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'Settled in the Heaven and Celebrated on Earth': A Sociolinguistic Study of Written Wedding Invitation Genre in Pakistan

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Abstract

Human communication seems to be a multifaceted, multidimensional and multilayered phenomenon. Sociolinguistics helps us explore how society and language (spoken and written) are intricately intertwined. In this context, this study seeks to analyze the linguistic and semiotic features of written wedding invitation cards printed and used in Pakistan. Weddings unite not only two individuals but they also merge families, tribes and clans. In fact, Islam introduces a family as a basic unit of world peace. So, weddings and wedding processes are important. How are such social ceremonies of happiness and joy communicated in Pakistan? How do Pakistani wedding invitations offer us access to deeper recesses of Pakistani culture and traditions? Theoretically, this study was based on the model of genre analysis by Bhatia (1993) and Swales (1990). Researchers in the field of sociolinguistics have analyzed the wedding invitation genre in Arabic, Iranian, and Christian, Muslim, Chinese, and Indian and Pakistani cultures. For the current study, a sample of 60 wedding invitation cards in Urdu and English was collected in the city of Hasilpur, Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The randomly collected cards were real wedding invitation cards published and used in weddings in 2015-2021. The results of the study revealed that the examined wedding cards featured seven mandatory and one optional move. The obligatory moves were found almost in all cards. The occurrence of optional moves, however, varied from card to card. The semiotic features were also channelized by the wedding hosts or senders of the cards to convey the nuptial messages effectively. Caste system, religious values, religious texts, economic positions, man-woman relationship, preference for hijab, architectural glimpses, musical instruments, traditional and modern means of transport and many other aspects of Pakistani cultures were skillfully depicted in the wedding invitation cards.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Pakistani Wedding Cards, Genre Analysis**,** Linguistics Features, Semiotics Features, Move Structure, Applied Discourse Analysis

Introduction

In most of regions of the world, wedding processes have been defined and ordained, to a large extent, by religions. Therefore, it is important to take into account religious aspects related to weddings. Islam is one of the three Abrahamic religions of the world. It comprehensively guides people about how to enter the bond of marriage and how to live together as married couples. Allah Almighty enjoined Adam to dwell in paradise with his wife (Quran 7:19). The word 'dwell' is English translation of the word 'us'kun' in Arabic. In Arabic lexicon, one sense of this word is associated with living peace or peace of mind (Al-Asphani, 1997, p. 417). Another ayah of the Quran links comfort with married life, 'And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them' (Quran 30:21). These noble signs from the Quran underline the desired peace, comfort and bliss of conjugal life. In this context, it can be said that a wedding invitation card is harbinger of peace and comfort. This is why when a wedding invitation card is received by people in Pakistan, they become happy and celebrate the news.

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A house or a family is a basic unit of society. Life of an individual is inseparably connected with collective human existence. A single unit of society is as important as the society as a whole. Peace in the world actually begins from peace at home or in the family. If units of society or families in a society are broken, dispersed and disrupted, the whole society may be influenced by these, to use a metaphor here, 'ripples of conflict, chaos and confusion'. The resultant society may be defined by high crime rates, corruption, injustice, violations of human rights and rampant violence. In this perspective, every single wedding can be taken as a human effort to build peace in the world. Therefore, a single unit of society or a family is important and so are the foundations of it—wedding process. After linking wedding with world peace, the following discussion mainly studies the written wedding invitations purely in the context of relevant and intricate terms of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and genre analysis.

A wedding involves several arrangements and formation of new social relations. Inviting people on weddings is an integral part of wedding ceremonies. There are many ways of inviting people for weddings in Pakistani cultures. One way of inviting guests to weddings is by writing letters to friends and relatives. Making phone calls is another way of inviting them to weddings. In the current influx of social media apps, guests can be invited through WhatsApp and other social media channels. But, using written invitation cards is the most formal way of inviting someone to a wedding in Pakistani culture. Written invitations cards have certain generic features which are not found in spoken invitations. These written invitation cards include mandatory information related to a wedding, such as, the names of host family, venue, time and date of events, as the following figure (Figure 1) shows:
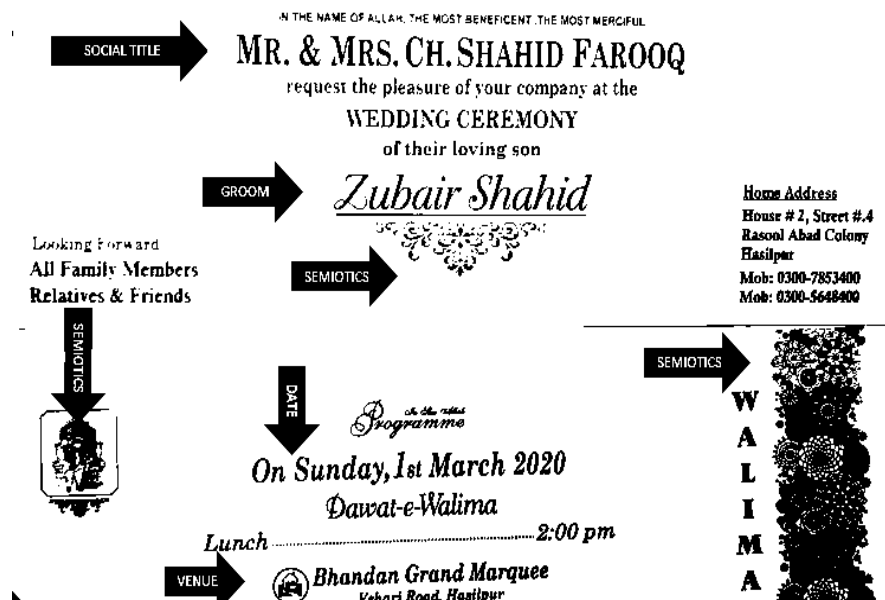

