



## Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Acts and Politeness in Urdu and English Short Stories

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**ABSTRACT:** *Politeness is culture specific and the degree of politeness can be observed well through the use of speech acts which are governed by social conventions. The present study aims to explore the cross-cultural differences and similarities in the use of politeness strategies as manifested in the literary works of two female writers from Urdu and English backgrounds. To achieve this purpose two Urdu short stories by Hajra Masroor and two English short stories by Katherine Mansfield are chosen. In this study the descriptive qualitative method is applied and the data is analyzed according to Searle's five categories of Speech Acts. Since politeness is studied through the use of speech acts in the given stories, it reveals that speech acts there are no marked differences between Urdu and English short stories. Nonetheless, it is the analysis of functions/illocutionary forces of those speech acts which offers a contrastive perspective to look into cultural and social orientations. The study concludes that there are differences in cultural norms, attitudes and cultural assumptions that bring in the specific differences in the observance of politeness between different languages, and also the use of speech acts reflect the degree of politeness which varies in quantity and type from one writer to another and hence from one language to another giving deeper insights into their cultures.*

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**Keywords:** Cross-cultural study, politeness, speech acts, illocutionary forces, short stories

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### Introduction

Language is a tool in our daily life which is used to interact, to convey messages, to communicate ideas, feelings and viewpoints, promise and request. In every culture people have their unique ways of using language to perform actions and these distinct ways reflect their cultural values and attitudes. Politeness is culture Language instantiates culture and situates us in the society we live in; it also helps create and determine our position in a range of social networks and environments. When using language we are performing a kind of action called 'speech acts' such as apology, invitation, complaint, compliment specific and the degree of politeness can

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be observed well through the use of speech acts. Since politeness is a culturally bound concept there is variability in the use of politeness strategies among different cultures. There are differences in cultural norms, attitudes and cultural assumptions that bring in the specific differences in speech acts between different languages, as Kalisz contends “Various speech acts have different linguistic realizations in different cultures” (1993 p. 107). Speech acts are significant in revealing the observance of politeness strategies and the level of acceptance in certain cultures.

The study of politeness and speech acts is a growing field in cross-cultural pragmatics and is now considered one of its sub-disciplines. Politeness is a pragmatic phenomenon that “lies not in the form and words themselves but in their function and intended social meaning” (Cutting, 2002 p. 51). Speech act theory allows us to look beneath the surface of discourse to establish the function of what is said. In this way, it helps explaining speakers’ use of language to accomplish desired goals and the way hearers deduce and understand intended meaning from the verbal action of speakers.

The present paper explores cross-cultural differences and similarities with regard to the use of speech acts and politeness as manifested in the literary works of two female writers from Urdu and English backgrounds. To achieve this purpose two Urdu short stories by Hajra Masroor *Raakh*<sup>1</sup> and *Charaghki Lan*<sup>2</sup> and two English short stories, *Bliss* and *The Garden Party* by Katherine Mansfield are chosen.

The prime purpose of this study is to make a comparison of the linguistic expression of politeness through speech acts and to identify the cultural differences as reflected in the speech of the characters and thereby the degree of politeness practiced and accepted in the cultures under study. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What kinds of speech acts are found in the stories, what are their illocutionary forces and what do these imply in the context of the selected stories?
2. Are there any significant differences in the use of speech acts and their illocutionary forces in the selected stories, if any what are they and how do they reflect the degree of politeness?

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<sup>1</sup> Ashes

<sup>2</sup> The light of a lamp

## **Literature Review**

A brief introduction of the selected authors is important to understand the significance of their literary works as explored in the analysis section.

Hajra Masroor was born on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1930, and died on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012. She is a Pakistani feminist writer and has written several collections of short stories. She raised questions relevant to social, political, legal, and economic rights for women in her stories. Her characterization is subtle and she has successfully depicted the miseries of poverty in general and of women in particular. Her stories present an avid reflection of Pakistani society of the twentieth century.

Katherine Mansfield was born in 1888 in Wellington, New Zealand. Mansfield writes about the lives of the middle-class women, as in the selected story 'Bliss' which is written from a woman's perspective which was unique for her time period. Mansfield's work also presents the young (usually female) protagonist learning about the world, of the complexities and the darker side of life and human nature. Laura in "The Garden Party" not only confronts death but also learns about its reality as well as the triviality of social norms. The theme of class distinctions in the short story depicts the society and the context in which it was written. "The Garden Party" was written in 1922, a time of Marxist movements throughout Europe. Mansfield explores class structure and human insensitivities; Laura is considered absurd and her attitude ridiculous when she asks for the reasoning behind class distinctions.

