

Citation: Zaib, F., Nawaz, S., & Hussain, R. (2021). Use of Pre-Invitation Signaling Politeness: A Descriptive Study. *Global Language Review*, VI(II), 181-190. [https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2021\(VI-II\).20](https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2021(VI-II).20)



Use of Pre-Invitation Signaling Politeness: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

Better understanding in relationships can be achieved by applying pre-invitation and politeness strategies. The major focus of the current research was to explore the frequency and usage of pre-invitation in making polite utterances. Data for the current study was gathered from professional field people. The participants of the professional field were the 60 teachers of Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Baghdad-ul-jadeed campus). The questionnaire was devised by the researcher that was comprised of five-point Likert-Scale, close-ended items. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using a descriptive statistical technique with SPSS(V-20) against each statement. The study was delimited on certain grounds, not taking unlettered people as a sample of the study. The data was gathered quantitatively via questionnaires. The result was found to be significant. The results showed that the majority of professional field people use pre-invitation in their daily discourses. Moreover, the frequent use of pre-invitation indicated that their basic purposes are; to show politeness and to save the face of each other as well. In the light of findings, some recommendations are proposed for future research.

Key Words: Communication, Politeness, Face-Saving, Pre-Sequence, Pre-Invitation, First Pair Part (FPP), Second Pair Part (SPP)

Introduction

Communication means to share ideas and to take part in the interchanging of information or to connect with others (Oweis, 2013). Interchange of information and thoughts can be possible through different mediums, i.e., verbal, non-verbal cues, and written words. It is an exchange of ideas between interlocutors. The conversation is the most significant and captivating activity for human beings, and a large part of their lives spend in conversation, and it is a mean of communication. The conversation is not only a linguistic code but also a way of using language socially (Mey, 1993). Our words have effects on our interlocutor, and it is not just a matter of

conveying information. Rather it is more than that - to do things with words (Mey, 1993). For the development of good relationships and avoidance of conflict, we use pre-sequences, pre-invitation, and politeness as the main means and strategies.

Mechanism of Communication

Communication mechanisms, i.e., turn-taking, play a vital role in interaction, particularly face-to-face correspondence. The turn-taking mechanism varies from culture to culture. Without being nominated, each person should speak at his turn that is the fundamental rule of conversation (Paltridge, 2006).

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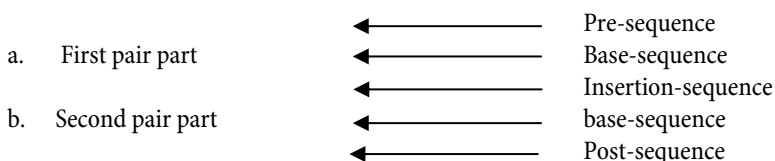
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These rules make conversation organized and successful. In other words, turn-taking is concerned with who, when, and for how long.

Adjacency Pairs

According to [Richards and Schmidt \(1983\)](#), adjacency pairs are automated utterances in pairs that are used in our conversation and can easily be noticed. These utterances are produced by two speakers in sequential order.



Schematic Representation of Sequence Expansion

Pre-Sequences

There are many sequences that are fabricated in more than a single adjacency pair and can be clustered under a general term that is pre-sequence. Dis-preferred responses can be avoided with the use of pre-sequence. In our daily conversation, we are using pre-sequences without knowing its terminology. We frequently use pre-sequence as a courteous and safe means. Possible responses of pre-sequences:

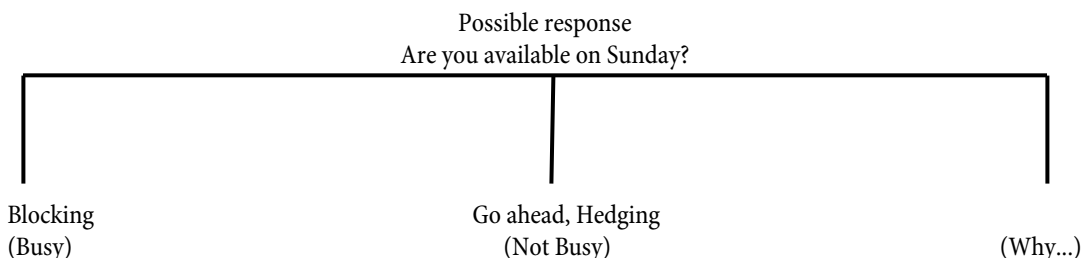


Figure 1: [Schegloff \(1995\)](#) Possible Responses

Pre-sequence provides the ground for a further sequence, and they also perform a negative face-saving function ([Cutting, 2005](#)). Pre-invitation is an important type of turn that is heard as foreshadowing a certain potential type of next turn ([Schegloff, 1990](#)).