Figure 1: A wedding invitation card in English in published and used in Hasilpur

Pakistanis have their own way of constructing invitation cards for their wedding ceremonies. Since family connections make a difference in Pakistan, a list of names of important members of family is also given on the wedding invitation cards (along with their telephone numbers, as figure 4 shows). Wedding invitation cards belong to categories of social discourses and informative discourses. Yasmin, Naseem and Sohail (2019) regard wedding discourses as 'homely discourses'. They studied wedding invitation cards used in urban areas of Pakistan and UK, the current study, however, examines wedding invitation cards used in a small city which is surrounded by villages. Thus, the current study takes into account wedding discourse of both urban and rural population.

Brown and Yule (1987), Cuklanz (2000), Paltridge (2006), O' Keeffe (2006) and Gee (2011) have discussed theory and methods of discourse analysis. Cook (1990) observes that 'discourse can be anything from a grunt or single expletive, through short conversations and scribbled notes right up to Tolstoy's novel, 'War & Peace' or a lengthy legal case. What matters is not its conformity to rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent' (p. 7). He further explains that jokes, invitations, slogans, prescriptions, signs, tickets, advertisements are all discourses. Wedding invitation cards are formal, written and informative discourses. As a discourse, wedding

invitation cards in Pakistan contain the features of both shared and unshared discourses. They make a shared discourse in the sense that such wedding invitation cards appear to be universally ubiquitous. At the same time, they make an unshared discourse in the sense that there are features in Pakistani wedding invitation cards which are unique. These singular features of the cards necessitate that the researchers in the field should consider Pakistani cultural context and Pakistani people's cognitive context into account. This study falls in the area of applied discourse analysis—genre analysis.

What is genre analysis?

Our modern, urbanized and complex life needs dynamic communicative answers. We are surrounded with a large variety of discourses and genres. We need versatile theories and concepts to answer complex questions of mechanical and mundane world (Bhatia, 1997). Knowing and understanding various genres seems to be linked not only to comprehensive language mastery but it is also associated with development of communicative and cultural competencies because we are almost inseparably connected to intricate social world around us (Bazerman, 1993). This is why there exists a concept of genre pedagogy (Reid, 1987). Genres can be general and specific (Bakhtin, 1986). A genre fuses together linguistic, psychological and sociological aspects. In fact, psychological and social aspects are linked together. In other words, theoretically, in genre studies, however, discourse and communication are socio-cognitive aspects (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). Since the social is an important aspect, it investigates the use of language in particular context. It places text in a situational context and undertakes contextual analysis. Swales (1990) has described genre as a communicative event which has some objective and purposes and these purposes are classified by the experts of community. Identification of purpose in a text is an important thing in genre analysis. These professional members of society make rules to investigate language used in institutional context. Miller (1984) has defined genres as rhetorical actions that have particular objectives. On the whole, genre analysis is not linear and straight. It seems to be complex and interlinked phenomenon because a genre contains subgenres as well or what Fairclough (1992) calls genre-mixing. Genre analysis involves insights from diverse disciplines such as communication, discourse, applied linguistics, paralinguistics and semiotics. Move-structure and communicative purpose are important aspects in genre analysis.

