



PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**POWER AND POLITENESS: A STUDY OF FEMALE FACULTY INTERACTION  
IN COLLEGE RESULT MEETING**

Bisma Butt <sup>1</sup> , Khalid Ahmed <sup>2</sup> , Naila Kanwal Dar<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Lahore, Chenab campus

<sup>2</sup>University of central Punjab, Lahore

**Bisma Butt, Khalid Ahmed, Naila Kanwal Dar: Power and Politeness: A study of female faculty interaction in college result meeting-- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18 (1), 970-983. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Keywords: Power, Politics, Female, College**

### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to examine the dispersal of power between superior and subordinates in educational domain. This existing research also focuses the relationship between power and politeness in communication. Moreover, a dearth of research exists in college faculty meeting regarding expressions of politeness and power. Therefore, for bridging this gap, a review of linguistic implication of politeness and power in educational domain is being done by using Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. This is a subjective study comprised of structured observation and uses Critical discourse analysis (CDA) for targeted data. This analysis will help the educators in comprehending of society and language in a relationship. This study concludes the simultaneously co-occurring of politeness and power in a context. Moreover, this research highlights the importance of college context as a rich information resource in terms of linguistic behavior.

### **Introduction**

In a workplace communication system, politeness is a vigorous communal pattern that has engaged in a considerable attraction of Pragmatics & Critical Discourse Research since the mid-1970s. Due to the result of controversial role of power being played in communication, researchers have advanced conflicting views about the effect having a status of individual's on politeness. Contended further that power is expressed in language, Locher

(2004) views politeness as a strategy that is internalized to alleviate the power effect. That is, speakers and listeners speculate how to fulfill their needs while saving face among themselves (Locher, 2004).

Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that the people can pre-select politeness strategies from a situation of innate powers. Harris (2001) contradicts their explanation of power as a substantial component and argued instead that it is a dynamic aspect of interaction as to withstand pre-existing idea.

Research on the politeness and power in a number of rudimentary settings including the courtrooms (Harris, 1989), hospitals, and the military (Halbe, 2011) have been studied by Critical discourse analysts. However, in college setting, some of the studies have inspected the link between power and politeness and, it is examined that, stress student teacher interaction without considering principals, in which his power could be exercised over collateral staff. Like all other institutions, college also functions by the consecutive communication between its members in an endless language encounter, e.g. conversation between different members, like teachers issuing instructions, during meetings, other yearly organized functions and events.

Brown and Levinson (1987) best explain the politeness strategies engaged in exploiting powers is considered to be amongst the most dominant studies. They were praised by Watts and Locher (2005) for broadening the way to politeness studies and for the provision of “an enormous amount of research mileage”, (as cited in Salazar, 2007, p.87). Only the specific types of discourse (Harris, 2003) were concentrated and the institutional context were ignored by the Brown and Levinson, the embracement of their studies is because the expression of politeness is affected by the power in institutional setting and it can therefore be considered to represent a significant aspect of politeness phenomena (Lackoff & Jannen, 1979; Leech, 1980, 1983).

Due to the individualism and western-centered type of study, Brown and Levinson's (1987) study has been criticized. Their studies have been adopted because it specifically exercised with institutional, but not cultural. Furthermore, both positive and negative dimensions of politeness were enclosed in their studies. Their assumption got rejected because those strategies cannot be attended in a concurrent discourse. This study is agreed with Harris (2001) and Mills (2002) who critique Brown and Levinson for viewing “politeness as occurring only in single utterances” (Mullany, 2004, p.16). To produce a clear and valid analysis, it is found an essential critical discourse analysis. The similar conclusion was supported by Holmes (1999).

As a result, verbal communication is being investigated between principal and staff. During the college result meeting, the absolute interpretation of power and politeness is being analyzed. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness is being adopted to answer the research questions and employed Fairclough's (1989) critical discourse analysis in a female faculty meeting interaction, it is examined the intensity to which the power of teacher and principal is being exercised and politeness through discourse during a college result meeting.

This research is an attempt:

- To examine the power and politeness within institutional verbal interactions in college.

The study is bearing the following research question:

- How power relationship impacts the concept of politeness in communication?

### **Methodology**

In this subjective study, data is collected on analytical observation. This is Brown and Levinson's strategies of politeness and Fairclough's three dimensional model based study, in advance, it is determined that what researcher is going to locate in context (Shohamy, 1987). By using these two models, researcher tried to pinpoint the politeness strategies and the exercise of power in college faculty result meeting. The selected context is a Marghzar Girls college campus university of Gujrat. The selection procedure is developed deliberately.

