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Discourse Analysis of Pakistani Wedding Invitation Cards during Pandemic (COVID-19)

Abstract

The present study explored the online wedding invitation genre in Pakistan during the covid-19 pandemic. It analyzed the role of socio-cultural religious norms and beliefs in presenting such type of genre with linguistics and non-linguistics features. For this purpose, 120 online wedding cards were collected from Facebook from March, 27 to June 13, 2020. Theoretical and methodological traditions of Bhatia (1993), Miller (1984), and Swales (1990) were used to analyze the data. Grammar of visual design has been used by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) for non-linguistics features. It has been revealed by the genre analysis that there were eight moves e.g. opening, name of parents of bride and groom, a program for wedding, stay home, stay safe, looking forward, and names of the guests. It has been shown by the online wedding invitation cards that people of Pakistan follow the social, cultural, and religious norms when inviting people to their weddings. This study found the social and linguistics implications and enhanced the understanding of online wedding invitation practices during a state of a public health emergency. A comparison of different wedding practices can be done with Muslim society and some other countries like Jordanian wedding practices, Christian, Chinese, and Indian as well which can be used for future recommendations.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, online linguistics behavior, Pakistani wedding practices, genre analysis.

Introduction

Weddings are the most memorable and happiest experience in individuals 'lives. But in the critical time of the coronavirus disease (covid-19) pandemic, the living ways, lifestyles, and celebrations changed intensely. To prevent the covid-19 disease Pakistani Government banned everything like gatherings, funeral gatherings, wedding gatherings, suspended the prayers at mosques, and limited the size of such gatherings to no more than 10. Al-khalidi (2020). And the state of emergency was declared by the Government on March 16, 2020. And Government offices, markets, transport facilities, retailers as well as each and everything shut down to control the virus (covid-19). Some people put themself in quarantine to prevent the disease. It means all these restrictions affected the lives of Pakistani peoples in general and their wedding practices in particular. Since the pandemic started, each traditional gathering was banned in Pakistan.

There are certain preparations for the wedding in normal situations and we wedding cards are one of the big priority in this regard. These cards are considered conventional and socially constructed genres. These invitations are sent orally as well as in written form according to Al-Ali (2006). The method of the invitation is presented differently orally as well as in written form. It differs from one community to another as well from time to time. For example, Pakistani people use a distinctive style of writing on wedding cards. Such type of study helps to consider the social norms of Arab weddings in general and Pakistani weddings in Particular. However, the present research explores the moves from online wedding cards during pandemics (covid-19). And there will be new sights from online analysis of wedding cards which would explore the social, cultural, and religious norms of Pakistani society.

There is a need for vibrant communicative answers in our modern lives. There are a lot of genres and discourses in our surroundings. So, there is a need for multipurpose answers to the questions. To get the genre is not only the understanding of that genre but also communicative capability. It can be

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explained specifically as well as generally. It comprises cultural, social, linguistics as well as religious aspects. Swales (1990) stated that genre purposes as well as aims because it is communicative and different purposes identified by the society. One important thing regarding genre analysis is to identify the text. And then language is analyzed by the professional members of the society. Miller (1984) explains that genre has specific actions. As Fairclough calls it "genre – mixing". Communicative purposes, as well as move-structures, are the necessary elements of genre analysis. There are three interrelated fundamentals of the genre:
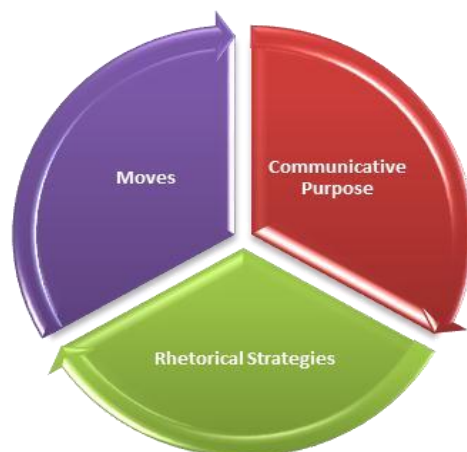
Figure1: Three interrelated elements of genre Bhatia, (1993)

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The purpose of communication is founded on the agreement acknowledged by a given speech community.in other words, it can be said that it is socially acknowledged as well as recognized how the genre shaped. It is not a modified genre. The basic unit of discourse is moving analysis which achieves specific functions Bhatia (1993). The overall purpose of discourse is attributed to each move. There are numerous moves like length, text type, semantic functional parts, etc. So, it can be said that move analysis is both sociolinguistics as well as applied linguistics. The purpose of communication plays a pivotal role in the genre. It explores the internal structure by giving the shape to a text. Additional purposes and communicative purposes are defined by the genre analysis. The overall purpose of communication is analyzed by move analysis as well as purposes in different contexts.