### ***Language, Culture and Politeness***

Various theories have been proposed on the notion of politeness, most notably by Goffman (1967), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987). Since politeness is a culturally defined concept, there is variability in the use of politeness strategies among different cultures. Politeness involves mutual relationships and thereby linguistic politeness implies the most appropriate speaker addressee relationships. Linguistic politeness is used in conversation in order to express concern for the feelings and desires of one's interlocutors and to maintain interpersonal relationships. Politeness in language also helps to comply with socio-cultural rules and norms of what is considered as appropriate behavior. (Van Olmen, D., 2017). Politeness strategies can be seen as a way of encoding distance between interlocutors (Grundy, 2000). A linguistic interaction is essentially a social interaction

involving social norms, etiquette and “a number of different general principles for being polite within a culture (Yule, 1996 p.60).

A number of researchers have used speech act theory as an insightful tool for analyzing politeness and discourse. The growing area of research in pragmatics deals with intercultural and cross-cultural aspects of languages in use. Many researchers focused on the use of speech acts by second language learners in second language pragmatics (Barron 2003; Rose 2005 and Cohen 2008 cited in O’Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs, 2011). The significant research in this area is the “Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project”, the project focused on cultural variation in two speech acts i.e. requests and apologies. Discourse-Completion Task (DCT) was used as a tool to gather data from both natives and non native speakers (O’Keeffe, et al. 2011, p.107).

Some of the researchers who have studied the phenomenon of politeness cross culturally through the use of speech acts include Holtgraves and Yang (1990) who explored the “Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Request Strategies and Inferences Based on their Use”; the findings from the study suggest that interlocutors relative distance, power and position affect the way remarks are perceived and understood. Michael Haugh (2005) studied “The Importance of “Place” in Japanese Politeness” to understand politeness phenomenon in Japanese Culture; Shams and Afghari (2011) studied “Effects of Culture and Gender in Comprehension of Speech Acts of Indirect Request” among Iranian male and female participants through quantitative method; The results from the study show that culture affects the interpretation of Indirect speech acts, however, gender does not. Sattar and Farnia (2014) conducted a “Cross-Cultural Study of Request Speech Act in Iraqi and Malay students”; the results demonstrate more similarities and less differences in the way the subjects use mitigation devices such as apologies, compliments and gratitude to achieve their goals in different situations. Babaie and Shahrokhi (2015) examined Speech Acts of advice by Iranian EFL Learners.

In his posthumously published book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), J. L. Austin extended his systematic theory of utterances as human action. A number of subsequent works have tried to systematize this approach including J.R Searle (1969) who classified speech acts into five main types. The basis of a speech act is the speaker’s intention to affect the hearer in a desired way, for that matter “Speech act is an action performed by the use of an utterance to communicate” (Yule, 1996 p.47). People speak differently in different societies and communities, not only do

the languages they speak differ, but also their ways of using language are different. These differences indicate different cultural values, which often become the cause of communication failure between individuals and social groups. There are some speech acts which are culture specific while many others are universal. Asking questions, issuing orders and making assertions are universal while greetings and blessings are culture specific.

Speech act theory was applied in the interpretation of literary texts from the late 1970s; such application is devoted primarily to drama due to the centrality of dialogue in this genre. However, analyzing speech acts in the narrative also offers new insights. Research exploring the use of speech acts in literary works include Altikriti (2011) "Speech Act Analysis to Short Stories", Kadhem (2008) "Politeness Theories in Conversations with Special Reference to Cather's Short Story", and "On the Gulls' Road" etc.

The current study looks into the speech acts to investigate how characters from different cultures employ certain politeness strategies in their interactions as depicted by two female writers.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The study follows the mixed method research paradigm; the primary data for this paper consist of the short stories listed earlier. Keeping within the objectives of the study only the utterances of the characters are analyzed by applying mainly the descriptive qualitative method. Surakhmad (1994) argues that in the descriptive method the researcher makes use of "the technique of searching, collecting, classifying, analyzing the data, interpreting them and finally drawing the conclusion" (cited in Mudzakir, 2013). The quantitative method is also used to support the findings and therefore data is quantified by collecting it through quantitative means.

It is important to mention that complete utterances are enumerated in the form of tables under selected categories; however the qualitative section includes only selective examples of the utterances due to the length constraints, yet complete utterances can be found in the Appendix section. Inner thoughts, monologues and narrator's description or illustrations are not taken in for analysis. As the purpose of this research is to account for the actions performed via utterances i.e., speech acts

and to analyze their illocutionary force<sup>3</sup> in order to determine the degree of politeness. After thorough reading of the stories under study, the speech acts are identified and classified under different categories, and then their illocutionary forces are realized and tabulated.

To examine the observance of politeness, Searle's five categories of speech acts are compared with the given functions Competitive, Convivial, Collaborative and Conflictive adopted from Kadhem (2008, pp. 39-40). The assertive and responding illocution coincide with the collaborative function, as it does not work as imposition rather a proposition, a response or suggestion which does not maximize cost to others in Leech's terms. The following table illustrates these functions associated with the speech acts observed in the present data. This helps understand how the analysis of the speech acts lead to understand politeness in the selected short stories.

