

A Pragmatic Analysis of Negative Politeness Strategies in the Discourses of Cricketers

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out the negative politeness strategies used by former Pakistani cricketers in their media statements in reference to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Pakistan cricket. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, this study seeks to find the preferred negative politeness strategies used by the cricketers in their press conferences, YouTube interviews, and media appearances. Data collection was performed using qualitative approach namely observation and textual analysis from the online news and video media. The data was gathered from 20 previously playing Pakistan cricketers' 80 statements. Of the 10 negative politeness strategies found, the cricketers preferred to use eight of them: Hedging; Impersonalizing Speaker and Hearer; Stating the FTA as a General Rule; Giving Deference; Being Indirect; Being Pessimistic; Minimizing Imposition; and Apologizing. Hedging, Impersonalization and Stating the FTA as a General Rule were the three most common strategies. The strategies enabled the cricketers to attack the policies, selection and deficiencies of PCB and protect the dignity of its officials, and hence to keep the harmony without facing the current officials directly. Future research is recommended in this study to explore the positive politeness strategies which cricketers could adopt in other contexts like a team huddling, social media interactions and post-match celebrations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication among community members can be employed in a couple of different ways, one being verbal and the other being non-verbal. Both of these ways are important for people to communicate with each other successfully. Furthermore, they sometimes use them in parallel depending on their culture, interlocutors, relationships, and situations, which they encode and decode when using speech. Indeed, every society has private signals and indicators which make the strategies used by them either polite or impolite. The aim of this study is to identify former Pakistani cricketers' negative politeness strategies and to find out the effect of these strategies in their interactions with the Pakistan Cricket Board and the public in media statements. Moreover, this research aims to find out why such strategies are used, as they are used through the statements made in press conferences and interviews. Norms that are acceptable in Pak society may not be acceptable in any other culture. As a result, this research tries to shed light on understanding the negative politeness strategies used by the cricketers in this study that make their communication with the cricket establishment so successful despite frequent criticism.

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A number of researcher studies are conducted on politeness today but the reasons behind the use of these strategies by Pakistani cricketers have not been thoroughly investigated. This is because Pakistani cricketers tread a very fine line – they have to go out on the field and criticize or request from the powerful officials, coaches and selectors of the board without hurting them. Therefore, the study of this dimension of the language can provide insights into the preferred negative politeness strategies followed by the cricketers and also find out the reasons why these strategies are considered as polite in the context of cricketers. When the listener(s) do not understand the intention of the speaker, or when the listener(s) understand the intention but then misunderstands the message, pragmatics is useful for solving the problem, Leech (2014) said. Pragmatics - speaker uses implied utterances, which are understood by the listener. The pragmatic competence of speech is based on the considerations of the addressee, context of utterances, and purpose of an interaction. All of these criteria are important to the effectiveness and understanding of pragmatic speech.

The study is important since its results will impact the societies, cricketing bodies, fans, players, and researchers pertaining to the politeness phenomenon. It will help researchers to do more research on the pragmatics of politeness in sports communication that will make the communication between players and administrators more purposeful and respectful.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several theories created to analyze politeness behaviors used by societies all around the world. The theory that can be used to understand participation and the behavior of participants is Grice's Co-Operative Principle (CP) (1975) which aims to find out what a person does in an efficient and cooperative conversation. Grice identifies four maxims which he uses to discuss politeness: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Another theory, which is regarded as one of the more modern politeness theory, was proposed by Lakoff (1973) who added three rules of politeness in order to maintain interpersonal relationships to Grice's CP (p. 298), which are: (1) Don't impose (formal politeness); (2) Give options (informal politeness); and (3) Make the addressee feel good (intimate politeness). Conversely, Leech (1983) introduced his theory to "minimize the expression of impolite beliefs; maximize the expression of polite beliefs" (1983) which consisted of half a dozen maxims: (1) Tact; (2) Generosity; (3) Approbation; (4) Modesty; (5) Agreement; and (6) Sympathy.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) work was the first study on politeness which proposed the universality theory of politeness. Based on their observation, the linguistic strategies employed by people of different cultural backgrounds are similar. They were based on the important work of Goffman (1967) and his concept of 'face'. As a result, Brown and Levinson proposed that two similar "face" wants exist, positive face and negative face. On the other hand "positive face" is the desire to be "desirable to at least some others", negative face is the desire to have one's actions "impeded by others" (p.62). Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed politeness theory from the perspective that the faces of people who comes from different cultural background are seen as the same. Brown and Levinson (1987) added three social variables to politeness speech in an attempt to measure the degree of "face threatening acts

