. Oxford University Press.
- Pishghadam, R., & Navari, S. (2012). A study into politeness strategies and politeness markers in advertisements as persuasive tools. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 161-171.
- Rahastri, C. Y. (2017). Politeness strategies used by Ellen Degeneres and US politician in the Ellen Show. *Yogyakarta: English Language Education Study Program, Sanata Dharma University*.
- Sadia, S., Asgher, M., & Asgher, T. A. (2020). A pragmatic analysis of politeness strategies used by Pakistani and American politicians in interviews. *Ilkogretim Online-Elementary Education Online*, 19(4), 3774-3783.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Zaheer, L. (2018). Public Affinity for Political Discourse in Pakistan. *Journal of Political Studies*, 25(01), 229-241.