### **Data collection**

When the data was being collected, and according to Jorgensen and Philips' (2002) recommendation, researchers sought to find context: (a) questions related to research (b) data's accessibility to high degree. This study is based on naturally encountered language as spoken by participant in official college meeting in Gujrat. The most appropriate data was to be collected to accomplish the selection process. Necessary data from the meeting was collected, i.e. recordings w.e.f. 19<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015 to 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan, 2015. For later exercising of data analysis note taking was also conducted.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

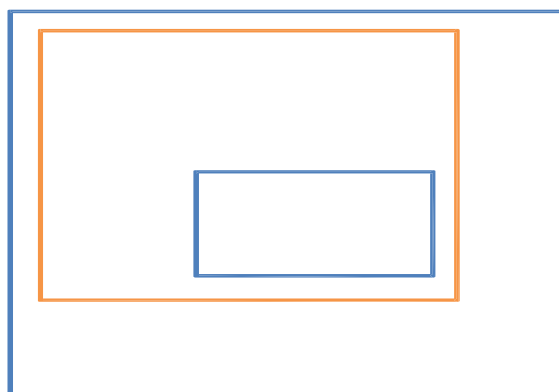
There is no authorized process for analysis of discourse studies. Instead, the alignment of the data analysis was purpose to study and the social context within which the discourse was taken (Jorgensen and Philip, 2002).

The collected data was analyzed using two theoretical structures. Firstly, researcher decided to adopt Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach. This method uses the procedure to judge the both linguistic and non-linguistic feature in a proper context. During the college faculty meeting, study was made limited to explore linguistic features that affect the discursive and social practices' evidence. This study also applied Brown and Levinson's positive and negative strategies to politeness.

Fairclough's three dimensional model constructed from: (a) usual feature of linguistic (b) implication of process in producing and consuming discourse (c) the disciplinary within which the event occurs.

**Fairclough's three-dimensional level:**

Data is analyzed in three levels, during studies and in terms of Fairclough's three-dimensional model; text, discursive practice and social practice. On first level, formal linguistic features are analyzed, while the second level depicts productivity of text and the last level indicates and identifies the perception of power. Transcription procedure applied the Koester (2005) and Holmes (1995) model, as used in Victoria (2009).



**Figure: The three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002 P.68) (based on Fairclough, 1992 p.73)**

Critical Discourse analysis analyzes the particular social discourse in specific context. This is called critical in terms of knowing power relationships of targeted communication. The interrelationship of power and language is also analyzed through CDA.

According to Fairclough (1995), linguistic behavior also exhibits the clash of ideologies. His theory is comprised of two levels in which discursive practices exercise. These levels are: institutional level where authority of institution prevails whereas the second level is individual level in which individual gets his/her own internal understanding of institutional identity.

**Context**

The context of the research is a college faculty result meeting. The meeting was led by the principal of the college. In meeting, 35 faculty members were present. Faculty of the college was consisted of vice principal, assistant professors and lecturers.

This meeting was a college annual meeting, aimed at discussing the college annual result of the students, teachers' performance and accomplishments in terms of the college plan. The structure of this meeting is similar to courtroom

where a judge (Principal) is superior and asked different questions regarding teachers' performance and issue of short attendance.

1. **Principal:** wo ap sab se bi kehna chahun gi pehlay bi keh chuki hun meeting me. sab se gandhi attendance ISLAMIAT k logun k ha

T: Principal: I want to say to all of you as I have said before in a meeting that Islamic Education has poor attendance

2. ::::itna acha result ha agar english ka.english k logun ne waqai bohat mehnat ki ha.attendance sab ki bohat achi ha.

T: If the result of English is good. English teachers have really done good. Attendance of every subject is good.

3. aik attendance ka jo masla aya ha wo ISLAMIC EDUCATION me aur dosra jo attendance masla aya ha wo physics k us me.matlab ap yeh sochain agar baqi sab me uski attendance itni achi ayi ha tou yeh aik aad ap subject keh lain ya teacher keh lain is me teacher ka qasur ha ya subject ka qasur ha

T: The only issue that comes is 'Islamic Education' and the second one in Physics. Think! if the attendance is good in all subjects then the problem either is on the part of subject or you can say it is the teacher who is guilty in this regard.