Table 1

*Speech Acts and their Functions*

Speech Acts	Illocutionary forces		Functions	
Representative/ Declarative	Assertive responding		collaborative function	
Expressive	thanking congratulating admiring	mocking, abusing disapproving	Convivial	conflictive
Commissive	Promises	Threatening	convivial	conflictive
Directive	requesting	ordering, questioning	convivial	conflictive

***Rationale for the Sample Selection***

The authors of the selected short stories are female, contemporaries, 20<sup>th</sup> century writers dealing with the prevailing issues of their society in that time period.

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<sup>3</sup> Speaker's intention in producing the utterance

Though living in different cultures they deal with similar themes. The selected stories mainly consist of dialogues. This makes them helpful in studying speech acts, and they present similar issues of women identity, class distinctions, poverty, infidelity etc.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The data is analyzed according to Searle's five categories of Speech Acts as found in Niazi & Gautum, 2010. To examine the observance of politeness, Searle's five categories of speech acts are compared with the given functions i.e. Competitive, Convivial, Collaborative and Conflictive adopted from Kadhem (2008, pp. 39-40). These categories are adopted in the study according to the five classes of speech acts proposed by Searle which are as follows:

1. Representatives

“Representatives are Speech Acts that have a truth-value, statements of fact, assertions and descriptions are included in it.”

2. Expressives

“Expressive are speech acts that tell about the feelings of the speaker e.g. pain, pleasure, likes, dislikes etc.”

3. Directives

“Directives are attempts to get the hearer to do something, for example commands, orders, requests etc.”

4. Commissives

“Commissive are speech acts that commit the speaker to some future course of action such as promise, pledge, threat etc”.

5. Declaratives

“Declaratives are speech acts that change the world via their utterance. In order for declarations to be performed appropriately, the speaker must have a special institutional role in a specific context”. (Niazi & Gautum, 2010 pp. 206-207)

The choice of Searle's five categories helps in identifying the speech acts and their functions to understand cross-cultural differences in observing politeness, and

also in examining how these female writers have depicted the social and cultural issues of their times in their short stories.

### **Data Analysis**

Understanding of the literary works is dependent upon the cultural context in which they are produced. Despite being produced in different socio cultural contexts, the stories under analysis share similar themes of class distinctions, discrimination, women's identity and infidelity. The authors belong to the same time period and are contemporaries; though living in different cultures they both have dealt with similar themes.

First Urdu short stories are presented and analyzed followed by English short stories for comparative study. After tabulating and analyzing the speech acts from each story individually, a comparison of both kinds of stories is done in the Discussion section.

### ***Presentation and Analysis of the Data of Urdu Short Story: Raakh***

A summary of each story is important to understand the significance of the speech acts and their illocutionary forces presented in this section. The data is classified and tabulated followed by analysis of the stories.

#### ***Summary of Raakh***

In *Raakh* the hypocrisy resulting from narrow confinements of family systems and societal conventions is shown. It is a story of a middle class family where two contrastive personalities of sisters are shown. The younger sister smokes in hiding and the elder one while putting on the garb of being pious and virgin has an affair with a man, in whom her sister is also interested. The younger sister is tired of the restrictions imposed by her elder sister. It is only at the end that she catches her elder sister who while breaking all her made up rules was meeting her lover in the absence of the family.

#### ***Classification of Speech Acts & Illocutionary Forces***

The given table enumerates the frequency of speech acts found in the short story "Raakh" and their illocutionary forces.

Total No. of speech Acts: 69

Table 2

*Directive and Representative Speech Acts*

Directive Speech Acts: 26      38%					Representative Speech Acts:17      24%	
Questioning	Ordering	Directing	Calling	responding	Assertive	Responding
13	10	1	1	1	14	3

Table 3

*Expressive Speech Acts*

Expressive Speech Acts: 23      33%													
Surprise	Mocking	Admiring	Taunting	Annoyance	Showing pain	Abusing	Condemning	Disapproving	Disliking	Making fun	refusing	Scolding	questioning
1	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	2	1	1

Table 4

*Commissive Speech Acts*

Commissive Speech Acts: 3      4%	
Promise	Threatening
1	2

***Analysis of Raakh***

This section contains selective examples of speech acts from the story and the illocutionary forces that those speech acts imply in the given context.

### *Directive speech acts*

The analysis of the text *Raakeb* reveals the dominant use of directive speech acts with 26 instances that represents 38% out of the total number of utterances in the story. In this speech act there are the illocutionary forces of questioning and ordering which are markedly frequent than others as presented in table 1.1.

#### *Example*

- *Chori ki hai?* (Did you steal?)
- *Kya ho ga bhala?* (So what?)

These are some of the instances of directive speech act with questioning illocutionary force. Whereas in the forthcoming example the utterances having illocutionary force of ordering are presented.

#### *Example*

- *Acha idhar talashi tau do kabin bhai jaan ki koi aur cheez tau nahi udha lain.* (Here let me take a search to see you might not have stolen something of my brother.)
- *Ab cigarette jala lao.* (Light up that cigarette now.)
- *Aray zara diyya salai tau de de.* (Oye bring me that match box.)