(FTA)". These factors include social distance (D) between interlocutors, relative power (P) of the participants, and absolute ranking (R) of impositions in an act in relation to a specific culture. In addition to the above-mentioned variables, it is also serious depending on the interactants. By using this strategy, the interactants then select an appropriate strategy to suit their needs.

The positive and negative politeness strategies are mostly redressive, i.e. they aim to protect and/or rescue someone's face from the threat of face or self-devaluation, when considering and preserving others' face in the face of threatening acts. People can save each other or other people's face; people are friendly with each other. The present study explored negative politeness strategies with accuracy which were adopted by the former Pakistani cricketers towards PCB and its officials while responding to the media. For example, if you had to say 'I believe it is the right time to revamp Pakistan cricket.' The speaker is aware of the potential "offensiveness" to the board on his/her face and uses the hedge, "I believe," to soften the criticism. Negative politeness is based on the assumption that the message sender's speech could be an intrusion or an imposition on the face of the addressee; and negative politeness strategies are employed in an attempt to maintain the addressee's face in this regard. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987), negative politeness is similar to what people generally term as being polite. Hence, negative politeness strategies involve being indirect, asking a question, hedging, minimizing the imposition, showing deference, expressing an apology, incurring a debt, nominalization, and stating the FTA as a general rule.

Many studies have been conducted on the politeness used by the different societies and in the case of Pakistan. The National language of Pakistan is Urdu and English is widely spoken as a second language and there are several regional languages spoken within Urdu. Culturally, thoughts, beliefs and actions of Pakistani people are still based on Islamic and South Asian values and influence all aspects of their life. There have been a number of studies in the field of politeness in the South Asian context. Al-Natour et al. (2015) examined the core request strategies used in the academic context by Jordanians. Banikalef et al. (2015) showed that more than the severity of the offence or the social distance, social status had an impact on apology strategies. Latrech and Alazzawie (2023) conducted a study on the applicability of politeness strategies in teacher-student interaction in EFL classroom in Oman. They found that more face saving acts (FSAs) are performed by teachers than face threatening acts (FTAs).

Algivan (2022) stated that the positive politeness strategy was mostly used by the students in his research; the lecturer mostly utilized bald-on-record strategy, and several factors were believed to influence the use of politeness strategies such as power, institutional position, social distance, age, and social culture. According to Al-Natour, M. M et al., the eight positive politeness strategies were chosen by the professors as preferred strategies for using with their students. The researchers of Fitriyah et al (2020) identified 10 maxims used by the teachers in their communication with students.

Other researchers, for example Al-Ali (2006) studied written wedding invitations in the perspective of genre and critical discourse analysis with focus on the patterns of the written wedding invitation. Pragmatic use of diminutives in the colloquial Arabic of Jordan has been

examined by Badarneh (2010). El-Shafey (1990) studied politeness in Egyptian Arabic and British English. Atawneh (1991) examined the directives executed by Palestinian Arabic-English bilinguals, Stevens (1993) explored the pragmatics of the expression "no!" in both English and Egyptian Arabic with some strategies, while Nelson et al. (2002) examined cross cultural pragmatics and strategy use in Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals.

Though more contextualised support is not provided in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, there has not been any study that completely debunks the theory. In support of their theory politeness, Watts (2003) claims that the theory can "help us to refine and elaborate on their original insights" (p.11). As a result, this study follows Brown and Levinson's (1987) analytical frameworks to find out the preferred negative politeness strategies used by the former Pakistani cricketers with the PCB officials. Their theory has been used in many studies since it was first introduced, thereby ensuring its validity to sufficiently analyze the data of this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, five strategies may be universally used by speakers. First, there is positive politeness which involves addressing the positive face of the listener. Second, there is negative politeness which involves addressing the negative face of the listener. Third is bald-on-record which is used to express a message directly to the listener. The fourth one is off-record which allows speakers to execute a face-threatening act (FTA) indirectly where their utterances can consist of several ways of interpreting the utterances. Finally, the last one is Do not do FTA which means the speaker just avoids saying anything and continues doing other things that represent his or her full activities. The framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 60) determines the circumstances determining the choice of politeness strategies.