**1<sup>st</sup> Teacher:** [madam 3, do teen bar jo ha na wo c aur han na unkey b bachy ha na bohat late bana tha na unka yeh section islamiat ka uskay bad ha na jo kabi unko kaha gea k ap c me beth jain kabi d me istrhan se.phir unko yeh option di gai kay kay jo apka practical free ho ga .jab practical ho ga practical dain aur jab ap free hun ap is me aa jain.is liye bachy jo hain wo is trhan karty rahay].

T: 1st Teacher: Madam 3 or more than two time....C and B ...made very late. So it was said sometime to sit in C or in D. Then an option was given to them if u get any practical class free. if you get practical class then attend practical class otherwise take Islamic class in this period. Therefore, students do in this way.

**5. Principal:** dekhain yeh aik aad agar asa case hua ha

T: Principal: If this case happens

**6. 1<sup>st</sup> Teacher:** us usi  
waja say hua ha] T: 1<sup>st</sup> Teacher: That's the reason

**7. Principal:** -- us me combine bi hua ha unki attendance to hoti hi rahi ho gi.lakin yeh kay aik yeh:::han ap ke kitny 8 han ya 9 han section?

T: Principal: It was also combined. their attendance was being marked. But it is....How many sections you have? 8 or 9?

8. trhan se ha na? T: Is this the case?

**9. 1<sup>st</sup> Teacher:** han ji

T: Yes

**10. Principal:** 8 ya 9 section me agar is trhan ka masla hua ha to yeh overall performance ha **OVERALL** yeh kisi aik ya do section k performance nahi

T: Principal: If it happens in 8 or 9 sections then it shows your overall performance. This is not the performance of one or two sections?

**Principal:**

[is me koun?] T: Who is in?

**12. 2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher:** [Madam wo kehna tha k 8<sup>th</sup> period me koi theek trhan se round bi neh le raha hota bachian bahir bi hon

T: Madam it is needed to say that in 8<sup>th</sup> period no one takes the round seriously and girls remain out there

**Principal:** [ab mene na time period be dekha ha 8<sup>th</sup> pe jo ha

T: Principal: I have seen the timetable. the 8<sup>th</sup>...

14. **1<sup>st</sup> Teacher:** [madam agar  
bachian ] T: 1<sup>st</sup> Teacher: Madam if the girls....

15. **Principal:** ::::us me bohat kam **BOHAT KAM** ha jo 8th period me lgy huay han classes unki ziada jo ha wo ha ist period aur uskay bad 7th period .aur jis se me poochti hoon ist period me bi yehi problem ha aur 7th me bi yehi problem ha (.)

T: Principal: There are very few, very few, who are in 8<sup>th</sup> period, they have greater no. of classes and after this the 7<sup>th</sup> period. And to whom I ask, they have issue in 1<sup>st</sup> period and in 7<sup>th</sup> period.

16. **2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher:** aur wo round bi koi baqaida nahi le raha hota . bachian bahir bi han to 8th period

T: 2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher: And no one takes the rounq regularly. girls are out there and in 8<sup>th</sup>...

**1<sup>st</sup> Teacher:** [har mahinay ham absentee detay rahay han absentee detay rahay han yeh bat ha]

T: 1<sup>st</sup>Teacher: We have been submitting the absentees in every month. that is...

18. **Principal:** laik yeh k larkion ko bhjna clerk ka kam tou nhi us ne to absentee leni ha aur usko fine hi kerna ha .class me unko kerna to apka kam ha .agar ap dekh rahain han kay koi asa case ha jaisay bohat kam aa rahi han to ap usko struck off karain. Kaya kabi kia ha kisi ko?

T: Principal: But to send the girls is not the duty of clerk. she is only there to collect absentees and fine them. during class, you have to manage them. if you are noticing them that such are the cases that they are not coming, you have to struck off them. did you do it ever?

19. Chahay 8th period ha ya 7th ha ya ist period .koi nahi aa raha tou koi asa case aya .abi sciences kay b zabardasti mangwaye han wo cases aye han samnay.

T: Either it is 8<sup>th</sup> period, 7<sup>th</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup>, if no one is coming, is any such case is reported? I also have asked for sciences. they have come.

20. ham ne fine kiya ha

T: We have fine them



21. **Principal:** lakin ap kay pass aisa masla tha to ap nay kabi notice board pe likha ha? keh yeh student han jinhain stuck off kia gea ha .ya koi yeh case le ke kisi teacher k pass aya ho? meray pass aya ho ? Riffat k pass aya ho? Asa koi hua ha?