### ***Expressive Speech Acts***

Expressive speech acts can be rated more common after directives with the frequency of 23 representing 33% of the total. Expressive SAs<sup>4</sup> are interesting in terms of their illocutionary forces as well as carrying cultural overtones which makes them markedly different from their uses in other cultures as could be seen in current study. There is a wide variety of illocutionary forces under expressive SAs ranging from disapproving (5), mocking (4), refusing (2), admiring (2) etc as given in table 1.2.

#### *Example*

“*Ho pakki badmaash*” (You are such a clever punk) mein ne payar se kach kacha ker kaha (I said with gritting teeth). **(admiring cleverness)**

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<sup>4</sup> SAs abbreviated for Speech Acts

- “Ullu, gaddba” (a foolish donkey) mein ne ghusse mein is ke lye naye naye inkashaf shuru ker diyye (I started calling names in anger). **(abusing)**
- “Phir tu keh pagley!” (How dare you say me crazy again) Mein ne issy chirraya (I said mockingly) **(taunting)**
- “Wab ri teri daryaft”(what a discovery) Ruqayya ne aankhein matka ker kaha **(mocking)**

These are some of the examples of Expressive speech acts carrying varied illocutionary forces i.e., speakers’ intentions behind the utterances.

### **Representative Speech Acts**

Representative SAs have the forces of assertion and responding in this story. The number of occurrence is 17 representing 25% of the total.

#### *Example*

- *Deenyat per note tayyar kerrahi hun.* (I’m making a religious note.) **(Assertive)**
- *Wo rakhi hai taaq per beta* (That is up there my child) **(Assertive)**
- *Nahi hai beta kbana pakne ke baad sab angarey bujha diyye thay* (No it’s not there I have blown out the whole fire after cooking food.) **(responding)**

In the first example the narrator asserts about the kind of work she is engaged in, though in reality she is lying. In the second example the cook is making assertion of his knowledge about the world (kitchen), and in the third example he is responding to a query.

### **Commissive Speech Acts**

It is noticed through data analysis that the text has only 3 instances of Commissives as making 4 per cent of the total. It comprises of promise only once and threatening twice.

- *Jab tauba tun Nassu qism ki cheezain nazm karungi tau dekha jaye ga* (It will be seen when I versify things like “The penitence of Nassoh”<sup>5</sup>) **(promise)**
- *Tau phir mein bhi na jaaungi* (Then I also will not go) **(threat)**

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<sup>5</sup> A classic by Deputy Nazir Ahmed

- *Tum sab ki sab hamesha ke lye kanwari reh jao gi* (You would all be left as spinsters forever) **(threat)**

The examples illustrate the varied functions of speech acts as used by the characters in Raakh. Almost all the utterances are by female characters giving deep insights into their language use and the level of politeness in their interactions. Most notably in expressive SAs all the utterances have the function of mocking, taunting and abusing etc. which simultaneously exhibit the prevailing discontent, annoyance and anger among women in the society under study.

### ***Presentation and Analysis of the Data of Urdu Short Story: Charagh ki Lau***

The second Urdu story under analysis is “Charagh ki Lau” a remarkable and thought provoking story dealing with the social issues.

‘Charagh ki Lau’ brings to light the extreme poverty and insensitivity of the upper class who devoid of any humanity are busy in money making and showing off. It is a story of a poor girl and her father who do not have enough oil to even light up their lamp. To the readers’ disappointment the father was unable to arrange for a shroud for his wife, and now is worried about his daughter who, like her mother, is shrinking due to some serious disease. The story presents a dark picture of society.

The data is classified and tabulated followed by analysis of the story.

### ***Classification of Speech Acts & Illocutionary Forces***

The given table enumerates the frequency of speech acts and their illocutionary forces.

Total number of Speech Acts: 22

Table 5

#### *Directive and Representative Speech Acts*

Directive Speech Acts: 7 32%			Representative Speech Acts: 7 32%	
Questioning	Requesting	Asking permission	Assertive	Responding
5	1	1	5	2

Table 6

*Expressive and Commissive Speech Acts*

Expressive Speech Acts: 6 27%				Commissive Speech Acts: 2 9%	
Annoyance	Offering	Sorrow/distr ess	Scolding	Threatening	Promise
1	2	2	1	1	1
Illocutionary forces					

**Analysis of Charagh ki Lau**

This section contains selective examples of speech acts from the story and the illocutionary forces that those speech acts imply in the given context.

***Representative and Directive Speech Acts***

The data analysis of the story show the occurrence of representative and directive speech acts with the same frequency of 7 times representing 32% of the total utterances. Representative SAs have the illocutionary forces of assertive and responding whereas directive SAs reveal three kinds of forces i.e. questioning, requesting and asking permission, and importantly there is no use of ordering as an illocutionary force as is presented in table 2.1.