This study analyzed the data based on the above framework to determine the preferred negative politeness strategies utilized by the cricketers toward the PCB. It is noteworthy to mention here that this framework has been used in several studies that aim to find out the occurrence of politeness utterances through using the above framework (1987:60). Unlike the recent study by Banat et al. (2024) which only analyzed seven negative politeness strategies, this study adopts the complete original framework of ten negative politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987).

This study was a qualitative one. It concentrated on the statements that were produced by former Pakistani cricketers in their media appearances, press conferences, and YouTube interviews. The data was collected from online news archives (Dawn, Tribune, ESPNcricinfo, etc.) and video platforms (YouTube). The objectives of the research were addressed through the analysis of the public statements of these cricketers. Each participant was coded in order to maintain the privacy of their interactions using codes for the cricketers such as C-1, C-2, C-3, and so on.

Four statements were collected from each cricketer for a total of 80 statements collected. The data was collected from 20 former Pakistani cricketers who have played for the national team. Observations and memos were used while reviewing the statements to identify the negative politeness strategies that were performed by the cricketers with reference to the PCB. The politeness strategies were listed while reviewing the statements. Finally, they were classified and then analyzed based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theoretical framework.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This study was conducted to explore some negative politeness strategies in-depth, since the majority of research on politeness strategies is only discussed along with NP strategies. It concerns with the politeness meanings of the cricketers in their statements talking about the PCB in Pakistan's social conditions in language use. The sociopragmatic factors have an impact which is necessary. They involve sociological variables, social distance, social power and rank of imposition (Brown & Levinson 1987). The following table depicts the common negative politeness strategies employed by the cricketers:

Table 1: The Cricketers' Negative Politeness Strategies

No.	Strategy	Frequency
1	Hedge / Question	16
2	Impersonalize Speaker and Hearer	14
3	State the FTA as a General Rule	12
4	Give Deference	14
5	Be Indirect	5
6	Be Pessimistic	10
7	Minimize Imposition	4
8	Apologize	3
9	Nominalize	1
10	Incur a Debt	1
Total		80