Pre-invitation

Before an invitation, an utterance can be made to check the fulfillment that is pre-invitation (Yule, 1996). This common phenomenon regulates harmony and trouble-free relationships among

Sequence Expansion

The adjacency pair is one basic component of sequence building which is based on pairs: FPP and SPP ([Schegloff & Sacks, 1973](#)). Expansions of sequence may take place in three different places in conversation one is prior to the base FPP, between FPP (the base) and SPP (the base) and next to the base SPP that are called pre-expansion, insert expansion, and post-expansion, respectively ([Schegloff, 2007](#)).

groups of society and enables the warmth of connectedness among families and friends and can be witnesses in daily life conversation. The initial turn of a pre-invitation is comprised of two components, and it projects the probability that a base FPP - an invitation- will be produced that leads to the initiation of a relevant (SPP) - a response- to the pre-invitation. After getting a response, the projected occurrence of the base FPP makes the invitation contingent ([Schegloff, 1995](#)). The action of invitation paves the way for pre-sequence. Are you doing anything? ([Atkinson and Drew, 1984](#);

[Levinson, 1983](#)) and What are you doing this weekend? ([Schegloff, 1995](#)) are the representative types of pre-invitations. [Sacks \(1992\)](#) stated the purpose of the aforementioned questions are to check the likelihood for an invitation, not looking for information. Pre-invitation could be placed near the beginning or prior to the terminating of a conversation. Pre-invitations are employed to obtain an idea about the realization of the invitation.

Politeness

Politeness is a fixed concept, and pre-invitation is interlinked with politeness. We adopt an appropriate behavior in specific situations that is an attempt to maintain and achieve the successful social relationship with others ([Lakoff, 1972](#)). Within a particular culture, it is possible to identify different general principles for being polite in social interaction. Being tactful, modest, generous and sympathetic towards others are some of these principles (Yule, 1996), and to be polite, we use pre-invitation as a device. One can deviate from the conversational principles in order to be polite and when the interaction is about to damage face. ([Brown and Levinson, 1987](#)).

Face- an Important Notion

Face - the public self-image that individuals want to claim for themselves, and it can be maintained, damaged or enhanced through interaction ([Brown & Levinson, 1987](#)). Two aspects of the face ([Brown & Levinson, 1987](#)):(a) Negative Face: It refers to a person's need to be independent and freedom from imposition. (b) Positive Face: It refers to a person's need to be liked or accepted by others.

Significance of the Study

Awareness of the importance of using the pre-invitation conversation is a new concept in terms of its relation to politeness. The current study will be helpful to provide effective understanding to allow people to use pre-invitation in a better way that indicates politeness. Moreover, the study will impart insight on the part of relationship development by using politeness tactics. Pre-invitation use is one of the best strategies of politeness. The current study will give the awareness of the pre-invitation roles in

daily discourses and also manifest the frequency of using pre-invitation in professional field discourses.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the current study are to:

1. Investigate the importance and role of pre-invitation in discourses.
2. See the frequency of using pre-invitation in professional field daily routine discourses.

Research Questions

- Does the use of pre-invitation signal politeness?
- To what extent pre-invitations are used in the discourses of the professional field people?

Review of Related Studies

Twitter *likes* are not simply neutral ways of acknowledging a post or comment but also display various stances toward the content that is being liked, with such stances forming the basis for the invitation and complaint sequences ([Raclaw, Durante, & Marquardt, 2021](#)). To make an acceptable invitation in an international setting, there are sequences that should be followed. Responding to the invitation is another stage that should be acquired to provide a suitable response to the invitation. Learners should acquire the socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic rules of the foreign or second language to avoid them using the rules of their mother tongue, to express intention in the other culture, and their knowledge will enable them to communicate effectively with native speakers of the English language. (Kamaridinovna, 2021). Inauthenticity and deviation in film dialogues are due to lack of invitation sequences ([Ryan & Granville, 2020](#)). The woman learners tend to use adjacency pairs, and man tends to use overlap more frequently than other types of sequences ([Juvrianto, 2020](#)). Knowledge of pre-invitation can help the Vietnamese learners of English in using them more effectively in inappropriate situations ([Hanh, 2010](#)). Dung (2010) tried to give a good understanding of pre-invitation, its meaning, and usage in conversation by comparative and contrastive methods and collected pre-invitation examples from many books, documents, and stories