Three Aspects of Genre Analysis

Regarding genre, experts have given three aspects of genre: purpose, moves and rhetorical strategies, as figure 2 below shows. The communicative purpose is based on convention accepted by a given speech community. In other words, communicative purpose is socially accepted and influences how genre is shaped. It is not personalized genre.
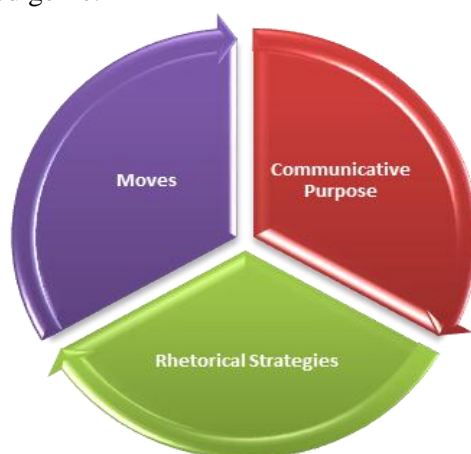

Figure 2: Three Interrelated Elements of Genre (Bhatia, 1993)

Purpose defines structure of the genre and 'moves' constitute the components of the genre. Purpose defines 'moves. In addition to purpose and moves, there are rhetorical strategies. Different words and orientations can serve as rhetorical strategies. Furthermore, strategies can be both verbal and nonverbal. The function of rhetorical strategies is to help in the realization of communicative purpose. Strategies or steps are caused by non-linguistic aspects. Strategies exist in large numbers and can be utilized keeping in mind the requirement of the situation.

What is Move Analysis?

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A move can be defined as a basic unit of discourse which contains the content and intent and performs specific function (Bhatia 1993). Each move in a discourse contributes to the overall communicative purposes of the discourse. Moves can be of various lengths. In other words, moves are semantic and functional parts of discourse with communicative purposes. These moves are simply the interpretation of a specific context. In this way, move analysis applies both to applied linguistics and sociolinguistics.

Communicative Purpose in Genre

Communicative purpose is important in a genre. A genre can have main purpose and supplementary purposes. For example, a sales promotion letter aims at convincing customers. Additional purpose of such a letter is continuation of communication. Bhatia (1993) explains the genre definition of Swales (1981, 1985 and 1990) in the following words:

'Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. . . the genre is primarily characterized by the communicative purpose(s) that it is intended to fulfil. This shared set of communicative purpose(s) shapes the genre and gives it an internal structure. Any major change in the communicative purpose(s) is likely to give us a different genre; however minor changes or modifications help us distinguish sub-genres' (p. 13).

The discussion on communicative purpose, moves and strategies shows that genres are defined by their main communicative purpose and additional purposes. Moves and strategies contribute towards overall communicative purpose.

Literature Review

Genre analysis approach is frequently cited in academic research in the field of sociolinguistics. Many studies have been conducted on wedding invitations. It is important that the receivers of the wedding invitation cards should understand the communication in the cards. Clynes and Henry (2004) conducted a study for this purpose, dividing the respondents into two groups and noting their responses as recipients of wedding communication. The results showed varied responses of the two groups. Al-Ali (2006) carried out a study on 200 Arabic wedding invitation cards. The study highlighted in total eight mandatory and non-mandatory generic features that were compulsory components of Jordanian wedding invitation cards. Sharif and Yarmohammadi (2013) studied 70 wedding invitation cards of Iran. The main goal of the study was to explore the patterns of wedding invitation cards, in which they highlighted seven generic moves used by Iranians while articulating the text in their wedding invitation cards.

Sawalmeh (2014) investigated wedding invitation cards of two most prominent religions of Jordanian society: Islam and Christianity. His main focus was to highlight the differences and similarities in the wedding invitation cards of Muslims and Christians. The results showed that the followers of both the religions were somehow similar in communicating wedding invitations. The study reveals that the followers of both the religions have used quotations and verses from their Holy Books.

Rohana, Thani and Kauang (2017) examined the cards of three different ethnic communities: Malay, Chinese and Indians. They collected 30 wedding invitation cards of these communities from year 2000 onwards. The results shows that these communities have adopted modernism in every aspect and their native cultures are less frequently depicted in the invitations. However, to some extent, only Malay community could maintain their basic traditions and encourage their culture and traditions in composing and designing wedding invitations.

Yasmin, Naseem and Sohail (2019) conducted a study on 50 wedding invitation cards to explore how generic structures and cultural values shaped the Pakistani wedding invitations. They compared Pakistani wedding invitations with British wedding invitations. The findings suggested that wedding invitation cards in Urdu consisted of seven mandatory moves and one optional move; and English invitations consisted of six mandatory moves and one optional move.

The goal of this research was to analyze the move patterns of wedding invitation cards and to find the impact of social and cultural values that shape the construction of wedding invitation cards. This study also highlights the norms embedded in Pakistani traditions, family life and cultural practices which impact the construction of invitation cards.