Statement of the problem

Marriages are an integral part of human lives. In a normal situation, people are used to inviting by sending wedding cards. In past, people used to send thread (red or yellow) for invitations, or a letter was sent by one of the close senders to invite them to the marriages. Since the pandemic came, the situation has been changed from physical to a virtual gathering. There is less research on virtual wedding invitations, mostly it has been completed on offline invitations. So, the purpose of the research is to analyze 120 online wedding invitation cards which were collected from Facebook that how people invited by virtual invitations to get the linguistics and non-linguistics features of the cards also cultural, social well as the religious context of Pakistani weddings.

Research questions

- How genre has been performed by analyzing the pattern of different moves in Pakistani wedding invitation cards?
- What are the linguistics features in different moves of Pakistani wedding invitation cards?
- What are the non-linguistics features in Pakistani wedding invitation cards?

Significance of the study

The significance of the study aims to explore the realities of online wedding invitation cards in the Pakistani context. It investigates the linguistics and non-linguistics features of different moves in online

Pakistani wedding invitation cards. It constructs the reality of different Pakistani traditional wedding invitation cards as well as online wedding cards during pandemic (covid-19) which were collected from Facebook, Facebook is a social media platform. The data has been collected from March to June 2020. Theoretical as well as methodological implications were analyzed from Bhatia, Miller, and Swales 'model and grammar of visual design used by van Leeuwen for non-linguistics analysis. The genre analysis identifies the social, cultural, and religious norms of Pakistani society by move analysis of Pakistani wedding invitation cards during the critical time of pandemic (covid-19).

Literature review

Genre analysis is applied in the field of sociolinguistics as academic research. Numerous studies were conducted on wedding invitations. The communication on the cards must be understood by the receivers of the cards. A study has been conducted on it by Clyne and Henry (2004) for this purpose and respondents 'responses were analyzed for communication. A lot of responses were shown by these two groups. A study on Arabic invitation cards was conducted by Al-Ali (2006). Total eight mandatory and non-mandatory generic features were analyzed which were necessary for Jordanian wedding invitation cards. There were 70 invitation cards of Iran were analyzed by Sharif and Yarmohammadi (2013). The pattern of invitation cards was analyzed which was the main aim of the study, seven generic moves and articulation of text were also highlighted.

The wedding invitation cards of three different ethnic communities Chinese, Indian and Malay were analyzed by Kong (1998). Thirty wedding cards were collected of these three communities from the year 2000 onwards. It has been shown by the result that modernism depicted in these cards rather than their traditional native customs and rules for invitations. However, the Malay community maintained its traditional wedding culture for the invitations. The generic and cultural values of Pakistan were analyzed in 50 wedding cards by Yasmin, Naseem, and Sohail (2019). British wedding invitations and Pakistani wedding invitations were compared through this study. It has been explored through this study that there are seven moves which were compulsory and one was optional and in English six were compulsory and one was optional. The main aim of the study was to explore the social-cultural values and main moves of invitation patterns of Pakistan. It highlighted the family life of Pakistan, cultural and religious norms, customs of Pakistani life which constructed the identity of the Pakistani wedding invitation pattern.

The history of Pakistani wedding invitations

Wedding is a serious matter in most Asian cultures. Islam is regarded in Pakistan as a basic code of life. In Pakistan, the wedding is not only the name of cultural values but also the compulsory teachings of Islam. Numerous Quranic verses support and encourage the teachings of Islam in the matter of Pakistani weddings. There are different ways of invitation in Pakistan that are used by Muslim society. In past, when the print version of cards was impossible, people used to send their barbers for the wedding invitation. Barbers would go by foot and used to hand over written invitations where time, the venue was written for a wedding. Apart from it, a lot of people used to send a colored thread especially (red and yellow) for the wedding invitation. And it was knotted as a sign of acknowledgment by the recipients. But the tradition of this thread was less important in the parts of Punjab, Pakistan. Many people used to send letters to their relatives and friends for the invitation to a wedding. Then, after this trend printing press came and people started to send cards for the invitations. in the 1930s and 1940s some cards were written in Persian.

A proposal was sent from the man's side to the bride's family. It was sent by a man who used to be very close to the family. Then after the acknowledgment of the invitation, both families used to get rings and used to know each other. After then both families used to invite their relatives and other people. Numerous weddings were held for the mark of development. There are three main mandatory events in Pakistan Mehandi, Barat, and Walima. And cards according to these three events are divided. These wedding cards are printed mostly on paper-based but also can be made with metals and clothes. In Pakistan, the context is different for "wedding invitation cards and wedding invitation". The culture, social status, customs, social norms, text language, colors are used for the reflection of Pakistani society and its traditions. So, the culture of Pakistan is reflected through linguistics features, semiotics, colors, and communicative orders. Therefore, it is necessary to study the discourse systematically to find out the linguistics, non-linguistics features, and genre analysis of the invitation cards.