in English and Vietnamese language. The same kind of work has been done on ESL textbooks invitations (Bernsten, 2002). After reviewing the related literature, the researcher finds the gap and tries to investigate the frequency of pre-invitation. Moreover, the findings will help the learner/speaker to use pre-invitation effectively in conversation.

Research Methodology

The element that distinguishes the present research from previously done work and provides the new ground to the current research was an innovative design that was based on Schegloff (1973) model. The

sample of the present quantitative study consisted of 60 teachers of IUB (Baghdad-ul-jadeed campus). A convenient sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 60 teachers. The researcher designed the questionnaire that was used as a data collection tool. The piloting of the questionnaire to check its reliability was done prior to distributing the questionnaire for collecting data from the desired sample. The adapted questionnaire comprised of 11 close-ended items using a five-point Likert Scale that was (5) Always (4) Often (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never. The data were analyzed on SPSS(V-20) to find out the results in terms of frequency and percentage. Results are displayed by graphs.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

Table 1.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.873	11

The reliability was measured for 11 statements of the questionnaire. For this purpose, the questionnaire was distributed among ten teachers of IUB who were not part of the sample of the current study. SPSS (V20) was used to analyze the results. The Cronbach alpha value of 11 questions was .873, which is a strong indication of the reliability of the questionnaire.

Use of Pre-Invitation to Invite

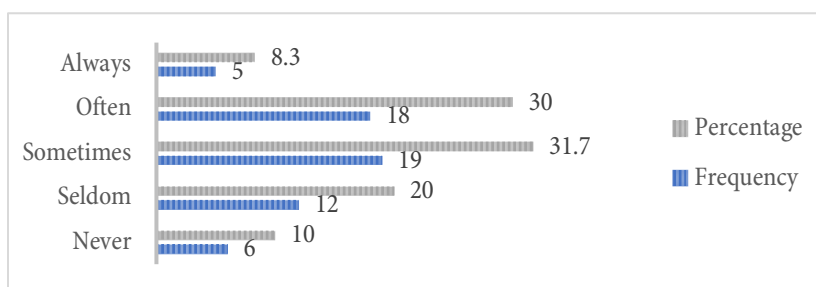


Figure 1: I use Pre-Invitation

The statistics show that 20% seldom use pre-invitation to invite others, 10% never use them. While 30% often, 8.3% always and 31.7% sometimes use pre-invitation. Hence figure illustrates that the

Findings

For the convenience of the reader, the major and detailed information of the results were displayed by using graphs. The following points summarize important findings of the study:

majority of the participants use pre-invitation sometimes to invite others, whereas few respond that they always do so.

Use of Pre-Invitation Consciously

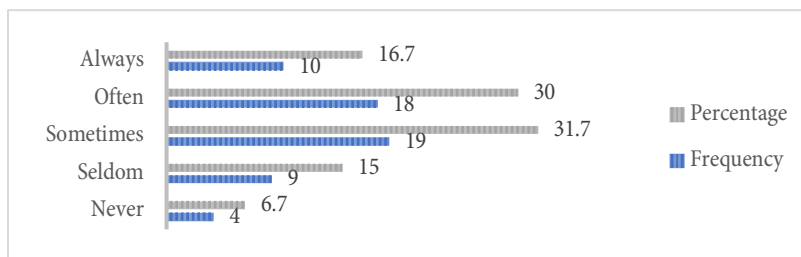


Figure 2:

I use Pre-Invitation Consciously

The findings demonstrate that 16.7% responded that they *always* use pre-invitation consciously, 15.0% *seldom* use them. 31.7% *sometimes*, 30.0% *often*, whereas 6.7% *never* use them. Hence in the verbal scale, the respondents who think that *sometimes* they

use pre-invitation consciously are in majority, whereas the respondents who believe that they *never* use pre-invitation intentionally in their daily discourse are few in number.