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The History of Wedding Invitations in Pakistan:

In most of Asian cultures, wedding is a serious matter. Pakistan is a country where Islam is regarded as a basic code of life. A wedding ceremony in Pakistan is not only a part of cultural norms but also a part of Islamic teachings. There are many traditions and Quranic verses which encourage, support and promote marriages in Muslim society.

Families in Pakistan have been using different ways of inviting people to weddings. In the past when the services of printing press were not accessible and affordable for common folks, people used to employ barbers to travel on foot and invite people for the wedding ceremony. Barbers used to take a written invitation note on which time, venue and date were mentioned. Besides, some families used to send a colored thread (especially red and yellow) to inform people about the dates of a series wedding events. The recipients of the thread would put knots on the thread circulated among relatives and friends as tokens of acknowledgement. But this thread-tradition prevailed in some parts of the Punjab in Pakistan. Some families used to send letters to inform about wedding ceremonies to their relatives and friends living in other cities and countries. After the availability of printing press, wedding communication changed and people started using printed cards or papers. In the 1930s and 1940s, some wedding invitations were written in Persian or Persian script, as figure 3 shows:
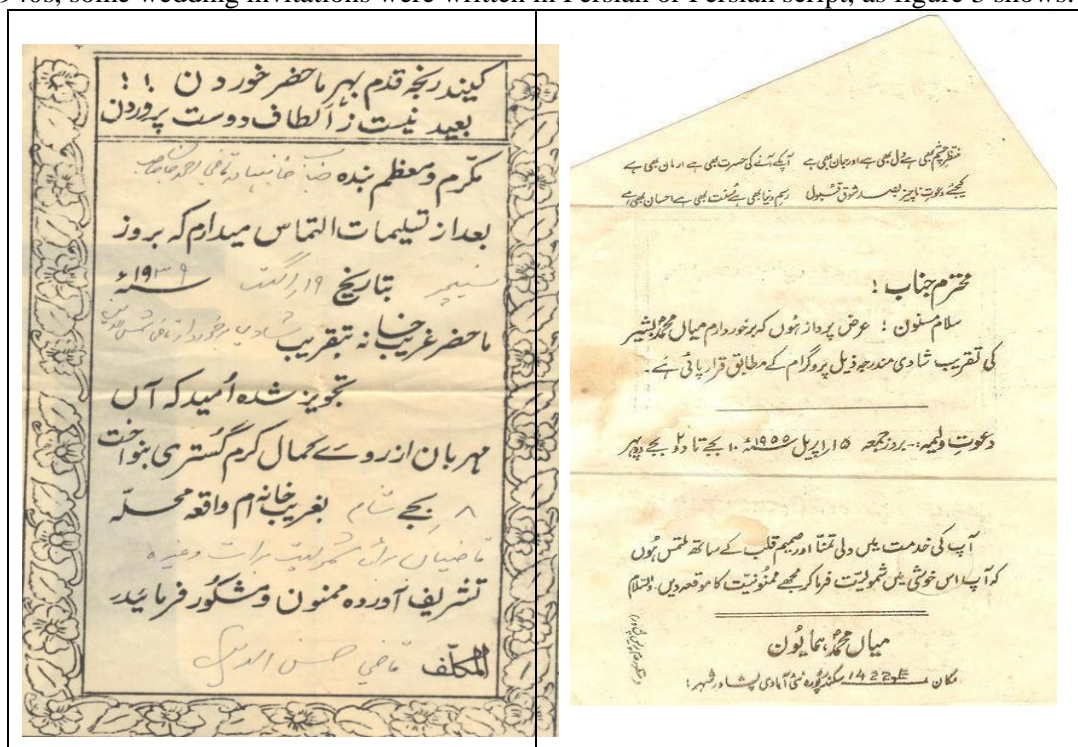

Figure 3. Wedding Invitations in 1930s & 1940s
Retrieved May 1, 2021, from
https://www.facebook.com/QissaKhwani/photos/pcb.1908791222587081/1908789202587283/

The invitation on the left in figure 3 in Persian script reads "Please, bless our meal with your presence". "Bring yourself to our meal, for nourishing friendship amongst us." The invitation is surrounded with a framework of flowers. The wedding invitation on the right in figure 3 is in Urdu language and begins with Urdu poetry requesting the presence of guests in the wedding. To understand special forms and formats of Pakistani wedding cards, it is pertinent to know about the native Pakistani context, social norms and practices that help in the development of such important cultural and religious ceremonies and institutions.

