

Research Article

Musarat Yasmin*, Farhat Naseem, Ayesha Sohail

Religious and Socio-cultural Influences on the Pakistani Wedding Invitation

<https://doi.org/10.1515/olpi-2019-0019>

Received October 28, 2018; accepted July 10, 2019

Abstract: The Wedding Invitation is one of the significant text genres. Following genre analysis approach and discourse analysis (DA), the present research analysed the wedding invitation genres in Pakistan to explore generic structures, as well as the role played by the broader socio-cultural norms and values in shaping this genre. Therefore, a corpus of 50 wedding invitations in Urdu and English was randomly selected from cards received from January to June 2018. The results of this genre analysis revealed seven obligatory and one optional move in Urdu, while six obligatory and one optional move in English invitations. Through discourse analysis, it has been uncovered how religious association and cultural influence in Pakistani society shape textual selection. Little variation was displayed in the invitations of the two languages, presumably due to regional cultural reflections and recent influence of western values. A comparison of Pakistani and UK invitations showed differences not only in move selection but also in lexical choices which are shaped by the respective cultures.

Keywords: wedding invitation; genre analysis; discourse analysis; religious influence

1 Introduction

The wedding is one of the most remarkable days in a person's life. Wedding in each culture demands several arrangements, and the wedding invitation is one of these preparations. Wedding invitation cards are socially constructed and conventionalised genres. Invitations can be delivered through a card, or verbally. Written invitations include certain generic features not found in spoken invitation. These written invitations include more specific information, for instance, the names of people involved, venues and the time of the wedding. There are various types and manners of invitation cards. Pakistanis use a distinct manner in providing invitation cards for their wedding ceremonies. Invitation cards analysis will explain the underlying norms ingrained in Pakistani and Islamic traditions, as well as primacies of the couples and their families. The current research goals are defining the constituent move about the Pakistani wedding invitation cards.

1.1 Theoretical underpinnings

The current study draws on the framework of Swales (1990). Researchers from different backgrounds characterised genre differently. The most influential definition has been attributed by him as follows: "A genre is a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby

*Corresponding author: Musarat Yasmin, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan, E-mail: musaratalvi@hotmail.com

Farhat Naseem, University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan

Ayesha Sohail, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, Pakistan

constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains the choice of content and style" (p.58).

Hence, the genre is comprised of a sequence of constituent moves, including obligatory and optional, each contributing to the major purpose of the genre text (Al-Ali 2006). "Not all the moves are essential in a genre, and conventions across disciplines and cultures may differ as to which ones are vital for achieving which purpose" (Kachru & Smith 2008: 161). Also, they do not essentially come in a similar sequence. In genre analysis, according to Ruiying and Allison (2004), discourse structures used in developing a communicative event are examined, and the main objective of the analyst is to provide their rationale in terms of the authors' aims and institutional codes.

1.2 Wedding invitation genre analysis

"Ritual stands for conventionalized aspects of language use" and is associated with speech acts or certain script performed/written in/for institutionalised settings; however, such beliefs are unable "to capture its complex interactional and relational functions" (Kadar 2013: 5). Though the expectations and interpretation of rituals differ greatly across societies (Kádár & Bax 2013), yet, it is established that ritual interaction not only strengthens but also (re)shapes interpersonal relations (Kadar 2017). Hence, it can be inferred that through wedding cards people convey their ties in a community and create new social dependences.

Wedding invitations are referred to as "homely discourse" (Miller 1984). An invitation is "a commemorative social action having the function of informing and requesting the presence or participation of a person(s) kindly and courteously to some place, gathering, entertainment, etc., or to do something" (Al-Ali 2006). Despite their uniqueness and prevalence, wedding invitations are understudied; most of the literature can be found only in academic and professional genres. Little research has been dedicated to the wedding invitation genre, except Al-Ali (2006) and Sawalmeh (2015). Others focussed on the description of the generic structure. Research on categorising linguistic features of the invitation cards of a Brunei Malay wedding was conducted by Clynes and Henry (2004). Two analyses by teachers and students were performed to study the moves, their order and communicative functions. Though the learners were relatively less successful in explaining language components and communicative functions, yet they identified moves and their order successfully.

Later, Al-Ali (2006) analysed 200 Arab written wedding invitations which were collected by 45 Arab undergraduate students at Jordan University of Science. He employed two frameworks of discourse analysis: genre analysis and CDA. The findings indicated eight obligatory and non-obligatory moves. Moreover, a critical discourse analysis of the text showed that religious attachment and masculine kinship authority shaped text component selection. Another study on Jordanian cards was conducted by Momani and Al-Refaei (2010) who investigated 55 invitation cards used from 1979 to 2006 to find different communicative purposes through the generic structures of wedding invitations in Jordanian society and considered cultural representations of this genre. They employed a mixed method study and examined the impact of socio-cultural aspects on invitations through people's perceptions about the function of some moves by using a questionnaire and interviews. The study, however, does not throw light on sampling techniques, nor does it provide any instrument in the appendix that may help future researchers to validate the results. The results revealed six obligatory moves as opening, asserting the names of inviters, inviting the guests, recognising the marrying couple, informing about arrangements of the ceremony (location, date, time), and two optional moves as identifying the celebrating families, notification. Participants' response showed that several features of wedding cards show the influence of religion and culture.