Use of Pre-Invitation Unconsciously

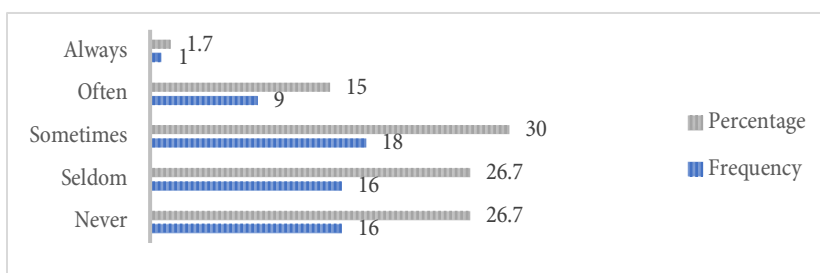


Figure 3:

I use Pre-Invitation Unconsciously

The findings illustrate that 26.7% *never* use them unconsciously, whereas 26.7% *seldom*, 30.0% *sometimes*, 15.0% *often*, and 1.7% *always* use them unconsciously. Hence in simple words, the respondents who think that *sometimes* they use pre-

invitation unconsciously are in the majority, whereas the respondents who believe that they *always* use pre-invitation intentionally in their daily discourse are few in number.

Pre-Invitation and Social Distance

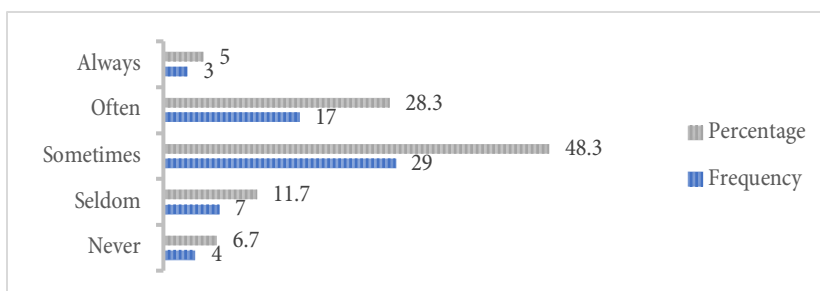


Figure 4: Pre-Invitation Depends upon the Social Distance

The graph shows that 6.7% disagree with the above statement, 11.7% *seldom*, 48.3% *sometimes*, 28.3% *often*, whereas 5.0% agree that social distance matters. So, in order to summarize the result, we can say that majority of the respondents favour the view

that *sometimes* social distance matters, whereas few of the respondents come up with the opinion that formality scale *always* plays a significant role in this particular phenomenon.

Use of Pre-Invitation to check the Realization of the Invitation

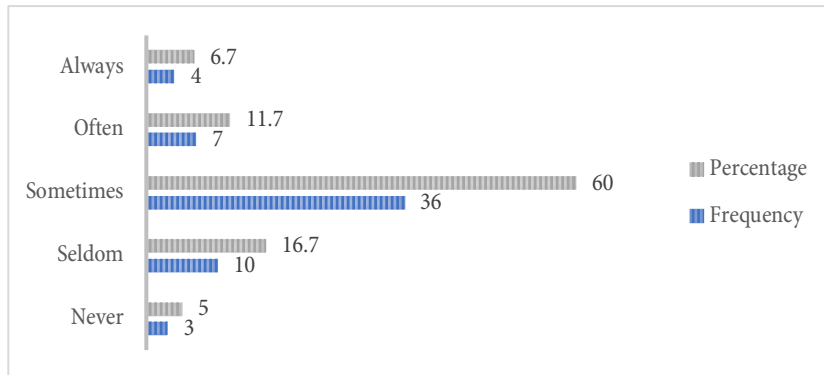


Figure 5: I use Pre-Invitation to check the Realization of the Invitation

The graph shows that 5.0% opine that they *never* use pre-invitation in their life to check the realization of the invitation. 16.7% *seldom*, 11.7% *often*, 60.0% *sometimes*, whereas 6.7% *always* do so. Hence the interpretation of the above graph in a verbal scale is

that *sometimes* the majority of the users employ pre-invitation to check the realization of the invitation, whereas few are totally disagreed with the above-mentioned statement.