T: Principal: But if this is the case, if you ever mention on the notice board? that these are the struck off students? or if you ever visited any teacher or to me? or to Riffat? did you do this?

22. **1<sup>st</sup> Teacher :** madam me ne ki thi bat madam Riffat se bat ki aik bachi nahi ati

meray pass uski attendance short ha lakin jab paper ho rahay thay us waqt b bataya gea tha kay yeh roll no han jinko bethnay k ijazat nhi gi jay gi laikn wo phir dosray subject me aty rahay han.

T: 1<sup>st</sup> Teacher: Madam I talked to madam Riffat that girls don't come, her attendance is short, and even during papers, I declared that these are the students who will not be allowed for papers but they used to come in other subjects

23. **Principal :** lakin wo log bi bethay huay han is me likha hua ha attendance short ha unki .struck off huay huay han lakin kamazkam ap jo han unki list bi di gai thi.::list Ghazala k pass majood thi.list notice board pe lagai gai thi.

T: Principal: But still those students are there whose attendance is short. it is written in this. They are struck off. But atleast..their list was also given. List is with miss. Ghazala. List was displayed on notice board

24. laikn jin teachers k pass yeh masail han un logun ne zahmat hi nahi ki.unka paper ho raha ha unko dekhain unko to pata ho ga un students ka jo bunkers ha unko check karain k yeh log agar struck off han hamary section me to yeh kuon bethi hui han?

T: But all those teachers who face these issues they don't bother that during paper they see them. they are your students . you must know them who are bunkers. you need to check them that these are struck off students. in our sections they are...

25. **1<sup>st</sup> Teacher:** madam woi na paper k duty kay doran jab hamary Islamic studies ka tha to ham ne inform kia tha k attendance shot ha laikn koi aur paper ha us me to ham apni duty day...

T: 1<sup>st</sup> Teacher: Madam in our Islamic paper's duty, we informed them but in other subjects we were invigilating.

26. **2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher:** [ham ne Asma ko baqaida rollno diye thay k yeh log short attendance han .us ne kaha k theek ha

T: 2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher: we gave asma the remaining roll nos that these are the short attendant students and she said alright

27. ham dekh letay han.

T: We see them

28. ham ne bataya tha k wo log kahan bethay han.

T: We told her that where these are sitting

29. **Associate professor:** lakin jab koi continuously absent ho to phir bachay ko pakar kay layin phir to bas yehi hal reh jata ha

T: Associate Professor: But when they are continuously absent then you need to caught them and come to us. this is the only solution

30. **Principal:** [lakin jab paper ho raha hota paper me disturb kerna ya churwana yeh to ap us ka career kharab karain gay na ,lakin paper agr kar rahi ha to us waqt ap action lain ap us waqt dekhain ap usy pakrain aur clear karain ,kahain k wo paper day rahi ha ..laikn wo khair bad ki bat ha yeh to end ha bilkul .ap pura sal likh k lagain k in k attendance short ha.ap notice lagain in logun ko struck off kar dia gea ha .in k attendance short k waja se takay inkay waldain ko pata ho.rabta karain unsay (...)

T: Principal: But when paper is continue then disturbing the students or to snatch the paper will result in form of loss of future of students. but if they are doing papers, you need to take action at that time, caught them and clear the issue, tell us that they are doing papers, but all these are later to be discussed. you have to write notice and display it throughout the year that these are the struck off students due to short attendance. so that their parents come to know and they contact with us....

31. thek ha 50 marks ka ha laikn itna light kun lain ap is ko?

T: It is 50 marks paper, don't take it light

Code switching is dominant during targeted data and participants rarely used standard Urdu language. Principal used the pronoun AP positioned the teachers as opponent to her. she tried to blame them for the poor short attendance of the students in different departments (specially Islamic Edu & physics).within lines 3,10,15,18,19,20,21,24 and 31 she exercised her power.

However, Principal also tried to overcome this issue by assuming the suggestive measures. Moreover, she highlighted the teacher's negligence as in lines 3 and 15 show her authority and in most of the instances, she prevailed her power. The text is the main source where power can be seen as exercised e.g. the pronoun AP is a good example of this case. Further, structural presupposition and frequent allegations are displayed through: jaisy ap dekh rahi han k bohat kam aa rahi han to ap usko struck off karain.kaya kabi kia ha kisi ko?(Line 18).