In the beginning of a wedding process in Pakistani culture, a proposal comes from man's side. The proposal is sent to bride's family through someone who is close to the family. After the acceptance of the proposal, the ceremony of engagement is performed where a couple exchanges rings and families of the two individuals meet and get to know each other. After deciding date, time and venue, the families of couples start inviting people for wedding. Various ceremonies are held to mark the development of a wedding. There are three mandatory events of Pakistani wedding, Mehndi (tradition of putting Henna on Brides hand and feet), Barat (groom's wedding procession escorted by

his family and relatives) and Valima (meal offered by the groom after a bride arrives at groom's home). For all these three events, invitation cards are different and are selected according to the consent and consultations of the families involved. The wedding invitation cards are mostly paper-based but there can be invitation cards made of metals and cloth. In Pakistan, the words 'wedding invitations' and 'wedding invitation cards' are used interchangeably. The colors, text, languages (national, regional or foreign), texture and semiotic features are used to signify and reflect the social status, taste and social contacts of the senders. Thus, the wedding invitation cards in Pakistan contain rich linguistic, cultural, semiotic and communicative contents. Therefore, it is important that they should be studied systematically. When the researchers decided to study the cards, a number of research questions emerged. Thus, the current study attempted to find the answers of following questions.

1.   What linguistics and semiotics features are incorporated in wedding invitation cards?
2.   How are Pakistani wedding cards influenced by cultural factors?
3.   What kind of differences and similarities can be observed in Pakistani Urdu and English wedding invitation cards?

Research Methodology
In this research, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyze data. The genre-move analysis framework used in this research is based on insights given by Swales (1990). Each of these moves has a specific function to fulfill and thereby conveys the overall communicative purpose of the Pakistani wedding invitation cards. A comparison has been made to find differences and similarities in the generic components of Urdu and English Pakistani wedding invitation cards.

Population and Sample of the study
A sample of 60 wedding invitation cards printed during 2015-2021 was selected for analysis. The selected cards were collected from different parts of the city of Hasilpur, District Bahawalpur, Pakistan. These cards were collected from the researchers' friends, families and colleagues through random sampling. A similar study by Yasmin, Naseem and Sohail (2019) was based on 50 wedding invitation cards.

Research Setting
This research was carried out in Hasilpur, a city of Bahawalpur district. The city of Hasilpur is around 101 km away from the city of Bahawalpur. It was named after Nawab Hasil Khan. Hasilpur tehsil houses Head Islam, a headworks on the River Sutlej. Agriculture and livestock are the two main sources of income of people in Hasilpur. This part of Southern Punjab has a large number of cotton processing industrial units.

Data Analysis
This study focuses on move pattern and influence of socio-cultural and religious values on wedding invitation cards. The analysis of move structure highlighted seven obligatory and one optional move as shown in table 1. Eight moves include: opening in the name of Allah, greetings, stating host's name with title and caste, announcing the wedding ceremony with a phrase or statement, introducing the names of bride and groom, asking guests for their company in ceremony, naming other important members of the family and talking about the events of wedding. These move patterns were observed in both 'Barat' and Reception invitations card.

Findings
Move structure of wedding invitation cards
Table 1: Moves found in Pakistani wedding invitations in Urdu and English and their functions

Moves	Function in card	Frequency in English cards	Frequency in Urdu cards
Move 1. Opening: In the name of Allah	This move serves the function of starting wedding invitation cards with Quranic verses, quotation or Hadith.	85%	98%
Move 2. Greetings (optional)	This move is optional. It is used to send blessings and prayers	45%	60%
Move 3. Stating host's name with title and caste	This move describes the name of sender which is mentioned with full name and caste of the host.	60%	95%

Move 4. Announcing the wedding ceremony with a phrase or statement	This move announces the wedding with phrases and statements.	60%	94%
Move 5. Introducing the names of bride and groom	This move is used to tell the names of individuals who are getting married.	60%	96%
Move 6. Asking guests for their company in ceremony	This move tells receivers about the participants of wedding ceremony. It requests the invited participants to attend and remain in the wedding ceremony.	75%	96%
Move 7. Naming other important members of the family	This move tells receivers about the other important members of family like Uncles (paternal, Maternal) Brothers and Cousins.	90%	97%
Move 8. Telling about the events of wedding	This move describes the events' details like location, date, time and day.	88%	89%
Others	Like contacts number and home addresses.	88%	90%

Opening: *In the name of Allah*:

The very first line of the card is an opening line that introduces the wedding with Quranic verses, hadith, or Quotation. It is a mandatory move. It appears on the top center of both English and Urdu wedding invitation cards with different calligraphy, font and size style. It was observed that 90% of opening lines of wedding invitations cards in English and 93% of Urdu invitation cards were based on 'Bismillah'. This move is printed with different ink colors which makes it prominent. The font size of this move varied in each card. The frequent use of Quranic verses and traditional phrases shows senders' adherence to Islam. The communicative purpose of this move is to protect couple from evil eyes. Muslims start this important event in the name of Allah. In other studies of Muslims and non-Muslims societies, similar conclusions were made. (Momani and Al-Refaei 2010 and Sadri 2014).