Use of Pre-Invitation by people in Daily Conversation

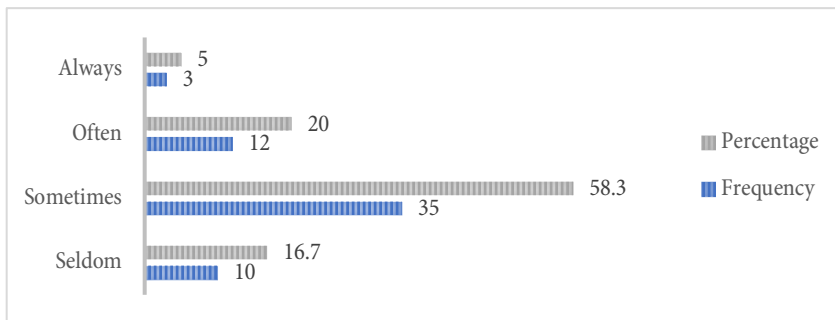


Figure 6: Not only me other people also use Pre-invitation in daily Conversation

The above graph denotes that 5.0% *always*, 16.7% *seldom*, 58.3% *sometimes* whereas 20.0% *often* observe people using pre-invitation in their daily conversation. Thus, the description of the above

graph in words scale is that *sometimes* most of the participants use pre-invitation in their daily discourses, whereas few users are *always* observe the same phenomenon.

Pre-Invitation: a Sign of Sensibility

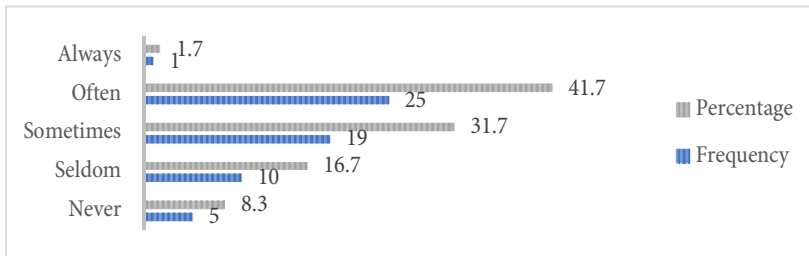


Figure 7: In my point of view, users of Pre-invitation are sensible people

The graph depicts that 16.7% *seldom*, 31.7% *sometimes*, 1.7% *always*, 41.7% *often* consider the users of pre-invitation as sensible people while 8.3% *never* think so. Thus, the participants who consider

pre-invitation users as sensible people are greater in number, while the participants who think that pre-invitation is *always* a sign of sensibility are fewer in number.

Pre-Invitation and Professionalism

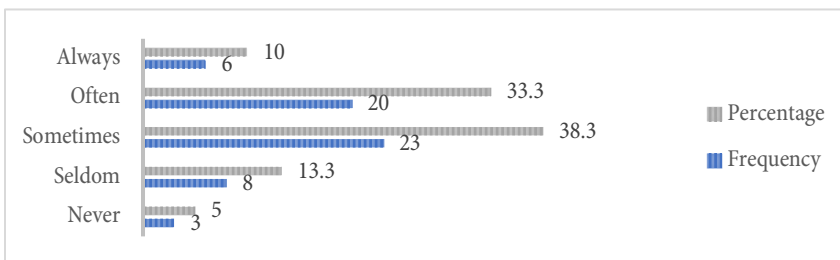


Figure 8: Professional people are Pre-invitation users

The above findings show that 5.0% say they *never* observe this phenomenon. 13.3% opine that professional people are *seldom* users of pre-invitation. Whereas 38.3% favour the statement that professional people *sometimes* use them, 33.3% *often*, and 10.0% *always* use pre-invitation.

Therefore, the result describes that majority of professional people are Pre-invitation users, and *sometimes* they use them on the other hand, few respond that they never use them in their daily discourses.