**Examples:**

- *Kaun hai?* (Who's there?) (**Directive/Questioning**)
- *Kahan thay abba?* (Father, where you had been?) (**Directive/Questioning**)
- *Mein hun Achan.* (I'm there, Achan.) (**Representative/ responding**)
- *Janti hai ke athwaron mein kabin dau pasay kamitti ka tail naseeb hota hai, is per bhi bbeer bbaar mein pairon ka qeema banta hai, kapray phatatay hain...* (You know it's not only too costly to buy a little amount of oil but it also takes a lot of effort, you get your feet minced and clothes torn off.) (**Representative/ assertive**)

### Expressive Speech Acts

There are 6 utterances of Expressive SAs making up 27% of the whole, showing a range of illocutionary forces on the part of speakers in their contexts including annoyance, distress, scolding as well as offering.

#### Examples

- *Ye lau diya salai* (Here, take this matchstick) (**offer**)
- *Tau kya faida aisay ujalay say, dukandar itna tail bhi na diya karey..* (Then what is the use of this dim light, shopkeeper ought not to give that amount of oil too.) (**annoyance**)
- *Chahey roshni na ho!* (May it be no light!) (**distress**)
- *Mera tau ji ultata hai aisay ujalay say.* (Such a light makes me nauseous.) (**distress**)

### Commissive Speech Acts

The data analyzed reveal 2 instances of commissive SAs representing 9 % out of the total. Within this SA two illocutionary forces (promise, threatening) are realized. As in these examples Achan's father promises her in the first place whereas in the second one he makes commissive speech as a threat. Both of these forces show fluctuation in attitudes due to the prevailing conditions.

- *Le ab mein beri nabi piyyon ga* (See I won't take these intoxicants from now on.) (**promise**)
- *Faida waida nabi maloom, bas itna hi tail milay ga ke charagh jalta rahay.* (I don't know whether it's helpful or not, we could get only that much oil which will help light up the lamp.) (**threatening**)

In *Charagh ki Lau* directive and expressive speech acts are significant in terms of their functions, directive SAs carries the function of asking, questioning and not order and expressive SAs bear distress frequently as well as annoyance which point to the misery and helplessness of the characters.

There is no example of declaratives or indirect speech acts in both Urdu short stories. In interpersonal communication directness is a sign of familiarity and closeness, whereas indirectness signals formality, distance, tact and denotes power. In

the analyzed Urdu texts the study of speech acts reveals a great degree of imposition in relations and a considerable degree of lack of politeness in interpersonal relations. In the studied stories imposition is diagnosed on the basis of the frequent use of directives, and lack of politeness is diagnosed based on the absence of indirect speech acts as well as more frequent use of the conflictive functions of SAs as explained in Table 1.

### ***Presentation and Analysis of the Data of English Short Story: The Garden Party***

“The Garden Party” is a story about the insensitivity of the middle-classes. Mansfield paints a precise picture of 20th century middle class lives and their attitudes. The story starts with the Sheridan family making preparations for hosting a garden party. While making arrangements they learn about the sudden death of their working-class neighbor Mr. Scott in an accident, leaving a wife and five children. While Laura insists and tries to convince her mother and sister that the party should be called off, no one agrees. The party went great, and later Mrs. Sheridan asks Laura to take a basket full of leftovers to the Scotts' house. Laura went into the poor neighbors' house wearing the same sparkling dress and hat, and it is upon seeing the widow and the corpse of the dead that she felt ashamed of her hat and dress. She is charmed by the young man, feeling herself captivated by his compelling beauty. The dead man made her to cry her true self and realize that she is more than just a social class.

The data is classified and tabulated followed by analysis of the story.

### **Classification of Speech Acts & Illocutionary Forces**

The given table enumerates the frequency of speech acts and their illocutionary forces.

Total No. of Speech Acts: 167

Table 7

#### *Representative Speech Acts*

<b>Representative Speech Acts: 37 22%</b>				
Assertive	Responding	Informing	Admitting	agreeing

31	3	2	1	1
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Table 8

*Directive Speech Acts*

<b>Directive Speech Acts: 66      40%</b>					
Questioning	Ordering	requesting	Directing	Suggesting	Compulsion
41	14	5	3	1	1

Table 9

*Expressive Speech Acts*

<b>Expressive Speech Acts: 53      32%</b>																							
surprise	excitement	Admiring	Greeting	Annoyance	Informing	Displeasure	Responding	Feeling sorry	Showing obligation	Exasperating	agreeing	Praying	Congratulating	offering	Refusing	Sorrow/distress	Scolding	Showing sympathy	challenging	pleading	Showing love	questioning	thanking
8	3	7	3	4	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	2	1	1	3
Illocutionary forces																							

Table 10

*Commissive and Indirect Speech Acts*

<b>Commissive Speech Acts: 8      5%</b>		<b>Indirect Speech Acts: 3      2%</b>	
Promise	Threatening	requesting	Ordering
5	3	2	1

*Analysis of the Garden Party*

In this section selective examples of speech acts from the story are given with the illocutionary forces that those speech acts imply in the given context.

### ***Directive Speech Act***

Directive SAs are of highest frequency in this story under analysis with 66 instances representing 40% of the total. Directive SAs carry a number of illocutionary forces with questioning as the most frequent and ordering the second in role among others.