Greetings (optional):

The second move which is found in many cards is 'Assalam-o-Alaikum' sending blessings and prayers to the receivers of the cards. It was noted that only 10% of the cards of the English language were having this move. But, in Urdu cards, 84% of the cards were having this greeting move. Urdu cards mostly have used greetings after the opening lines.

Stating host's name with title and Caste

It is a mandatory move observed on the top center of the card. It tells the name of a host. The invitations are issued by the father of a groom or a bride . The invitaion carries the name of male head of the family whether he is alive or no more in this world (without mentioining mother's real names). This concealment of real name of the mother is in accordance with religious and cultural norms in Pakistan where people don't like to mention names of their women publically. The names are followed by descriptions of their castes,professions and social titles such as *Hajji , Mian , Malik, Master* and *Chauduhary*. In the Arabian context, as shown in the studies of Al-Ali (2006) ; Al-Zubaidi (2017); Sawalmeh (2015), the names are substituted with tribal names. In English invitation cards , 'Mr. And Mrs.' are frequently used instead of cultural titles.

Announcing the Wedding Ceremony with a Phrase or Statement:

This is a mandatory move. The communicative function of this move is to announce that the couple is going to get married. The results of this move analysis showed that people who selected English language used simple and starightforward phrases to invite guests. But, people who selected Urdu language, chose poetic language and phrases to annouce the wedding.

Introducing the names of bride and groom:

The communicative purpose of this move is to introduce the names of bride and groom. It is a mandatory move. The names are written in different colors in bold form and the font size is large. The distinctive feature observed in this move in English invitations created by the groom's family rarely mentioned the name of the bride on invitations. But in Urdu cards issued from the bride's family mentioned groom's name first, rather than mentioning the name of their own daughter. The name of bride is rarely mentioned on invitations and most of the time it is substituted with honorific name such

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as "Our Loving Daughter" etc.   This feature was found in wedding invitations in Arabic language, as pointed by Al-Ali (2006). The observed frequency of mentioning only the name of groom was 60% in English cards and 96 % in Urdu cards.

Asking guests for their company in ceremony

This move is an important part of the wedding invitation cards. It requests the presence of the guests in the wedding. It is a mandatory move. In Urdu cards, different phrases are used to request the presence of guests. In English cards, only simple statements are used (like 'we cordially invite you to the wedding of our beloved son or daughter') to invite people. This move also explained how many members of a family were invited on the wedding. It is clearly mentioned with their names on the cards either they are invited with the whole family or only the specifically mentioned person is invited. This move was observed 97 % in English cards and 43% in Urdu cards.

Naming other elder and younger relatives

This move is a mandatory part of wedding invitation cards. In most of the cards, it appeared on the left side of the invitation written in a small font. The names of elder members of family are mentioned under the heading 'VIP' or "looking forward', as shown in figure 4. It means that the elders are looking forward to the arrival of guests. This move also shows how Hasilpurian families are connected and the marriage is not between two people; but it also involves the other elder relatives of couple, who partake in the wedding to make it successful. The names of younger family members are found only on Henna cards. The frequency of this move was 70% in English cards and 60% in Urdu cards.

Telling about the details of the Wedding Ceremonies

In Pakistan weding ceremonies can be very elaborate. This is the last mandatory move which was found in the sample examined--Hasilpurian wedding invitations.The analysis of the data showed that most of the people preferred Thursday or Friday and evening time for the event of Henna. The mentioned frequency of this move also confirmed it. The location of Henna event was usually the residence of the couple . Its frquency was observed 94 % in English cards and 97% in Urdu cards. In the light of data, Friday and Saturday were the most commonly chosen days for the event of Barat and Sunday for the reception. Friday is a sacred day in Islamic countries and Saturday is usually preffered because of the weekend. Majority of the peeople are available on this day and can attend weddings conveniently. The analysis showed that in 87% of the English cards and and 67 % of the Urdu cards, the procession of Barat was to be welcomed at the wedding hall   . So majority of the people hosted reception in wedding halls and the rest of the people chose their own home or residence for the reception party. The date and timing of the events varied in each cards. Mostly, the event of 'Barat' or 'Recption' were held in daytime. Only 2% senders of English invitaions welcomed barat and hosted reception in the evening.

Other Notifications:

Another feature which was observed in the wedding invitation cards was contact numbers of the senders and complete home addresses. Another unique feature that is frequently seen in Hasilpurian cards was the contact number and name of the printing industry for advertisement.