Sharif and Yarmohammadi (2013) analysed a sample of 70 Iranian wedding invitations from 1995 to 2013 collected from friends and relatives. Their analysis revealed seven obligatory moves and two optional moves, similar to those found in the above study. Obligatory moves included an opening in the name of God, identifying bride and groom with the first name, announcing marriage, inviting, identifying bride and groom's last names, situating; whereas the optional moves included appeal not to bring cameras and publishing the company's name. However, some other interesting findings include the choice of particular

days for marriage. Summer was found to be Iranians' favourite season for wedding festivals, and otherwise, Fridays were the most frequent days for celebrations as, besides summer holidays, Friday is the holy day of the week for Muslims and is also an official holiday in Iran. Another study on Irani wedding invitation analysis was conducted by Faramarzi, Elekaei, and Tabrizi (2015) who investigated 200 Irani cards to find generic, schematic, as well as language structures. Based on Swales (1990), the results of this study showed obligatory moves as mentioned above and optional moves like the inviter's request. Few similar moves were found on invitation pockets. The textual analysis revealed local socio-cultural values as well as Iranian and Islamic norms for men and women. Faramarzi *et al.* (2015) also recommended future studies to be conducted in different cultural regions. The above studies are conducted in Arab countries where Islam has been an official religion for centuries. There is no such study conducted in Asia, particularly in Pakistan, which has a diverse culture. Pakistani culture reflects shades of Arab rule, shared history with Indians and British colonisation. Pakistanis have a long-shared history with Hindus of India with cultural influences such as the acquisition of the caste system. Caste refers to rigid class structures in any society (Barth 1960), particularly in the Hindu culture and refers to a distinctive socio-religious stratification encompassing dissimilar hereditary groups positioned in hierarchy and their social status is determined on the basis of the notions of pure and impure in terms of blood and work (Usman 2017). The caste system has a religious basis in the Hindu community (Liddle & Joshi 1986), where birth determines profession, hierarchical positioning of groups, residence pattern, lifestyle, and mate selection. Caste system also includes endogamy (different groups do not intermarry to preserve caste purity) and rules of commensality and touch ability (Alavi 1972). Muslims' caste system is similar to Hindus in determining a group by birth, occupation, and endogamy, while it differs in commensality (eating or drinking with a member of a different group is prohibited) and touchability due to its inherent religious inclination to equality of human beings. With such a diverse culture, it would be of interest to examine the traditional influences on wedding invitations.

1.3 Pakistani wedding invitation pattern

Understanding cultural practices is central to construing the constructions of invitations. Pakistan is a developing Asian country. Despite rapid developments in all spheres of life, the society keeps observing its old norms and traditions (Khan, Abas, and Kalair 2015; Khan *et al.* 2019; Musarat Yasmin and Naseem 2019; Musarat Yasmin, Naseem, and Masso 2019; M. Yasmin and Sohail 2017; Khan, Abas, and Kalair 2016). Marriage is considered a family affair that involves two groups of people: the groom's family who goes to the bride's house to propose; and the bride's family who welcomes the aforementioned group. After a mutual approval, with the consent of the bride and groom, marriage is arranged. Both the bride and groom exchange vows at the bride's place separately and later the bride is seated beside the groom. Recent Western influence is observed where *Nikah* (official marriage agreement) is held in a combined ceremony. As *Nikah* is Sunnah (following of Holy Prophet) and it is taken as an announcement and declaration of marriage between the two, it is for *Nikah* and *Walima* (Reception) that the wedding invitations are issued to relatives and a wider community. Wedding invitations are designed in either English, Urdu or local languages. Urdu invitations are preferred in rural areas, and small cities and are popular among landowners. English invitations are more popular among people living in cities. The present study intended to examine a corpus of Pakistani English and Urdu wedding invitations and focuses on the generic features and socio-cultural influence on the components. The study intends to answer the following question.

1. What are the generic features of wedding invitations?
2. How much Pakistani wedding invitations bear socio-cultural influence?
3. What are the differences between invitations written in Urdu and English languages?
4. How far are moves in wedding invitations of Pakistan and UK different?

2 Methodology

The sample for the present study was collected through BS students of 8th semester in the English department who gathered cards from their families, relatives and friends. A sample of 25 Urdu and 25 English wedding invitation cards was randomly selected out of 90 cards received from January to June 2018 by the families. After the data collection, similarities and differences in generic components in several Pakistani marriage invitations were measured. The data were analysed following the framework of Swales' (1990) genre move analysis which considers genre as comprising of a sequence of constituent moves which, collectively, direct the communicative function of the genre. Researchers initially scanned the text to identify little units that articulated a certain function. Researchers followed the proposition that each unit communicates a certain rhetorical function before assigning the function to each unit. Thus, each of these moves has a specific function about the overall communicative purpose of the Pakistani wedding invitation. Moves' identification as obligatory and optional was followed by moves order. A CDA analysis is also intended to determine how religious association and family structure or gender positioning turns it into a socio-cultural event.

3 Results and discussion

This section presents the genre analysis of the corpus. The choice of lexical structure and socio-cultural influence is also discussed.

3.1 Generic structure of wedding invitations and socio-cultural influences

Researchers focused on analysing three components including moves, the order of moves and para-linguistic features. The analysis highlighted eight obligatory and one optional moves as illustrated in Table 1. Eight component moves include opening, introducing celebrating family, introducing bride and groom, announcing marriage, requesting the presence of invitee, situating the ceremony as date, day, time, location, and address of inviter, and introducing inviters' extended family on left side and introducing young male members of immediate family on right side. This pattern is observed in both *Barat* and *Walima* invitations.

3.1.1 Opening

It is the first optional move found in 80 % of Urdu and English wedding invitation cards. It appears in the centre top of the wedding card. The key communicative purpose of the opening is to introduce the wedding invitation card. Pakistani wedding invitations open in three ways: with the ritual Quranic phrase “in the name of Allah, the most merciful and the most benevolent”, or a religious prayer or blessing. The ritual phrase “Bismillah” contains the true essence of the Holy Quran. An example of opening with a direct quote from the Quran is illustrated in Figure 1 below. Image shows that Quranic verse is preceded by “Bismillah...”.

Table 1. Observed Frequency of Component Moves in Pakistani English and Urdu wedding invitations.