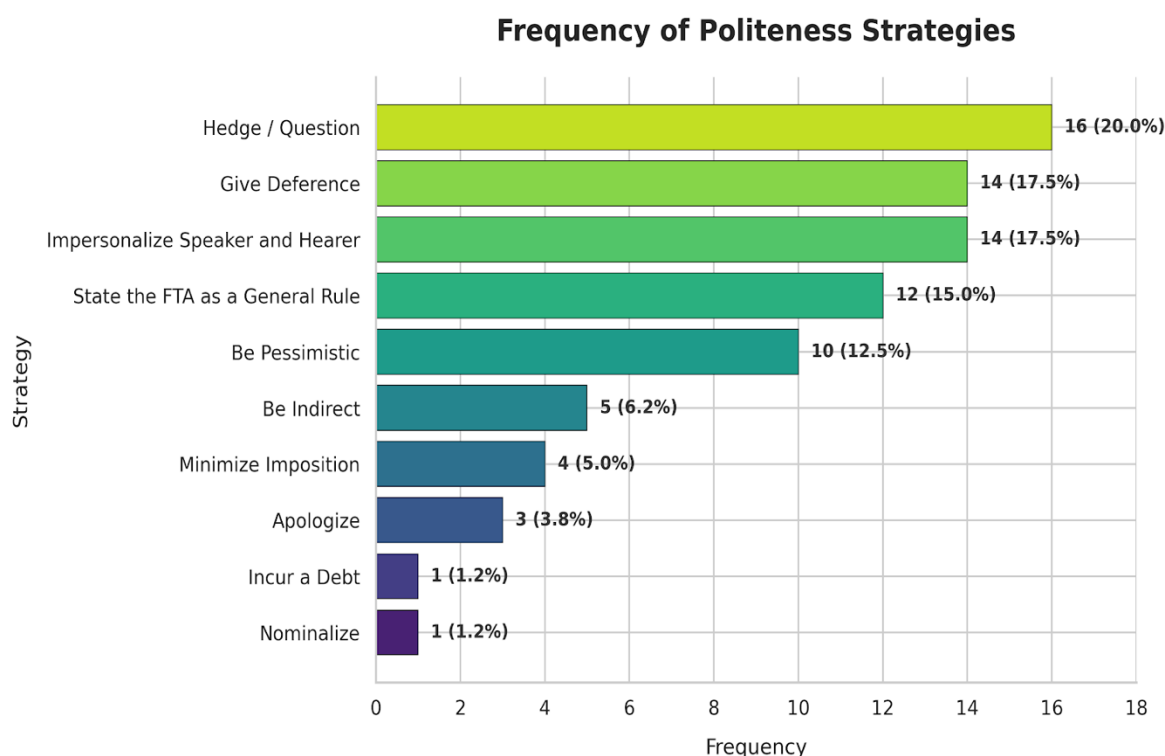


Figure 1: The Cricketers' Negative Politeness Strategies

From the analysis of the data, it could be seen that the cricketers preferred to employ more than one negative politeness strategy. Table 1 explains the negative politeness strategies used by the cricketers which are: Hedge/Question, Impersonalize Speaker and Hearer, State the FTA as a General Rule, Give Deference, Be Indirect, Be Pessimistic, Minimize Imposition, Apologize, Nominalize, and Incur a Debt. The ten strategies were the most preferred negative strategies: Hedge/Question, Impersonalize, Stating the FTA as a General Rule, and Giving Deference. The strategies saved the PCB officials' faces and it was respectful to them because the cricketers wanted the criticism to be constructive and not to be directed at the PCB officials.

To get a more in-depth understanding of the reasons behind using them and why they occurred in the cricketers' utterances, the researchers analyzed each one of them in detail. Additionally, a variety of examples are mentioned to precisely demonstrate their use. The analysis of the use of these strategies in detail is presented in the following sub-sections.

4.1. Hedge / Question Strategy

This strategy was used 16 times, accounting for 20% of the total strategies used. The Hedge strategy is one of the most prominent negative politeness strategies that was used by the cricketers in order to save the PCB officials' faces. This time there was no desire to browbeat the officials into taking their criticism on board. This was a good plan on which the cricketers managed to save not only their faces but the faces of their addressees too.

While talking to Sports Vibe, Rameez Raja (1.1) stated that it is now time to overhaul the game of Pakistan cricket as he believes that the nation's World Cup campaign is nearing its end with their net run rate being lower than that of all the other teams except Afghanistan.

The words, "*I believe*" and "*I think*" are typical hedging phrases (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 145). Rameez Raja's criticism of the team's performance and the PCB's management is not even a harsh, objective statement, but rather his opinion. This is in order not to directly challenge the current selection committee.

Example C-12 (Azhar Mahmood – 12.2): "*Throughout my tenure I raised this matter to PCB officials that as bowling coach I must have a say in selection matters as I had a better idea about every bowler but it didn't happen.*"

The phrase "*I had a better idea*" is a hedge; in the context of criticism of the PCB selection process, it means that he is not stating this as fact, but rather his own professional opinion. Pakistan cricket not a very good option to watch unless pressure is applied on Pakistan then they make a comeback, says Muhammad Wasim (4.2).

The hedge here is in the conditional clause (jab... to) which highlights the uncertainty of the prediction's subject, making it a tentative possibility, rather than a definite one.

4.2. Impersonalize Speaker and Hearer Strategy

This strategy was used 14 times and was around 17.5% of all strategies used. The strategy in this case was to keep away from identifying individuals while tackling the shortcomings of the PCB. They, however, referred to "the system," "every chairman," or "the board. Doing this sends a general message, but is intended to be sent to current officials. To avoid embarrassing a specific person directly is a sign of respect by the cricketer. Sometimes in this instance, the cricketers would use pronouns such as 'we' or 'some' or general announcements to make the target persons understand that he was talking about them indirectly.