Semiotics Features

Malmkjaer (2000) argues that 'semiotics is the study of signs and linguistics can be seen as that sub-discipline of semiotics which is particularly concerned with the nature of the linguistic sign' (p.465). Thus, on the basis of this categorization of linguistic and non-linguistic signs, linguistics, since it represents only limited types of signs, is a branch of linguistics. Semiotics has a wider domain and encompasses the world of sights and sounds in its studies. Wright (2006) argues that shapes, colors, gestures and behaviors can be regional and universal discourses. For instance, Ferguson, (1980) has discussed signs and symbols used in Christian art. Such signs and symbols are actually belief-specific. Wright (2006) further underlines that 'marketers and advertisers use semiotics extensively both as a complement to and a substitute for language' (p. 174). These definitions can be applied to wedding Invitations as well. Warren (2009) argues that with regard to photographs, 'semiotic analysis involves identifying 'signs' contained in the picture, and determining what they signify. Importantly, what is signified in this process is culturally determined and consequently can tell us a lot about the ideologies and assumptions of both producer and audience' (p.570). The current study revealed that Hasilpurian cards were designed and decorated with different colors. The writing style of each card is different, font size varied from one card to another and some people also used calligraphy in their

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invitations. The quality of cards varied according to the status of the family. The research found out that use of clip art of groom and bride sitting on a chair was frequently used. The cards frequently showed a man with a drum, horses and a carriage and women holding henna plates. Furthermore, architectural glimpses of Asian and Muslim architecture were also shown in some of the cards. The said images were used to describe the events. Almost all other studies (Al-Zubaidi, 2017; Sharif & Yarmohammadi, 2013) have referred to different images according to their culture such as images of rings, hearts, dove, roses, bells and snaps of bride or groom on invitation. In Pakistani wedding invitations, special stripes, threads and drawings were used to illustrate the event of wedding like on henna ceremony drawings of women were used which showed that henna event in Pakistan was especially for women. A man beating a drum and a horse with a carriage show that in Pakistani society groom has to bring carriage for bride and picture of a man with a drum is used to portray the celebrations planned and arranged by the groom's family.

Socio- Cultural influence on Hasilpurian wedding invitation cards:

Our human identities (race, culture, ethnicity, class and color) remain with us wherever we express ourselves and in whatever mode we express ourselves (Spencer, 2006). The following paragraphs discuss some of the socio-cultural factors which influence the wedding invitation cards.

Gender Influence or Religious Norm?

The data analysis on a surface level shows that Hasilpurian society seems to be 'a male-dominated society' where males are given more importance than females, from a 'purely' feministic perspective. However, this could be part of cultural norms in Pakistan where a good number of women observe hijab and their names are not mentioned publicly. Male-domination is associated with culture and convention. It has got nothing to do with the religion. 'Hijab' is associated with the religion. Move 5 (announcing the name of bride and groom) and move 3 (where host's name is stated), clearly showed adherence to the religious norm. It was observed that people preferred to use names of male members of the families and mentioned them on the invitations. They skipped female names if it was possible and used honorific names such as "Loving daughter" or 'Wife of…'and 'Mr & Mrs……' However, in invitation cards, for henna ceremony, names of girls and women belonging to the family of the 'would- be' couple are mentioned because henna cards were meant only for female members of the families involved. Thus, Wedding invitations in Pakistan do give space to female names as well.
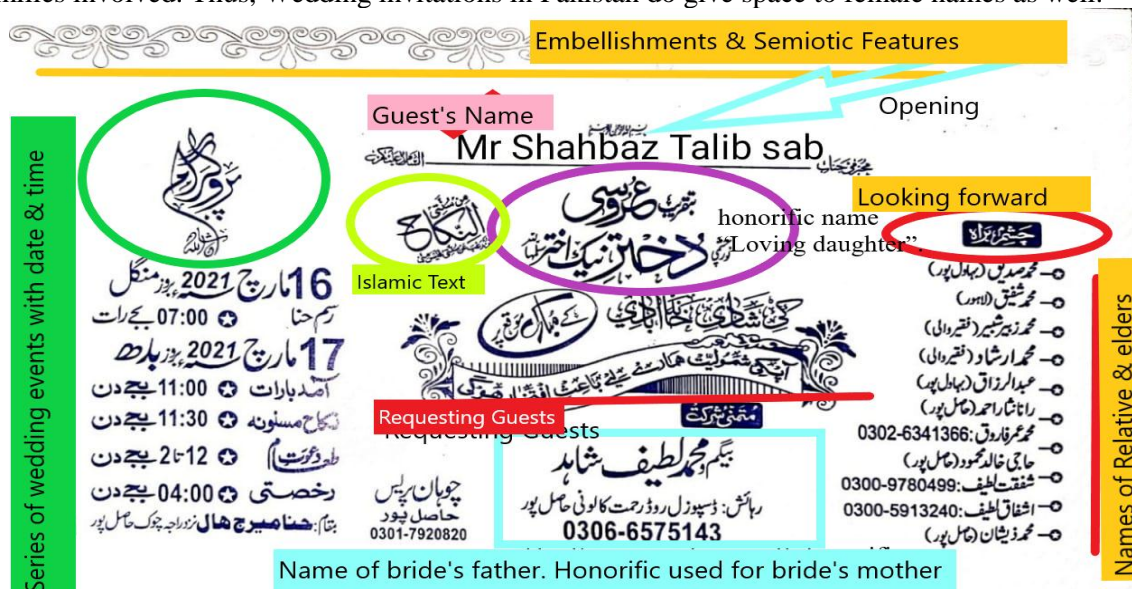