Move		Linguistic features of the moves				Frequency/%age			
		English		Urdu					
1	Opening	1	Quranic verse “In the Name of God” phrases				80 % 100 %		
			Quote				20 % ----		
2	Identifying the celebrating family	1	Fathers'/guardian's full names with caste				100% 100%		
3	Identifying the bride and groom	1	Groom's name prior to the bride's name				60% 40%		
		2	Bride's name prior to groom's name				40% -----		
		3	The absence of Bride's name OR in relation to male elder				----- 100%		
4	Announcing the marriage	1	Phrase announcing that bride and groom are tying knots The title used for announcement				100% 100%		
							66 %		
5	Inviting/Requesting the presence of the recipients (obligatory)	1	Requesting explicitly				60% 80%		
			No explicit request				40% 20%		
6	Situating the wedding ceremony (obligatory)	1	Day	Barat/ Nikah	1	Friday	40% 60%		
					2	Saturday	50% 40%		
					3	Sunday	10% -----		
			Walima	Walima	1	Saturday	----- 60%		
					2	Sunday	50% 40%		
					3	Monday	50% -----		
			2	Date	Solar calendar	1	Variable-No specific date 100% 100%		
			3	Time & duration		1	January 33% 30%		
				2		February 16%	35%		
				3		March 25%	25%		
				4		April 25%	20%		
			4	Reception		1	Lunch 30% 70%		
				2		Diner 70%	30%		
			5	Place	1	Wedding hall 70%	40%		
						The bride's/ groom's parental residence 30%	60%		
7	Introducing inviters' extended family	1	Full names of all uncles-heads of extended family				100% 100%		
8	Introducing young family members at the reception	1	Full names of brothers and male cousins				100% 100%		
	Other optional components (optional)	1	Contact number				90% 80%		

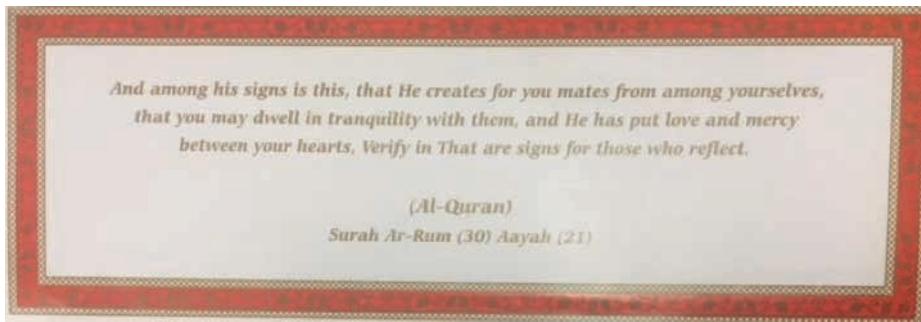


Figure 1: Opening with Quranic verse

Another less frequent opening form was quote based on prophetic invocations as 16% of the data showed.

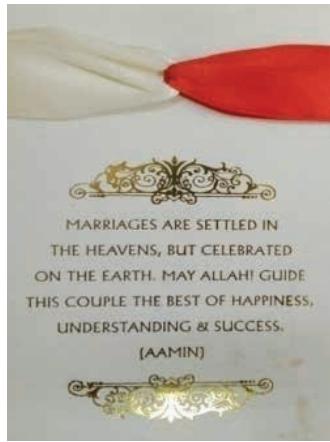


Figure 2: Opening with a quote

The frequent use of Quranic verses and ritual phrases in Pakistani Urdu and English wedding invitations is a symbol of adherence to Islamic teachings that prescribe to start every task with the name of God to safeguard it to accomplishment. In a similar vein, beginning in the name of Allah is to bring blessings, luck and safety to wed couples. Hence, the communicative function is to protect the bride and groom. Besides, it also highlights the significance and sanctity of marriage. Previous research in Muslim countries exhibited similar findings along with their culture-specific features (Momani & Al-Refaei 2010; Al-Ali 2006).

3.1.2 Identifying the celebrating family

Identifying the celebrating family is an obligatory move that appears soon after opening, and in case of absence of an opening, it appears on the top. This move functions to identify the celebrating family. Analysis showed that invitations are designed and sent by the bride and groom's families separately. This move is written in two ways: either starting with the head of the family's name "Mr...invites..." or with the name of the groom earlier to the father's/guardian's name as "Our beloved son...son of...". Al-Ali (2006: 700) labelled this move as "Heading" which provides a clue about the content of the genre. Therefore, researchers argue that this move should be termed as above. This move is printed in bold as shown in the examples below:

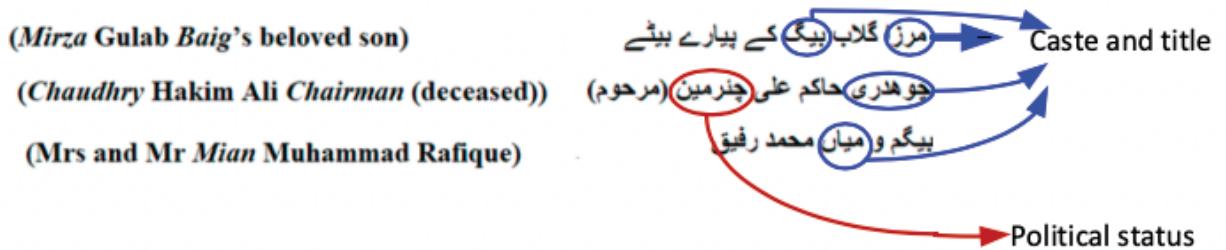


Figure 3: Identifying celebrating family and naming convention

Data also showed that except one case mentioned above as Mrs and Mr, the rest of the invitations carry the names of only the male head of the family whether the head is departed. These names are preceded or followed by their caste as the tradition holds as shown in the above italicised titles “Mian”, “Mirza” and “Chaudhry”. In the Arabian context, however, caste is replaced by tribes as previous results showed (Al-Ali 2006; Al-Zubaidi 2017; Sawalmeh 2015). In some cases, names are followed by profession as “Col.”, “Dr” (see appendix 2) or political position as “chairman” which is used to show the status of the inviter-family. The above examples show that weddings in Pakistan are not between individuals but in families or castes and through this format, families try to reflect their solidarity, pride and belongingness to their caste.