Examples:

- *"Forget I am your mother. Treat me as an honoured guest."* **Directive**
- *"You'll have to go, Laura; you're the artistic one."* **Directive**
- *"Bank them up, just inside the door, on both sides of the porch, please,"* said Mrs. Sheridan. **Request**
- *"Mother says you're to wear that sweet hat you had on last Sunday. Good. One o'clock. Bye-bye."* **Compulsion**

### ***Expressive Speech Acts***

The analysis of the text reveals Expressive SAs the second highest in frequency and display the widest range of illocutionary forces in all the stories analyzed. There are 53 instances of Expressive SAs making up 32% of total utterances in text. Following are some of the examples:

Examples:

- *"Oh, I certainly should. One moment - hold the line. Mother's calling."* **Showing obligation**
- *"O-oh, Sadie!"* **annoyance**
- *"Oh, I do, mother."* **agreeing**
- *"Very good, Miss Jose."* **appreciation**
- *"Yes, of course, olive. What a horrible combination it sounds. Egg and olive."* **surprise**
- *"Well, cook, I congratulate you."* **congratulating**
- *"Have one each, my dears,"* said cook in her comfortable voice. *"Yer ma won't know."* **offering**

- "Never a more delightful garden-party ... " "The greatest success ... " "Quite the most ... " **excitement**
- "It was a horrible affair all the same," said Mr. Sheridan. "The chap was married too. Lived just below in the lane, and leaves a wife and half a dozen kiddies, so they say." **showing sympathy**
- "Of course! What's the matter with you to-day? An hour or two ago you were insisting on us being sympathetic, and now--" **reprimanding**
- "Please, please don't disturb her. I - I only want to leave--" **pleading**

### ***Representative Speech Acts***

Representative SAs occur 37 times making up 22% of the total with the functions of assertion, responding, admitting, informing and agreeing.

#### *Example*

- "Yes, isn't it a perfect morning? You're white" **Assertive**
- "The stems will ruin her lace frock," said practical Jose. **Assertive**
- "Yes, it was the most successful party." **Assertive**
- "Mother, a man's been killed," began Laura. **Informing**

### ***Commissive Speech Acts***

There are a few instances of Commissive SAs with the frequency of 8 and representing 5 % of the whole text. Their number is not significant in comparison with other stories. It exhibits only two illocutionary forces of promising 5 times and threatening 3 times.

#### **Examples:**

- "I'm going straight up to tell mother." **Pledge**
- "Do you hear me, children, or shall I have to tell your father when he comes home to-night"? **Threatening**

### **Indirect Speech Acts**

- "If you please, m'm, cook says have you got the flags for the sandwiches?"  
**Indirect request**

- "I say, Laura," said Laurie very fast, "you might just give a squiz at my coat before this afternoon. See if it wants pressing." **Indirect request**

In this story the directives with the function of order and compulsion prevail carrying the undertones of authority and class distinction. There are the examples of indirect speech acts in the story and in expressive SAs the functions are convivial not conflictive which also point to a degree of politeness as observed by the characters in the story.

### ***Presentation and Analysis of the Data of English Short Story: Bliss***

In 'Bliss' the story starts with Bertha Young and her husband Harry throwing a party. Bertha was shown as a happy soul, but innocent and inexperienced one who does not know much about the world around and those closest to her. The story raises a lot of questions, about deceit, insincerity in relationships and about knowing oneself at the start of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The story is about betrayal of her husband, who is having an affair with another woman which Bertha found out at the end destroying her happiness in an instant. The title of this story is significant as it alludes to the sentiment that ignorance is bliss. The story invites the reader to think whether it is best to be ignorant of the truth in order to lead a blissful life or live with the knowledge of a harsh reality.

The data is classified and tabulated followed by analysis of the story.

### ***Classification of Speech Acts & Illocutionary Forces***

The table below describes the frequency of speech acts and their functions.

Total No. of Speech Acts: 112

Table 11

#### *Representative Speech Acts*

<b>Representative Speech Acts: 29    25%</b>			
Assertive	Responding	Informing	Agreeing
20	7	1	1

Table 12

*Directive Speech Acts*

Directive Speech Acts: 30					27%
Questioning	Ordering	Requesting	Directing	forbidding	informing
22	4	1	1	1	1

Table 13

*Expressive Speech Acts*

Expressive Speech Acts: 46																41%
Surprise	Excitement	Admiring	Greeting	Amusing	Informing	Self dispraise	Responding	Showing fright	warning	Acknowledging	compulsion	offering	refusing	Sorrow/distress	Showing love	thanking
8	3	4	3	1	5	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	4

Table 14

*Commissive and Indirect Speech Acts*

Commissive Speech Acts: 6		5%	Indirect Speech Acts: 1		1%
Promise		Informing		Questioning	informing
5		1		1	1

**Analysis of Bliss**

In this section selective examples of speech acts from the story are given with the illocutionary forces that those speech acts imply in the given context.