Genre is a concept used for functional and formal analysis. Genre is not only used in discourse analysis, sociolinguistics but also in science and other advertisements as well Bhatia (2002). Different scholars presented different definitions. Genere is a class of communicative event where structure, stylistic characteristics, and content is shared shawls (1990). In particular social occasions, a genre is a form of text stated by Kress (1987). In social life, the importance of language changed with different genres. A lot of studies were conducted on the wedding invitation genre. The most significant definition of the genre is defined by Bhatia and Swales (1990). It is a series of communicative events and communicative purpose is shared by each person of the event. It is a recognizable event described by Bhatia (1993). It is identified by the particular discourse community in which it occurs. However, the definition detailed by Bhatia and Swales is not that much different, it is said by Swalmeh (2015) they are together and provide a detailed description of the genre in ESP. There are some common features of the genre:

- Genre is considered as familiar communicative event, purpose and identified by the discourse of the community where it occurred.
- It has its integrity in professional and disciplinary which identified by context, related to text and discursive social construction.
- A genre is a social action that reflects a culture in a social context.
- Those who are outsiders/new in a community have more understanding of the genre.
- It is conventionalized and structured.
- It has a communicative purpose and has lexico-grammatical features.
- The organizational and private intentions socially recognized structure.

In the Pakistani context, different speech acts, the behavior of language, language, and refusing, answering, requesting, apologizing as well as plentiful consideration received in literature. And it has been seen that there is less attention for online discourse like wedding invitations, death, and birthday celebrations as well. It has been noted in the literature review that there is less attention paid to online discourse and most of the concern is regarding offline invitations genre analysis. It has been analyzed the genre analysis to explore the socio-cultural norms of the society. From Arab students, 200 invitation cards were collected. Then it was shown by the result that religious practices and male kinship played an important role in shaping the text. It also pointed that religion is an important factor in the lives of Muslims even in small events also in wedding invitations. A study was conducted by Al-Ali (2006), Sawalmeh (2018) it was explored which are linguistics features and how these tools play an important role to explore the social culture of the society. To find the main aim 200 Pakistani cards were collected and found the purpose of the study by the model of Bhatia. It was shown that there is a deep relation between social purpose and linguistics features. This study was also compared with previous and it was pointed out that there is a strong relation of religion with bride and groom's background. So, in short, it can be said that previous research is a first step towards the study of the online context of wedding invitation cards of Pakistan.

Methodology

Facebook is a famous social platform from which the data was collected.120 online Pakistani wedding invitation cards were collected from March 27 to June 13, 2020. The nature of the research is descriptive. The data was analyzed by theoretical and methodological traditions of Bhatia (1993), Miller (1984), and swales (1990). And the model of grammar visual design used by Kress and van Leuween (2006). It was shown by genre analysis that there was eight move in the online Pakistani wedding invitation cards. And these moves explore the social, religious, cultural, linguistics, and non-linguistics features of Pakistani wedding cards during covid-19. It was analyzed by different moves that how Pakistani people follow the cultural, social, and religious norms during the pandemic (covid-19).

Results and discussions

It has been analyzed that there were eight moves in online Pakistani wedding invitation cards. Each move is identified with sub-moves like opening, bride and groom's name, guests, the program for wedding, stay home stay safe, etc. There is a big difference between traditional Pakistani wedding invitations and virtual wedding invitations.

Move 1: Opening

This move is considered the most important move in Pakistani wedding invitations. And it is written in the center of the wedding card. It indicates the Muslim society that follows the rules and regulations of Islam. Quranic verses are written with different writing styles by using different font sizes. It is the symbol of blessing. It is used to save the bride and groom's life from evil eyes. It also shows the Pakistani culture of Muslim society.

Move 2: Name of parents of bride or groom

There are 73 cards out of 100 that showed this move is necessary on the card. It is examined that it means the child is protected by his/her parents and they are the guardian of the child. It also means that parents are fully involved and take interest in his/her child's marriage. The name of the parents is shown on the wedding card as the identity of the child. It also explores the culture of the Muslim society how parents take responsibility for the wedding.

Move 3: Inviting the guests with pleasure

There 87 percent of cards showed that this move is necessary for Pakistani society. It means the people of Pakistan are very happy to invite their friends and relatives to their daughter/son's marriage. They use different verbs, adjectives like delighted, cordially invited, desire, integrity, and request to capture the courtesy of the people. It also shows that Pakistani society is extremely keen to invite their adored ones.