3.1.3 Introducing the bride and groom

This rhetorical element is composed of the groom’s name only in all Urdu cards while the bride is mentioned as “Beti” [daughter] or honorific as “Noor Chashmi” [light/sight of eyes-daughter]. This obligatory move functions as identifying the marrying groom or bride separately, and it is printed in bold, either in a larger font or a font size similar to the father’s name. The groom’s name is again preceded or followed by his caste as illustrated below.

<i>Malik Zain Ali salamhu</i>	ملک زین علی سلمہ
<i>Mirza Wasif Baig salamhu</i>	مرزا واصف بیگ سلمہ

Figure 4: The naming convention of the groom

Malik, Mirza, Baig stand for the caste of the family. Another interesting feature is the use of term ملک [safety be upon him] and امیل [safety be upon her] in Urdu invitations for both groom and bride respectively. Bearing an Arabic origin, the terms are used to wish for the marrying person to be protected.

It should be noted here that the female names are not preferred in announcements as shown in Figure 5. Apart from new trends of presenting women’s names and particularly brides’ names in English cards, Urdu cards adhere to religious and cultural obligations, Pakistani culture and traditions, hence, do not bear any modern trend. The Muslims’ minimal orientation to or the deletion of the bride’s name specifies a traditional inclination to refrain from stating their names in public. However, in most English cards, this move identifies both bride and groom’s first names. It should be noted here that the order of names is not governed by gender but by the inviting family, so the invitations from the bride’s side carry the name of bride followed by the groom and vice-versa. The fashion of deleting female names from Urdu invitations resonate with previous findings of Al-Ali (2006: 708-09) who witnessed the deletion “among the nomadic and rural wedding ceremonies and in conservative urban circles as well as religiously-minded men...[where] calling a woman by her proper name is not open to any male but is restricted to a socially identified circle [father, husband, brother, etc.]”. It also contradicts with the results found in English cards and previous research by Sawalmeh (2015) who found both the groom and bride’s first names in Jordan corpus.

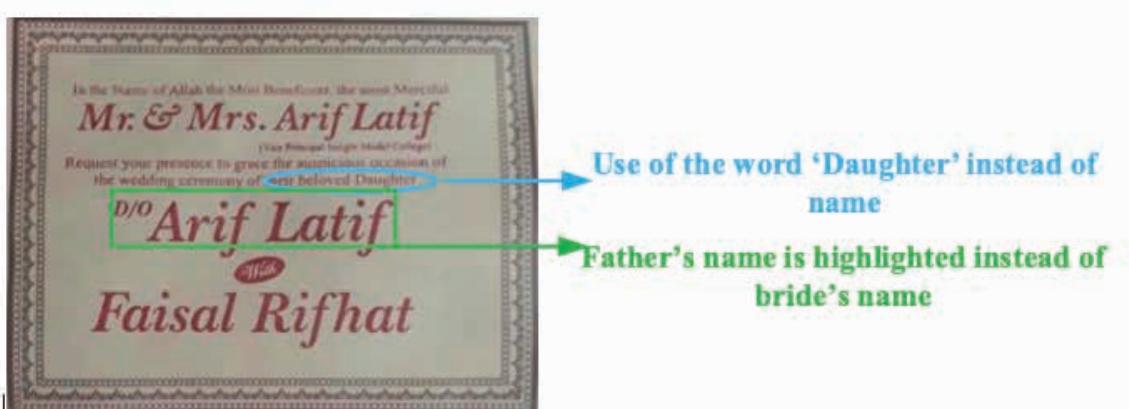


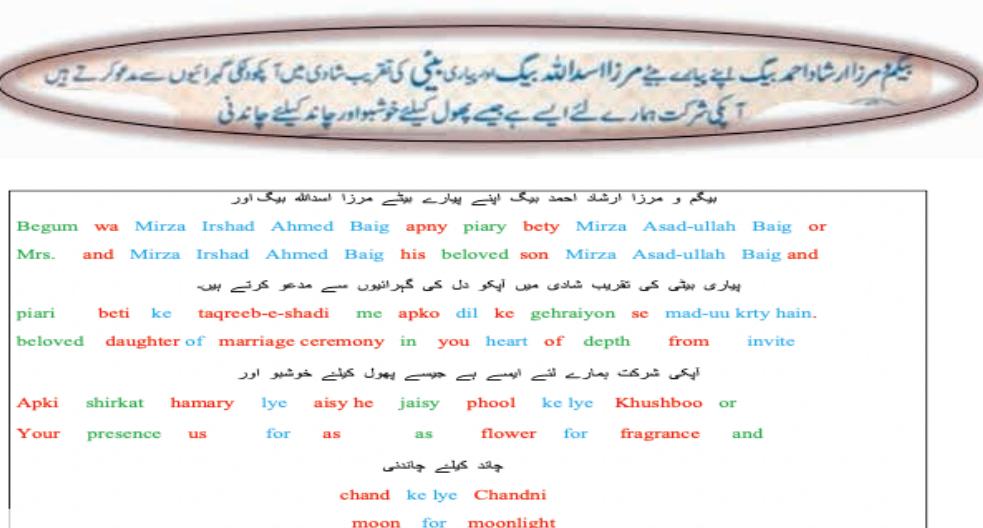
Figure 5: The naming convention of the bride

3.1.4 Announcing the marriage

This obligatory move appears at the end of the same phrase that identifies the inviters and the groom or bride. The communicative function is to inform about the bride and groom's exchange of vows. An interesting feature of this announcement is the use of the word *اُداب آن اخ* [settlement, prosperity] preceding *بے رقت* [a function of marriage] that translates as establishing a new family or blessed safe life.