### ***Expressive Speech Acts***

The study of speech acts in this text shows a significant use of expressive speech acts with the frequency of 46 and 41% of total. It also displays an extensive variety of functions of thanking, surprise, love, self dispraise etc. as could be seen in the following examples:

*Examples:*

- "No, thank you. I can see quite well." **refusing**
- "Oh, I must!" said she. **compulsion**
- "Now I've got you to myself, my little precious". **showing love**
- "I'm too happy—too happy!" she murmured. **excitement**
- "I'm absurd. Absurd!" **self dispraise**
- ". . . Why! Why! Why is the middle-class so stodgy—so utterly without a sense of humour!" **surprise/disdain**

### ***Directive Speech Acts***

Directive SAs are second in role with the frequency of 30 making up 27% of the whole. They include the functions of requesting, forbidding, informing, ordering etc as given in table 4.2.

*Examples:*

- "Shall I turn on the light, M'm?" **requesting**
- "Now, don't excite her after her supper. You know you do, M'm. And I have such a time with her after!" **forbidding**

### ***Representative Speech Acts***

Representative SAs carry the function of assertive, responding, agreeing and informing in this story. There are 29 utterances of this speech act representing 26% of the total.

*Examples:*

- "She's been a little sweet all the afternoon," whispered Nanny. "We went to the park and I sat down on a chair and took her out of the pram and a big

dog came along and put its head on my knee and she clutched its ear, tugged it." **assertive**

- "I met her at the Alpha show—the weirdest little person. She'd not only cut off her hair, but she seemed to have taken a dreadfully good snip off her legs and arms and her neck and her poor little nose as well." **assertive**

### ***Commissive Speech Acts***

Commissive SAs are used rarely with the illocutionary force of promising primarily in this case. The data reveals that the frequency of Commissive SAs is 6 making up 5 %.

*Example:*

- "I'll come with you into the hall," said Bertha. **promise**

### ***Indirect Speech Acts***

There is a single instance of indirect speech act which has illocutionary force of questioning. In order to lessen the impact of question indirect speech act is used which suggests politeness as well as social distance among interlocutors.

- "I *wonder* if you have seen Bilks' *new* poem called *Table d'Hôte*," said Eddie softly.

### ***Indirect questioning***

- "You're wanted on the telephone," **informing**

In *Bliss* the predominant use of expressive speech acts with the convivial functions reveal the emotional side of the characters particularly the females as well as the degree of politeness which they adhere to in their social interactions.

The data of all the stories reveal that in terms of the use of speech acts there is not a marked difference between Urdu and English short stories. In “Raakh” and “The Garden Party” Directive SAs prevail; in “Charagh ki Lau” both Representative and Directive carry equal frequency whereas in “Bliss” there are the Expressive Speech Acts which are predominant. Nonetheless, it is the analysis of functions/illocutionary forces of those speech acts which offers a contrastive perspective to look into the cultural and social orientations. (see discussion)

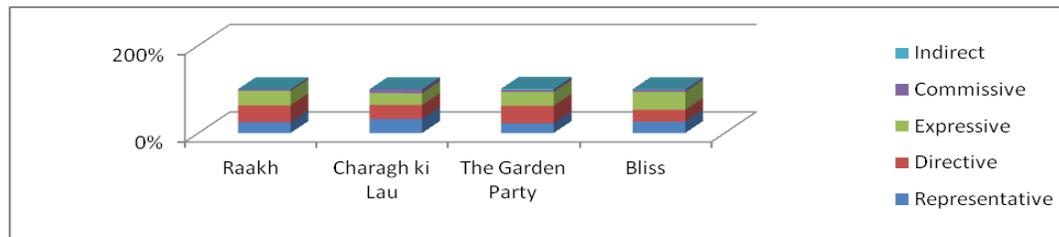
### ***Categorization of Speech Acts in Urdu and English Short Stories***

The analysis of the speech acts is taken up individually in the above section; hence the frequency of speech acts in all the short stories is collectively given below for comparison and discussion.

Table 15

#### *Speech Acts in Urdu and English Short Stories*

Short Stories	Representative Speech Acts	Directive Speech Acts	Expressive Speech Acts	Commissive Speech Acts	Indirect Speech Acts
<b>Raakh</b> 69	17 25%	26 38%	23 33%	3 4%	0
<b>Charaagh ki Lau</b> 22	7 32%	7 32%	6 27%	2 9%	0
<b>The Garden Party</b> 167	37 22%	66 40%	53 32%	8 4.7%	3 1.7%
<b>Bliss</b> 112	29 26%	30 27%	46 41%	6 5%	2 1%



### **Findings**

Politeness is culture specific and the degree of politeness can be observed well through the use of speech acts which are governed by social conventions. The

authors of literary works display their socio-cultural orientations in their works. The stories under study deal with similar societal problems of poverty, indiscriminate, infidelity and women issues. In all the stories the protagonists are females who go through the process of self awareness, learning about deeper truths and darker sides of life at the end. Hence it is the manner of depicting and presenting these social themes, also the language used to describe and communicate the message to the audience which provides deep insights into the cultures being depicted.