Figure 4: A Wedding Invitation in Urdu with Different Moves Identified.

Figure 4 shows all the eight moves: opening, greetings, host's name, announcing ceremony, honorific words for bride and her mother and name of the groom, requesting guests, naming important members of the family and giving details of the wedding events.

Designation, Family and Caste system:

In Hasilpur, since it is surrounded by villages, it was observed that people were very conscious about their caste and titles. In villages castes and tribes are taken as chief tokens of people's identity. The study revealed that people preferred to marry in their own family if it is not possible, they chose only the same-caste family. This showed that Hasilpurian society was proud of their castes and family.

Move 3 (where host's name is stated) and move 5 (where bride's and groom's names are announced) explicitly countenanced this dictum. Mentioning elderly relatives reflects that Hasilpurian people have strong connections with their family ancestors. This feature showed that not only the parents of the marrying individuals but other relatives also were treated as important participants of the weddings.

Religious impact on the construction of wedding invitation cards in Hasilpur

Pakistan is a country which was established in 1947 for the implementation of Islamic laws and principles. People have strong association with the religion. Muslims use Arbaic words *Insha Allah* and *Alhumdulliah* frequently in their conversation. It was also obseverd that 40% of the invitations in English and 84% invitations in Urdu used these words . The results showed that Hasilpurian cards were highly influenced by religion through which they used to seek blessings from Allah and to give their blessings to the marrying individuals.

Comparison of Urdu and English cards of Hasilpur

It seems that in Pakistan, English wedding invitations are used by the elite class or those people who want to associate themselves with the elite class. Rich people living in the cities or people graduating from universities and having high-profile jobs and high-profile contacts prefer to wedding invitations in English. This analysis revealed that only a few moves were different in Urdu and English invitations. The rest of the moves were the same. Urdu invitation cards were mostly issued by the people of the nearby villages. These Urdu cards examined were low in quality that revealed the poor economic status of the senders. The Urdu cards used poetry, proverbs and slightly poetic language. The senders opted fancy cards embellished with beads, stone and dark colors. English invitations were good in quality but they used simple and direct statements.

Conclusion

A wedding in Pakistani cultures is not a simple affair. It involves a series of steps, stages and ceremonies. One of those steps is sending printed invitations to friends and relatives. The genre of wedding invitations fuses together linguistic, cultural and sociological aspects. The study investigated the use of invitation discourse in wedding context of Pakistani culture. The linguistic analysis of the wedding invitations showed that the invitations were built on seven mandatory and one optional move. Generally, the purposes of these moves were to inform the guests about the time, date and venue of wedding ceremonies. The occurrence and sequence of moves varied from one card to another. The observed frequency of mandatory moves such as opening in the name of God / Allah was 60% in English Cards and 98% in Urdu cards and naming other important members of the family was 90% in English cards and 97% in Urdu cards. The explicit reference to professional and social titles (written in bold with different font sizes) highlighted the status of couples in society. Furthermore, the linguistic choices used in different communicative moves reflected religious practices of people such as the use of different Arabic words, 'Alhamdulillah', 'Insha'Allah', and title 'Hajji'. Though, communicative purpose was the main purpose of the wedding invitation genre, there were other additional purposes such as imparting aesthetic pleasure to the receivers and showing off sender's status, wealth and class. This is why the designers of the invitations had used different semiotics features like drawings, calligraphy and writing style, which had not only communicated the messages but also made the invitations eye-catching, engaging and attractive. In this way, the small wedding invitations reflected intricacies of human mind, behavior and social conventions. In short, the wedding invitations are capsules which contain information about diverse aspects of Pakistani culture and society. Similar findings were reported by Yasmin, Naseem and Sohail (2019) who concluded in their study that 'cultural and religious discourses were quite dominant in Pakistani wedding cards. Pakistanis considered religion as a code of life' (p.367). This is why some Pakistani wedding invitations in English begin with

> *Marriages are settled in heaven but celebrated on earth.*
> *The sacred unit of two unknown souls is written by birth.*

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