3.1.5 Requesting the presence of the invitee

This element is an integral part of every invitation discourse that enables the inviting family to cordially request the participation of the invitee in the wedding ceremony. A typical example is shown in Figure 6.



(Mrs and Mirza Irshad Ahmed Baig invite you from the core of heart on the marriage ceremony of their beloved son **Mirza Asadullah Baig** and beloved **daughter**. Your presence would be for us as a fragrance to flower or moonlight to the moon.)

Figure 6: Requesting the presence in Urdu wedding card

This move was identified in all invitations except one which bears no explicit inviting phrase; however, the very message of sending an invitation makes the purpose self-evident. Previous studies showed a mixed result of the inviters (Sharif & Yarmohammadi 2013); invitations were sent by either the bride or groom or their parents/guardian. However, the present study showed that all these invitations were issued by parents/guardian (grandparents) of bride or groom. It shows the influence of religion and culture as according to the Holy Prophet, “there is no marriage without a guardian”. Also, the Asian culture of sub-continent favours a family structure where the responsibilities of decision making and organising are on the elders.

Another distinctive feature of the present move is that one invitation is printed for the two mandatory ceremonies of *Barat* and *Walima* and one optional ceremony of Henna. The invitee is informed about his invitation to a particular ceremony by either selecting one ceremony or by crossing irrelevant ceremonies as illustrated below. Moreover, in the two invitations, a number of the invitees is clearly mentioned by hand, though the invitation is sent to the head of the family. This pattern, as it shows, is adopted by the middle class who cannot afford to print three separate cards or invite the whole family.

3.1.6 Situating the ceremony

The sixth move in a Pakistani wedding invitation is obligatory and appears in all cards, always after the invitation as illustrated in Figure 7. It provides explicit information about the day, the date, time, and the venue. If there is more than one ceremony, detail of each ceremony comes in order *Barat*, *Walima* either in sequence or adjacent to each other.

It should be pointed out that 64% of the invitations featured a formulaic expression of اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَم (will of Allah) and it occurred after the heading of “Programme”. It shows the Muslim Pakistani belief that nothing can be done if Allah does not will and saying اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَم is to confirm the ceremony. This phrase was also found in the study of Sawalmeh (2015) and Sharif and Yarmohammadi (2013).

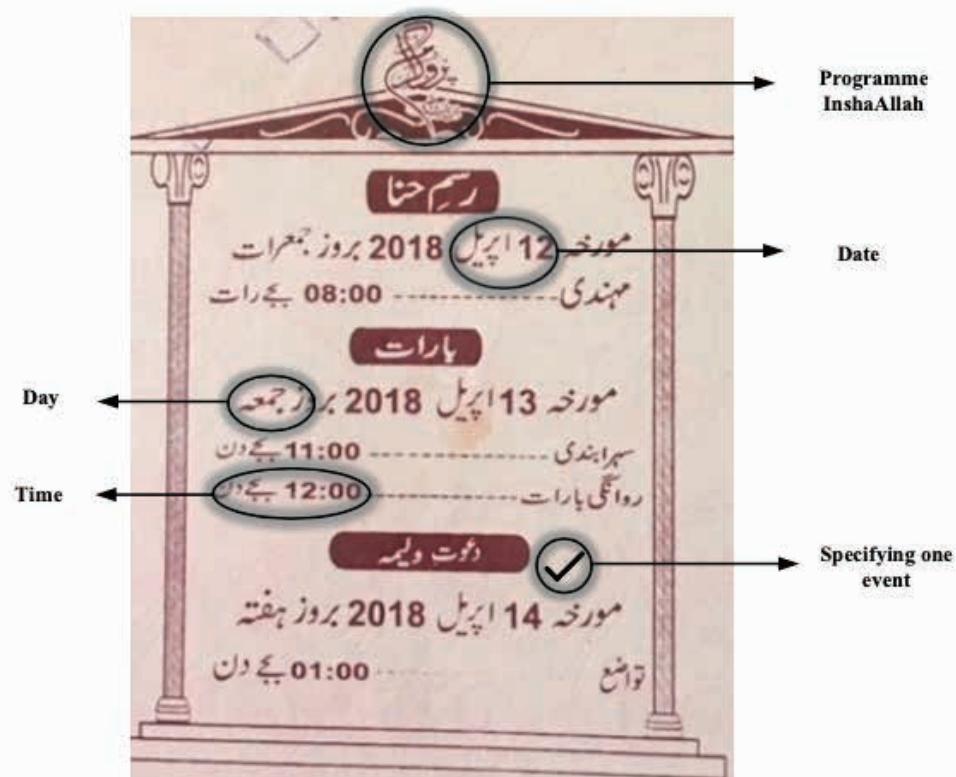


Figure 7: Situating the event: Date, Day, Time

The present corpus data showed that among the days of the week, Friday and Saturday were observed as the most popular days for the Barat ceremony, and Sunday for Walima. Saturdays and Sundays are rest days in many professions, thus, more convenient for the majority of people attending the party. However, Fridays are usually preferred for the Barat or Nikah ceremony as it is the traditional day for a wedding in Islamic states (Ali 2006). It can be inferred that if the religious day were happened to be weekends, wedding celebrations would have been more frequent then.

It has been observed in the present data that the duration of a traditional Pakistani wedding is 4-5 hours, depending on the venue. If the ceremony is decided to be arranged at the bride's or groom's house, then a duration of 5 hours is mentioned on the invitations. For the rest of the weddings being held in wedding halls, a limited duration of about 3 hours is indicated on the invitations. All Urdu invitations featured the daytime for Barat, whereas English invitations identified evenings as the time of celebration. As Barat involves travelling from the groom's house to the bride's house or to a wedding hall in the bride's city, early hours are preferred so that procession can reach back inappropriate time while Walima or receptions are found more relaxed and flexible in terms of time. Moreover, Urdu invitations mostly collected from villages show a common preference for daytime, while English invitations collected from cities show a preference for the evening.