The role of power (exercise and rejection) mainly depends upon verbal processes. The verbal process plays a dominant role in both exercising and rejecting power. The Principal expressed different meanings by using different tones; for instance, in Line 24, the ironic tone is used "laikn jin teachers k pass yeh masail han un logun ne zahmat hi nahi ki "to execute power on teachers for reporting the short attendance.

While in line 2, she uses an encouraging tone, ":::::itna acha result ha agar english ka.english k logun ne waqai bohat mehnat ki ha.attendance sab ki bohat achi ha"

At the discursive practice level, teachers mostly applied intertextuality through using informal language and casual style to reduce Principal's exercise of power. In contrast, Principal practiced inter discursively, in which she introduced religious discourse to the context in order to remind teachers of the highly recommended religious obligation (i.e. Islamiyat teaches honesty), as can be seen in Line 3.

During this meeting, the social practice was mostly governed by the institutional level, not the individual level. The Principal regularly attempted to remind teachers of their responsibility i.e. do not take it easy for the sake of 50 marks it will in return be the failure of the students. She gave suggestions and used polite tone to encourage teachers to remain on the right track, for the college's sake.

The Principal's practice of power might be a reactive state to the teachers' failure to give good attendance of the students. Thus, her behavior in this meeting could be viewed as a temporal state as opposed to a static one. Power was clearly seen in this meeting, but might not be so prominent in another meeting with the same context.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

The use of politeness in this meeting is transactional. Line 2 and 3, positive and negative politeness can be observed. She appreciated the performance of English Teachers and reprimanded the Islamic education teachers. Negative politeness strategies can be seen in lines 10, 18, 21and 30. Moreover, Line 2 shows positive politeness during which Principal appreciated the teachers. And in line 7 where tag question was used by the Principal.

Inclusive pronoun HAM is used by the teachers in line 28 to convert the burden from individual to the whole department and same is used by the Principal in line 20 to convert the power from individual to whole management and same HAM is used by the clerical office. Therefore, it can be concluded from whole scenario that power is not constant whereas it keeps on changing. According to Holmes (2009), power holders

are the main participants who decide when, where, and to what extent, they will exercise the power.

The application of politeness is generally transactional in this meeting. In Line 2 and 3

Principal used both negative and positive politeness. She appreciated the performance of English Teachers and reprimanded the Islamic education teachers. Negative politeness strategies can be seen in lines 10, 18, 21 and 30. An example of positive politeness can be seen in Line 2 during which Principal appreciated the teachers. And in line 7 where tag question was used by the Principal.

Inclusive pronoun HAM is used by the teachers in line 28 to convert the burden from individual to the whole department and same is used by the Principal in line 20 to convert the power from individual to whole management and same HAM is used by the clerical office. Thus, this means that power is variable and not constant; power-holders decide to activate or deactivate power in accordance to the context. Holmes (2009) asserted that it is the power-holders that decide to what extent they declare power.

Face threatening acts are used by the principal in lines 10,15,21,24 and 31. It can be seen that overlapping is always done by the teachers not by the Principal like in lines 6, 14, 16,

17, 25 and 26. Interruption is always done by the Principal like in lines 15 and 30 to exercise her power and to express disagreement with associate professor.

Thus, it is established that politeness and power are co-occurring phenomena in specific context. Authoritative and subordinates simultaneously exercise the power. Therefore, it is concluded that college is rich resource (context) for analysis of linguistic behaviors.

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## Transcription Conventions

	Meaning	Transcription Element	Meaning
or ~	Marked rise (or fall) in intonation	:::	Sounds that are stretched or drawn out (number of :: indicates the length of stretching)
<b>Underlining</b>	Used for emphasis (parts of the utterance that are stressed)	[ ]	Overlaps, cases of simultaneous speech or interruptions.
<b>UPPER-CASE LETTERS</b>	Indicate increased volume (note this can be combined with underlining)	° word °	Shown when a passage of talk is noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk
<b>.hhh</b>	A row of h's with a dot in front of it indicates an inbreath Without the dot an outbreath	=	When there is nearly no gap at all between one utterance and another
<b>(comment)</b>	Analyst's comment about something going on in the talk	(.)	Small pauses
<b>&gt; word &lt;</b>	Noticeably faster speech.	<word>	Noticeable slower speech
<b>?</b>	Rising intonation at the end of an utterance	(1.4)	Silences (time in secs)
<b>,</b>	Continuing intonation	.	Closing or stopping intonation