Move 4: Name of Bride and Groom

The data indicates that there are 65% of cards explored this move where the name of the bride is written, excitingly, there were such samples where the name of the bride is not written. It was written like D/O Ali Ahmad. It has been viewed through the analysis that some people do not want to show the name of their daughter because they think cards are distributed to relatives and friends. So, they do not prefer to reveal the identity of their daughter. It can be said that there are some restrictions that Islam imposes for females and there are some cultural and social norms as well.

Move 5: Program for wedding

This move is compulsory and it is written on all online wedding invitation cards. Pre-covid halls and parks were used to invite the wedding guests but since the pandemic came it was observed that people were invited virtually like through zoom meeting by sending the links in their emails. So, that people come to attend the ceremony live and may not miss the opportunity. It is written at the center of the cards like date, time, and venue, and the same was written on virtual invitations. It can be said that people get happy by inviting their families and friends on the occasion of happiness.

Move 6: Looking forward

This move was found in all online wedding invitation cards. Because people use it to invite the guests warmly and look forward to their arrival. They write the name with a place to show the wealth as well as status by mentioning the names and places. But here in the virtual invitation, it means to look forward to the people virtually attending the ceremony so that people may enjoy the online wedding by joining the link. This virtual gathering started because of a pandemic (covid-19) to keep the social distance.

Move 7: Name of the guest

It is written on each card the same it was written on virtual cards to invite the guest with his/her name along with greetings. So, it is observed that these are social and cultural norms in Pakistan that the guest is invited on the weddings with warm greetings. It is also written the same on printed cards as on online wedding cards.

Move 8: Stay home, stay safe

This move was found in all online wedding cards. It is not used on printed cards. Since the pandemic came, this phrase is found on online wedding invitation cards. It means that attendees should stay at

home and they should pray for the bride and groom's life full of blessings. So, the data showed that the care of people's health is mandatory, that's why they should stay at home to prevent the coronavirus and attend the wedding virtually and enjoy at their homes. This is once again a culturally and socially restricted norm that was found during the pandemic (covid-19).

Non-linguistics features

The invitation genre has certain types of non-linguistics features. Such as text size, borders of the cards, font size, different colors according to different moves, ribbons, different roses, hearts which are printed on cards to attract the people's attention. It leaves an eye-catching effect on the receivers. Receivers take interest by seeing such colorful wedding cards, this thing urges them to attend the ceremony. The receivers get different psychological implications to the event when they are handed over or sent these wedding cards. In virtual invitations, people are also attracted by colorful notes by highlighting the information of the event and they got interested to attend and having numerous variables in their minds. The data showed that there are different attractive colors on the cards like red, green, white, black but different cards were in silver, half white, purple which were found virtually. The red color indicates the love of the sender while the white color shows the gentleness, truth, and sincerity of the people. These colors also showed the social, educated, and cultural background of the people, educated families used simply as well as elegant, which shows their educational status as well. In virtual wedding invitation cards Time, new Roman was used and the headings were bold for attractiveness. So, all these non-linguistic features show the social, cultural, economic status as well as customs that are dominant in current Pakistani society.

Conclusion

The coronavirus affected the social lives of Pakistan in common and wedding practices mainly. The present research explored the different moves with linguistics and non-linguistics features which indicate the social, cultural, and religious norms of Pakistani society. The data showed how Pakistani people were restricted during the critical time of the pandemic (covid-19). And how people were invited to the weddings which were on virtual mode. These virtual gatherings were not like traditional physical weddings which were celebrated in halls and different parks. The data was collected from Facebook which is a social famous platform, from where 120 online Pakistani wedding invitation cards were collected from March to June 2020. Theoretical and methodological traditions of Bhatia (1993), Miller (1984), and swales (1990) were used to analyze the data. Grammar of visual design used by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) for non-linguistics features. The nature of the research is qualitative which explored the socio-cultural genre of Pakistani context from wedding cards. There were eight wedding moves like opening, names of parents of bride and groom, inviting the guests with pleasure, program for wedding, name of the guest, stay home, stay safe phrases and looking forward as well. It also has been indicated that social, cultural as well as religious norms powerfully affected the linguistics performance during their social practices in Pakistan. Apart from it, religious and social activities were also maintained even during the pandemic virtually where people united by sending virtual ceremony links. It means during pandemic people kept safe because health is the priority during covid-19 and people also enjoyed the gatherings by joining the online links which sent through Emails. The research suggests its implication in academics. A comparison of different wedding practices can be done with Muslim society and some other countries like Jordanian wedding practices, Christian, Chinese, and Indian as well which can be used for future recommendations.

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