3.1.7 Introducing the inviters' extended family

The seventh and eighth moves observed are unique and obligatory features of Pakistani wedding invitations as shown in Figure 8. This move is found on the left side of invitations, and it includes a list of all maternal and paternal uncles under the heading of "VIP" or "Looking forwards", and the major communicative function is to introduce the extended family who is looking forward to the guest's arrival. It also serves to please all the heads of the extended family by including their names. This move shows strongly the well-connected network of families in Pakistan where marriage does not only involve two persons or two families, but the whole extended relations are involved, and they contribute positively to making it successful.

3.1.8 Introducing young male members of the immediate family

The eighth move is observed on the right side of the card as illustrated in Figure 8, and it includes a list of young male members of the immediate and some from the extended family who are supposed to receive the guests under RSVP. In 32% of the cards, the names were followed by the names of foreign countries that show that a specific person lives or works there. The data revealed a trend of Pakistani overseas settled in Dubai, Europe and the Middle East. The seventh and eighth moves show the exclusion of female names from the lists. Another trend was also observed in the form of titles indicating the academic qualification or social position such as a doctor, engineer, lawyer, army official, etc. It can be inferred that living abroad and professional titles are a symbol of status in Pakistan.

The overall message of the card was positive. In every card, there is somehow a similar way of inviting people. In some cards, there was an invitation for the whole family, while in most of the cards, there was an invitation for only one or two persons. In 82% of the cards, the bride's name was avoided while it appeared only in a few English cards.

3.2 Non-linguistic features

Whereas paralinguistic features are concerned, the names of inviting family and the couple to be were found in a larger and bold font in contrast to other moves. Optional non-linguistic features included variation in the card appearance, size, type and size of font, layout, and graphics. The size, material and design possibly depend on the financial status of the inviter.

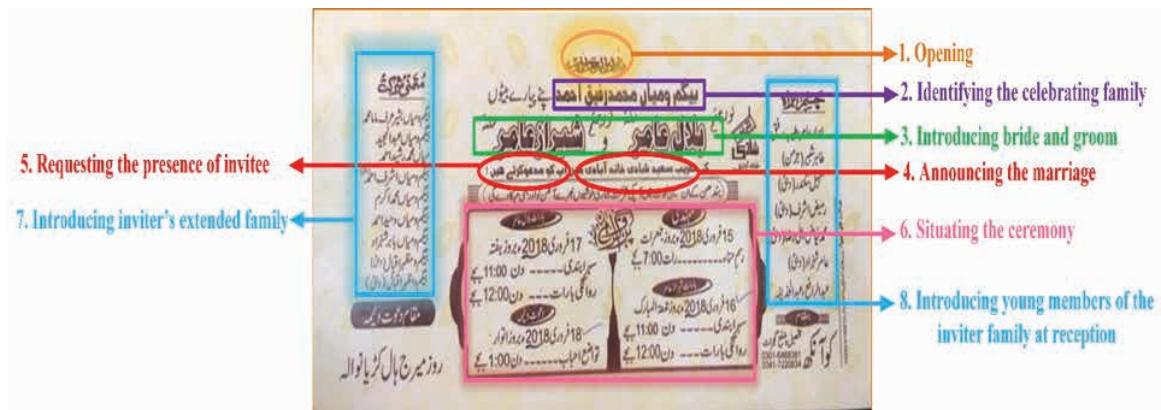


Figure 8: Moves in a generic structure of Pakistani wedding invitation

A recent trend of innovations was observed in the form of wooden carvings, silk, velvet, embossed text or images, use of ribbons and embroidery; few of these trends are similar to Jordanian invitations. White, beige, cream and red colours were found common and appeared favourite of the inviters. Another common non-linguistic feature was the use of floral or graphic borders, also found in Arab culture (Sharif & Yarmohammadi 2013b).

With respect to the image depicted on the cover of the card, drawings were more common than photographs. Data showed the use of images in 40% of the cards and common images included the bride and groom sitting together, drums, band, and henna. In some henna cards, there is a picture of women on the card to inform the invitees that this function has specifically been arranged for women. In these cards, women have been targeted for such an invitation. The overall wedding cards used in this study were also more likely to be appropriate for either sex than to target men or women explicitly.



Figure 9: Images used in invitations

Data analysis of both Urdu and English cards revealed interesting differences. Table 2 reveals that although move 7 and 8 are obligatory in Urdu invitations, these are not found in English invitations. Instead, the term RSVP is used for a list of young family members at the reception, contrary to an international trend where RSVP stands for a person to be informed and is followed by his/her contact detail. It shows that international trends have an influence on Pakistani English invitations, but as local traces are permanent, so the international feature is modified. Influence of international invitation practices is also revealed in the naming conventions where the bride's name appeared in English invitations only. An English card differs from Urdu invitations in the use of titles also, and professions replaced the references to nationality. The appearance of cards of both Urdu and English invitations highlighted the divide between social strata. English invitations with refined quality, a variety of innovative designs and size and use of separate card

leaf for individual event stood apart from Urdu cards and showed a great investment of money, time and energy.

Table 2: A comparison of Urdu and English invitations

No.	Features	Urdu Invitations	English Invitations
1	Move 1	Optional	Optional
2	Move 2-6	Obligatory	Obligatory
3	Move 7-8	Obligatory	Optional
4	Naming convention	Bride's name is avoided. Information regarding caste and Dual nationality are provided.	Bride's name is included. Information regarding caste and Professions of parents and bride and groom are provided.
5	Appearance	Simple designs, use of few colours The medium-quality paper is used.	A variety of designs, colours and modern trends The high-quality paper is used.