The example by Shahid Afridi – 6.1: "All PCB chairs are made on political considerations and their change does not alter the system. There is no mention of any particular chairman: Zaka Ashraf or Ramiz Raja. He depersonalizes the criticism and saves the face of the incumbent by using "every" and the system (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 190). For example C-18 (Haroon Rasheed – 18.4): When chairman leaves something and when chairman B comes on the scene and says no friend it is wrong finish, that is the reasons why the setbacks that PCB is facing. Haroon Rasheed uses general terms such as 'chairman A' and 'chairman B' to avoid attacking any one person in particular, but to make his point that there is a problem of policy inconsistency. Example C-9 (Aaqib Javed – 9.4): "PCB first hires one person and subsequently the advertisement follows the person. But if you don't correct your advertisement, then anyone can apply, what is the criteria?"

The use of the general third person, "a person" and the impersonal "anyone" is used to depersonalize the attack on the PCB's hiring practices.

4.3. State the FTA as a General Rule Strategy

This was the strategy used 12 times (15% of the total strategies used). By adopting this strategy, the cricketers were not indicating their own wish or opinion, but rather their duty, regulation or policy that the others ought to be following, and that may not be the case for them.

Example C-5 (Inzamam-ul-Haq – 5.1): “The Pakistan cricket can't be conducted in this way, time the board officials to take responsibility as well.” Inzamam doesn't complain about "You (PCB) are running it badly. Rather, he sutures it as an objective, universal rule on 'how cricket cannot be run'. This way the criticism is a natural outcome of the circumstances, not a personal attack. Mohammad Yousuf (13.4): "There are some people in the cricket system who are having vested interest, they have a big ego and they don't care whether it hurts Pakistan cricket or not. I have seen many examples in the past.

Yousuf does not challenge specific officials by saying "There are some people," but by saying "There are some people" as if it were a rule of the system, and by not identifying them. Example C-8 (Younis Khan – 8.2): "Departmental cricket has always been supporting players; I was able to play cricket at the center thanks to UBL, the PCB shall work on reviving the departmental cricket besides club cricket. Younis argues that the revival of departmental cricket, as a general rule of cricketing success, is not something to be blamed on the present administrators' lack of foresight, since he has had a first-hand experience of it, without specifically naming them.

4.4. Give Deference Strategy

This strategy was used 14 times, making up 17.5% of the total number of strategies. The cricketers took this approach to impress upon the PCB officials the value of their stance and to bring them down their level. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that this is the way to give a positive face to the listener. It lets the listener know that the speaker is appreciative. They adopted some of the humbling terms and expressions to express gratitude and respect, so that the officials could sense the criticism and feel it was given with respect.

Example C-2 (Misbah-ul-Haq – 2.1): "I am applying for the head coach's role fully aware that the competition will be tough as I envisage there will be a few more very competent and highly qualified people applying for one of the most challenging jobs in the game."

Misbah humbles himself and boosts up the level of his rivals by referring to them as "very competent and highly qualified" (p. 178). He shares the FTA of "applying for a job" by recognizing that those who are competing for the job are higher in status than he is and that the job is challenging.

Example C-11 (Mushtaq Ahmed – 11.2): “Things are going in a right direction, I want to highlight that, because of the PCB in the last two years, despite of the Covid, we have built up a domestic system which still needs some time in building the young cricketers,” But,

Mushtaq gives credit to the PCB (I want to give credit), while saying at the same time that more time and work is required. The following mild criticism ("this system still needs some time") is more welcome in the face of this deference.

Example C-7 (Mohammad Hafeez – 7.2): "Amir, Imad, Usman are good players but they need to have played domestic cricket and if they perform good then they should be selected for the Pakistan cricket team and this is a bad approach to the domestic players". Hafeez first shows respect to the abilities of the players ("Amir, Imad, and Usman are talented") and then condemns the selection process.

4.5 Be Indirect Strategy

This strategy was used 5 times, accounting for 6.25% of the total strategies used. The cricketers were being indirect in their speeches while using this strategy, which meant they didn't impose on the PCB officials. Brown and Levinson's (1987) stated that the speakers have to avoid impinging on the listener's negative face by using utterances that are desired by the listeners.