The comparison of Urdu and English short stories evidently exposes the social problems faced by the characters living worlds apart. The characters make use of language and a variety of speech acts in diverse ways to perform social function and to deal with their problems while displaying the degree of positive and negative politeness as well as impoliteness acceptable in their socio-cultural contexts. The examples given in analysis section illustrate the politeness strategies as used by different characters in the stories.

To examine the observance of politeness, Searle's five categories of Speech acts are compared with the given functions Competitive, Convivial, Collaborative and Conflictive adopted from Kadhem (2008, pp. 39-40). The assertive and responding illocution coincide with the collaborative function, as it does not work as imposition rather a proposition, a response or suggestion which does not maximize cost to others in Leech's terms. It is only in "Charagh ki Lau" that both directives and representatives have equal frequency while in other stories it is either directive or expressive which has highest frequency. As could be seen in Altikrti (2011) who examines the use of speech acts in three short stories and find no significant pattern in speech acts in all the stories, also the illocutionary forces within the speech acts fluctuate in all the texts. It further tells that representative speech acts are more frequent in number and hence more significant than expressive SAs in all the three stories while commissive SAs are the least significant.

Leech (1983) changes directives with impositives, as their illocutions demand the addressee to act in a certain way, be it ordering, requesting or questioning (Khadem, 2008 p. 40). In terms of representatives and directives, both kinds of short stories (Urdu and English) display almost an equal number of frequencies. However in Expressive Speech Acts the illocutionary forces reveal a huge difference in the level of politeness or impoliteness. Expressive function in both ways, i.e. convivial (cordial, welcoming) and conflictive (clash, disagreement) depending upon the illocutionary forces. If the illocutions are that of thanking, congratulating, admiring, such kinds harmonize with convivial function, conversely mocking, abusing etc. coincide with conflictive. As is noticeable through the categorized data given above; English short stories demonstrate the convivial type of illocutions in Expressive SAs which shows a degree of politeness, but in Urdu short stories the use of convivial function is least as compared to conflictive which is used sparingly in interpersonal relations. However, it illustrates two levels of interpretation, firstly that Urdu culture is presented as less polite through the use of speech acts than English culture and at the same time the use of SAs also reveals the higher level of closeness/ proximity and friendliness among the relationships of the characters in Urdu short stories which is rarely seen in English short stories. The differences that the researchers observe, they reflect different literary cultures, maybe even specific to these authors. The data proves that English speakers make use of politeness strategies more as compared to Urdu speakers; at another level it also shows that English speakers as portrayed in the selected stories are more formal and tend to maintain social distance in their interpersonal relations.

In commissive SAs promises have convivial function as they take care of addressee's interest but threatening is conflictive which presents a clash of ideas and disagreement. Instances of promising and threatening are obvious and almost similar in both kinds of stories, though the use of commissive speech acts is infrequent in the data under study.

Another significant difference is the use of indirect speech in English short stories while in Urdu there is not a single instance of indirect speech. Shams and Afghari (2011) examined the use of indirect request speech act by Iranian people in order to find out the cultural and gender differences in understanding the indirect requests. They found that Iranian participants (male and female) comprehend indirect form of requests in their daily communication regardless of any culture differences. In interpersonal communication directness is a sign of familiarity and closeness, whereas indirectness signals formality, distance, and tact, it denotes power as well. When choosing between a direct and/or indirect speech act the speaker usually considers the social distance, power relationship and the degree to which a certain face-threatening act is taken as an imposition in a specific culture. Politeness often results in the speaker's use of indirect speech acts.

### **Conclusion**

The study of politeness through speech acts in the short stories of female writers reveals that in Urdu short stories the characters demonstrate great degree of imposition in relations and lack of politeness which also hints degree of closeness and lack of formalities prevalent in Urdu culture.

The data shows slight differences in the use of speech acts but it is the distinctive difference in their social functions/ illocutionary forces in both Urdu and English short stories which provides deeper insights into the degree of politeness observed in both cultures. Such variation is evident predominantly in the use of expressive speech acts and their illocutionary forces as is discussed already and the presented data also proves, in such uses the English characters are more tactful and more concerned about politeness strategies as compared to Urdu characters who are more direct and use more face threatening acts.

Thus, it can be concluded that there are the differences in cultural norms, attitudes and cultural assumptions that bring in the specific differences in the observance of politeness between different languages, and the use of speech acts

which reflect the degree of politeness vary in quantity and type from one writer to another and hence from one language to another giving deeper insights into their cultures.

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### **Appendix**

The stories under study could be retrieved from the following links.

**“Raakh”** Allurdupdfnovels.blogspot.com.

**“Charaghki Lau”** Allurdupdfnovels.blogspot.com.

**“Bliss”**<http://www.katherinemansfieldsociety.org/assets/KM-Stories/BLISS1918.pdf>

**“The Garden Party”**<http://www.katherinemansfieldsociety.org/assets/KM-Stories/BLISS1918.pdf>