3.3 A Comparison of Pakistani and UK Invitations

A comparison of two socio-cultural settings revealed interesting facts (see Figure10, Figure 11 and Table 3). Firstly, the Pakistani wedding invitation appeared to be lengthier, crowded with 8 obligatory moves whereas UK invitations showed 4 obligatory explicit and implicit moves (implicit move is where the invitation is not pronounced but the invitation card serves the communication function). Secondly, UK invitations begin straight from the introduction of celebrating family or the purpose of the invitation, whereas Pakistani invitations bear a formal opening with Quranic verse.

Thirdly, unlike a traditional Pakistani invitation where friends and relatives are invited by the head of the family, the UK card carries invitation either by the parents or the marrying couple themselves. Some UK invitations showed both celebrating families as was found in Arab cards (Faramarzi, Elekai, & Tabrizi 2015; Momani & Al-Refaei 2010; Sawalmeh 2015). Fourthly, the names are preceded or followed by caste titles or the profession or the political position held.

3.4 Socio-cultural Influence

The above analysis informs the reader about the Pakistani society in general. Religion is a central feature in the Pakistani society, and it affects all aspects of life. As it plays a vital role in the Pakistani lifestyle, including birth, marriage and death, it is expected to find a Pakistani wedding invitation reflecting religious shades. The text on wedding invitations bears the religious features in several moves, from the opening

Table 3: A comparison of wedding invitations of Pakistan and UK

No.	Features	Pakistani Invitations	UK Invitations
1	Moves	7-8 moves	4-6 moves
2	Opening	Quranic verse/ Prayer	Bride/Groom's first names on the front page
3	Inviter	Parents/Guardian	Parents/ Bride and Groom to be
4	Use of titles	Caste, Profession, Political position	-----
5	Response required	A list of extended family members A list of young members of the family at the reception	Contact address/ phone number



Figure 10: Invitation from Bride and Groom



Figure 11: Invitation from Family

to closing. The data reveals a high frequency of the use of invocations that starts or closes an invitation. Its purpose is to bless either the invitation sender, the bride or groom, or the receiver. Some invitations started with a prayer that also serves as an invocation. The opening verses seem to persuade the potential unmarried audience to follow them and get married.

Moreover, the Pakistani social structure, as revealed through the analysis, shows that the social, political and economic aspects are considered areas for men while household running is women's task. Data showed that only 10% of the brides hold jobs as their titles (doctor) showed. On the other hand, 40% of the grooms have such titles. It can be inferred that women work less outside of the home as compared to men. This study also revealed that political and economic status determines the selection of the text. The selection of members from the extended family depends on their economic status as the cards show. The political position, profession and overseas location of those family members who had strong financial background, were added and highlighted.

The results also highlighted the importance of the extended family in a Pakistani's life. Similar to some Muslim countries, the extended family structure is a very basic cultural unit. However, unlike previous studies on the Arab culture, the present study revealed that a traditional caste system based on birth, economic condition and professions differs from the tribal system in Arab which was found in Arab studies (Al-Ali 2006). Frequent mention of caste with names shows that Pakistani feel pride in their caste. Besides educational qualifications and strong financial conditions, caste is a matter of social status. Though Usman (2017) argues that the caste system is decaying over time in India and Pakistan, yet the present study shows a strong influence of the caste system particularly in rural areas and a comparatively lesser in urban areas. An explicit caste pattern in RSVP and VIP shows that endogamy prevails strongly and marriages out of a caste are undesirable. This pattern is, again, more highlighted in rural as compared to urban areas. Hence, eight moves comprise Pakistani wedding genre, and it is not only the schematic structure that determines the content as Swales (1990) put forward, but cultural conventions also influence the number, content, and style of the moves as was observed by Kachru and Smith (2008).

4 Conclusion

The current research examined major components of typical Pakistani wedding invitations. It also investigated the socio-cultural influence on invitation making. The results revealed that Pakistani people have a unique style of wedding cards. A sample of an equivalent number of Urdu and English cards showed that almost 50% of the population of Punjab is educated. Cultural and religious discourses were quite dominant in Pakistani wedding cards. Pakistanis considered religion as a code of life. Besides religion, local culture with Indian cultural traces also influenced the family structure, and analysis showed a well-connected extended family network. A comparison with UK invitations made the peculiarities of eastern and western cultures clear. The present research implies its significance in academics. It recommends further research on homely discourse. A comparison of different ethnic or religious minorities living in Pakistan can also be made to examine if the overall patterns are the same or different.

References

Al-Ali, Mohammed Nahar. 2006. Religious Affiliations and Masculine Power in Jordanian Wedding Invitation Genre. *Discourse & Society*, 17 (6), 691–714. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506068428>.

Al-Zubaidi, Nassier Abbas. G. 2017. Wedding Invitation Genre: Communicating Sociocultural Identities of Iraqi Society. *Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature*, 41 (1), 129–55. <https://doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2017.41.1.129>.

Alavi, Hamza A. 1972. Kinship in West Punjab Villages. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 6 (1), 1–27.

Barth, Fredrik. 1960. The System of Social Stratification in Swat, North Pakistan. In *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*, 113–46.

Clynes, Adrian, and Alex Henry. 2004. Introducing Genre Analysis Using Brunei Malay Wedding Invitations. *Language Awareness*, 13 (4), 225–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410408668809>.

Faramarzi, Sajad, Atefeh Elekaei, and Hossein H. Tabrizi. 2015. Genre-Based Discourse Analysis of Wedding Invitation Cards in Iran. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6 (3), 662–68. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0603.25>.

Kachru, Yamuna, and Larry E. Smith. 2008. *Cultures, Contexts, and World Englishes*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kadar, Dániel Z. 2017. *Politeness, Impoliteness and Ritual: Maintaining the Moral Order in Interpersonal Interaction*. Cambridge, UK: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS. <https://www.bookdepository.com/Politeness-Impoliteness-Ritual-Daniel-Z-Kadar/9781107052185>.

Kádár, Dániel Z., and Marcel M.H. Bax. 2013. In-Group Ritual and Relational Work. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 58, 73–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.03.011>.