Umar Gul (C-14.1): "I have not yet had any call from Pakistan Cricket Board regarding the position of bowling coach, it will be a privilege if I get the job as bowling coach of the Pakistan team. Umar Gul indirectly shows his disappointment in not being chosen as he says it is a good wish. He doesn't actually say "Why haven't you appointed me?," but rather introduces a condition to suggest his desire.

Example C-3 (Waqar Younis – 3.1): "The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has to take the plunge to improve domestic cricket first. I would have been happy if there was improvement on the basis of my recommendations to the PCB. Waqar implies that the recommendations were not listened to, but doesn't actually say that the board didn't listen to him. In the past unreal conditional "I would have been pleased" he is being frustrated indirectly.

4.6 Be Pessimistic Strategy

This strategy was used 10 times, accounting for 12.5% of the total strategies used. The cricketers employed this strategy to suggest that the PCB was not able to improve as they have an easy way to "prove them wrong" without a direct insult (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 173).

Younis Khan (8.3): "It is like sometimes the PCB doesn't know its identity, even the people at the grocery stores and fruit sellers know who should be the captain and coach. Comparing the PCB to "grocery vendors and fruit sellers" is a sign of complete lack of faith in the competence of the board, Younis says. The use of "it feels like" and "it seems like" makes this sound like his opinion, rather than a fact, thus saving face.

Example C-9 (Aaqib Javed – 9.1): "Fear never lets you win and if we approach the games from the perspective that we don't lose and continue to make dead pitches then spectators will stop watching us. You simply cannot win if you make decisions based on fear of failure."

Aaqib Javed has questioned the decision making process of PCB in terms of “fear of failure”, which is a universal truth that will surely have repercussions. If you have to appoint a captain, then is it short term, long term, midterm?

Saqlain Mushtaq – 10.2: “We don't seem to have a vision, we look at what's going to happen tomorrow and appoint a captain, then change the team the next day.”

Saqlain's rhetorical questions and the use of the "we" indicate a sense of hopelessness that the board has little strategic vision and hold everyone accountable, not just the board member who is the primary target.

4.7 Minimize Imposition Strategy

It was used 4 times (5% of the total strategies used). This is a tactic the cricketers employed to reduce the strain on the PCB officials' faces. This strategy was demonstrated in a number of examples (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 176).

Waqar Younis – 3.2: "There seems to be a lot of talk, but PCB is yet to announce the formation of the cricket committee, PCB has real work to do in trying to get the former cricketers into the proposed cricket committee. The term "real work to do" helps to reduce the "burden" of the task by making it sound like it is "real" and not too difficult.

C-16 (Wahab Riaz – 16.1): "Selectors should begin to make good combinations, bring senior players, add juniors to the combination. Instead, Wahab suggests the action 'should start working', suggesting without giving a command which reduces the intrusion on the selectors' autonomy.

4.8 Apologize Strategy

This is a strategy that will lessen the threat to face for the listener by providing an apology. It was used by the cricketers 3 times, accounting for 3.75% of all the strategies used. Generally, this strategy was used by speakers to represent that they requested forgiveness and admitting the impingement (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 187).

Example C-14 (Umar Gul – 14.2): I waited for a week and cancelled my other engagements and went with the Balochistan team, but didn't get a response from the PCB! An organisation that is totally unethical! I don't know if things will ever change," I said, "I don't think so. This, as much as a criticism, is an apology or hedge, as the beginning "I don't know" helps to remove any blame from his behavior by making his frustration seem more like a question.

When Wahab Riaz was chairman of selection committee, he did not send any messages back, Example C-16 (Wahab Riaz – 16.4): "I texted him 4-5 times when he was chairman, but he didn't message back. The use of the respectful "bhai" (brother) is a tacit apology for the criticism that follows (that nothing was done about his messages). Displays respect when complaining.

4.9 Nominalize Strategy

I. Nominalize Strategy This strategy was the least used strategy, with only one use. The use of nominalization is a way of creating distance and formality (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 207) by converting verbs and clauses into abstract noun phrases.