Kadar, Dániel Z. 2013. *Relational Rituals and Communication*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Liddle, Joanna, and Rama Joshi. 1986. *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste, and Class in India*. Rutgers University Press.

Miller, Carolyn R. 1984. Genre as Social Action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70 (2), 151–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638409383686>.

Momani, Kawaakib R., and Dana F. Al-Refaei. 2010. A Socio –Textual Analysis of Written Wedding Invitations in Jordanian Society. *The LSP Journal - Language for Special Purposes, Professional Communication, Knowledge Management and Cognition*, 1 (1), 61–80.

Ruiying, Yang, and Desmond Allison. 2004. Research Articles in Applied Linguistics: Structures from a Functional Perspective. *English for Specific Purposes*, 23 (3), 264–79. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(03\)00005-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(03)00005-X).

Sawalmeh, Murad. 2015. Ceremonial Arabic Writing: A Genre Based Investigation of Wedding Invitation Cards and Obituary Announcements in Jordanian Society. University of Huddersfield. <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/28708/>.

Sharif, Maryam, and Lotfollah Yarmohammadi. 2013a. On the Persian Wedding Invitation Genre. *SAGE Open*, 3(3), 215824401350382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013503829>.

———. 2013b. On the Persian Wedding Invitation Genre. *SAGE Open*, 3 (3), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013503829>.

Swales, John M. 1990. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings / John M. Swales. - Version Details - Trove*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

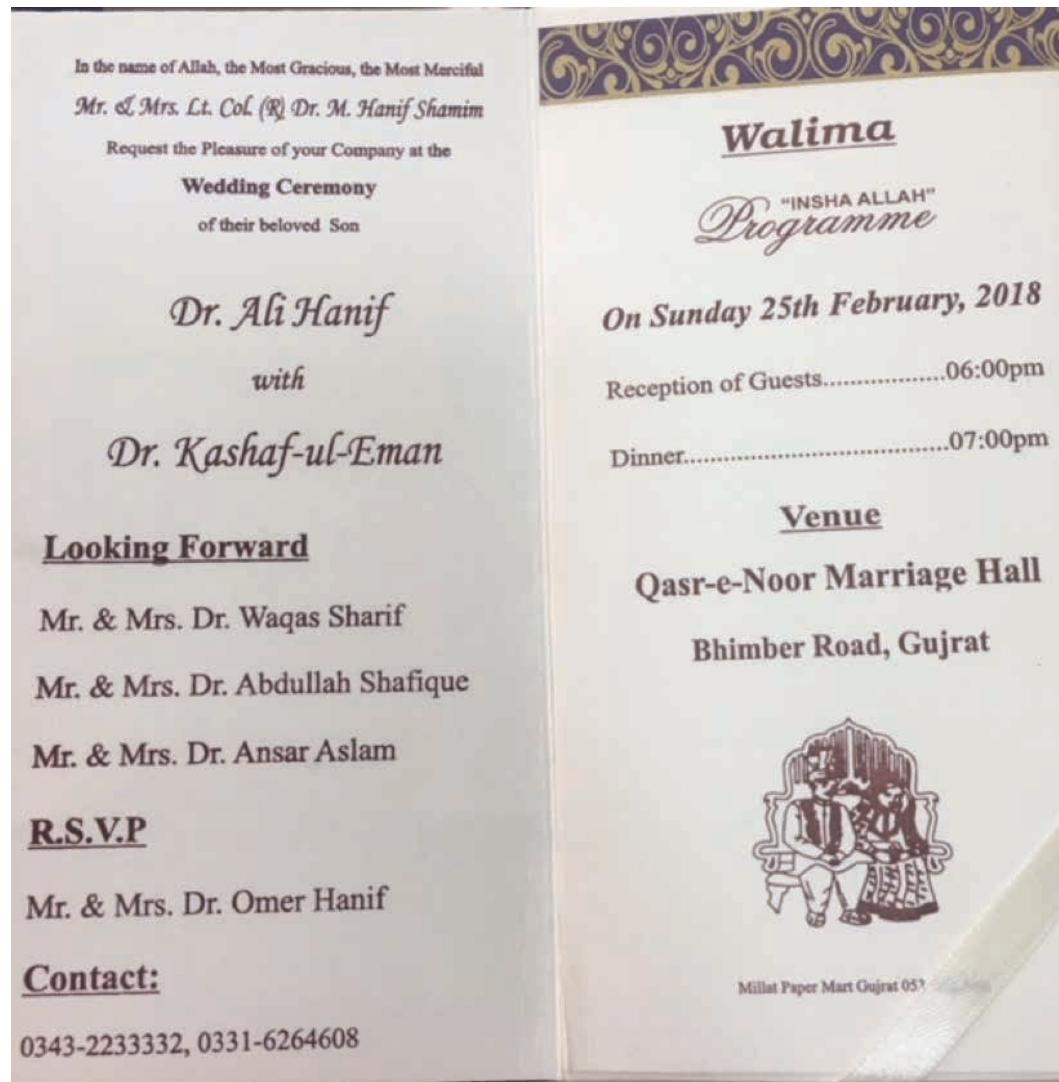
Usman, Ahmed. 2017. A Comparison of Hindu and Muslim Caste System in Sub-Continent. . *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 32 (1), 91–98.

Yasmin, M., and A. Sohail. 2017. Realizing Learner Autonomy in Pakistan: EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Their Practices. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8 (2), 153. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n2p153>.

Yasmin, Musarat, and Farhat Naseem. 2019. Collaborative Learning and Learner Autonomy: Beliefs, Practices and Prospects in Pakistani Engineering Universities. *IEEE Access*, 7, 71493–99. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2019.2918756>.

Yasmin, Musarat, Farhat Naseem, and Isamar C. Masso. 2019. Teacher-Directed Learning to Self-Directed Learning Transition Barriers in Pakistan. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 61,34-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.02.003>.

Appendix



Use of professional, political titles