In Example C-18 (Haroon Rasheed – 18.3) "*Indian cricket associations are richer than PCB.*"

This statement is an easy comparison. In the context of the interview, however, Haroon was talking about 'lack of financial planning' and 'administrative mismanagement' —that is, nominalizing the criticism. The comparison is formalised with the nominalised noun 'associations' in the statement itself.

4.10 Incur a Debt / Not Indebting the Hearer Strategy

J. Incur a Debt / Not Indebting the Hearer Strategy the second most used strategy was this one; this strategy was used 1 time. This is a strategy of granting the hearer a debt or the hearer to the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 210). Abdul Razzaq (20.3): "If I get a chance to work with PCB in the future, I believe that I can create players for Pakistan.

By phrasing his desire to work with the PCB as a conditional offer ("*If I get an opportunity*"), Razzaq implicitly acknowledges that the PCB would be doing him a favor, incurring a debt of gratitude, which softens the request.

5. DISCUSSION

The results revealed that there were 10 negative politeness strategies but the cricketers utilized eight out of these. The most common strategies used were: Hedging (20%), Impersonalization (17.5%), Giving Deference (17.5%), and Stating the FTA as a General Rule (15%). It was obvious that the cricketers progressively wanted to save the PCB officials' faces by using negative politeness strategies in their media statements. The cricketers took the negative approach in their rhetoric to try and lessen the risk to the board's face. Further, they wanted to keep good relations with the PCB as they did not want to be isolated from the cricketing system. In terms of power, the data showed that there was an asymmetrical power relationship between the cricketers (especially former players) and the PCB officials. The power is deliberately being comprehended by the cricketers since there are contracts, coaching opportunities, access to cricketing infrastructure that are under the control of PCB. However, the cricketers countered this attitude towards the officials by employing the negative politeness strategy to minimize the feeling, make the criticism more palatable and keep the door open for future collaboration.

Obviously, the level of imposition was quite clear in the cricketers' statements, whether they were in the negative strategies, in the sense of criticizing selection policies, administrative instability and favoritism; at the same time, the cricketers tried to minimize imposition with some of the words and phrases used in their negative strategies. These words and phrases are

followed by examples such as; I believe, I think, it seems, the system, every chairman, should be etc.

The negative politeness strategy is one of the politeness strategies Brown and Levinson's (1987) mentioned in their theory which is used to preserve the negative face of listeners. Hence, eight negative strategies were applied in the cricketers' speeches to the PCB. Based on this, it is deduced that the interactions between the cricketers and the cricket board are greatly influenced by the Pakistani culture. Pakistani culture is highly collective, authority-oriented and indirect, where people tend to be accepted by others. This strategy is used many times, indicating that the interlocutors were fairly distant from each other when using it. The cricketers, in most of the above examples made in the analysis, did not threaten the faces of the board, and presented cricketing discourse in a diplomatic and strategic manner. The Pakistani cricketing culture states that if the players keep the cordial relationship with the board in the future they will be rewarded by coaching, commentary and administrative jobs. This quotation might reveal one of the underlying motives of the cricketers' application of negative politeness tactics. They had one aim and that was to keep their place in the cricketing eco system, to be seen as constructive critics and not rebels, and to educate the younger generation to learn how to be diplomatic in the future.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the negative politeness strategy employed by former Pakistani cricketers in their media statements towards the Pakistan Cricket Board. The data showed that various negative politeness strategies were preferred by the cricketers. They were very diplomatic and strategic in using their criticisms, using eight out of ten negative politeness strategies. The strategies employed were Hedging, Impersonalizing, Stating the FTA as a General Rule, Being Indirect, Being Pessimistic, Minimizing Imposition, Apologizing. These negative politeness strategies were employed to ensure the freedom of action of the PCB officials, with the result of providing a degree of autonomy to those officials in making decisions and holding them accountable in a face-saving way.

The researcher recommends that further research should be carried out on other politeness strategies including positive politeness, bald on record and off record strategies in the context of cricketing activities such as team huddles, post-match celebrations, social media communication etc. This study concentrated on the use of negative politeness strategies in media statements and it is hoped that future research can scrutinize the use of politeness in other contexts and cultures. They will be able to compare the outcome of this study with the performance of these strategies among the cricketers from other cricketing countries like England, India and Australia.

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