Pre-Invitation and Intimate Relationship

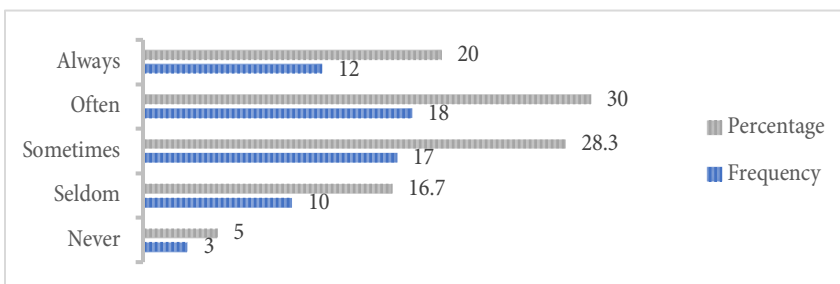


Figure 9: An Intimate Relationship, Pre-Invitation is Less Frequently used

The graphs depict that 20.0% pre-invitation is *always* less frequently used in an intimate relationship. 5.0% say that pre-invitation is *never* required in an intimate relationship. 16.7% *seldom*, 28.3% *sometimes*, while 30.0% often think that pre-invitation is less frequently used in an intimate relationship. On the account of the results majority of

the participants respond that they *often* less use pre-invitation in their discourses because they believe that in an intimate relationship, there is not much need to take the help of pre-invitation whereas few believe that pre-invitation helps them even in their intimate relationship.

Pre-Invitation leads to less chances of Rejection

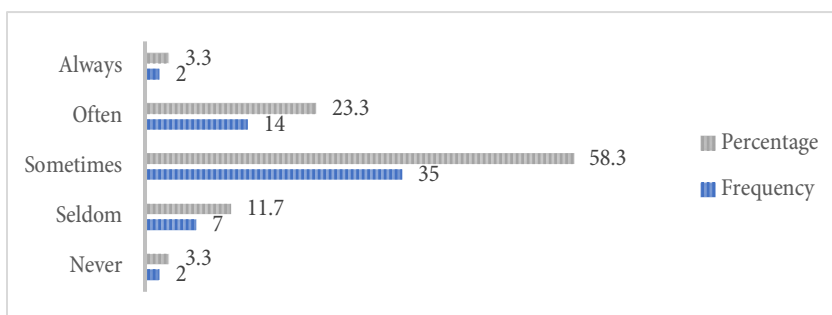


Figure 10: There is less Possibility of rejection in Pre-Invitation

The graph shows that 23.3% are *often*, 11.7% are *seldom*, 58.3% say *sometimes* there is less possibility of refusal in pre-invitation, whereas only 3.3% say that there is *always* less possibility of rejection in pre-invitation. 3.3% have disagreed with the statement.

Consequently, the respondents who think *sometimes* there is less possibility of rejection in Pre-invitation are greater in number, whereas respondents who completely agree and disagree with the statement are equal in number.

Pre-Invitation and Politeness

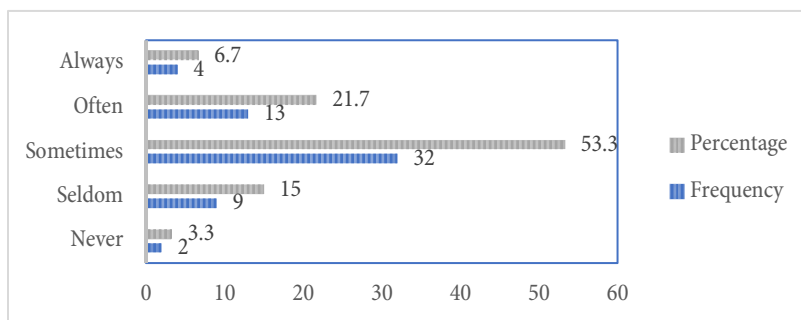


Figure 11: My use of Pre-Invitation shows Politeness

The above-mentioned graph illustrates that 15.0% *seldom*, 53.3% *sometimes*, 21.7% *often*, and 6.7% *always* use pre-invitation to be polite. While 3.3% view that their use of pre-invitation *never* reveals politeness. Hence the graph shows that the majority

of pre-invitation users *sometimes* employ pre-invitation as a politeness strategy in their discourses and whereas few respondents say that they do not think so.

Table 2. Overall Result of Responses: Pre-Invitation

N	60
Mode	3
Median	3.00
Mean	3.10

It illustrates the overall responses of the participants. The 3.10 is the mean of 60 respondents, the median is 3.0, it means 50% of respondents use pre-invitation never or seldom, while 50% of respondents use pre-invitation often or always. Mean that is 3 stipulates most of the participants *sometimes* use pre-invitation.

Discussion

Certain findings of the present study emerged as vital and provided remarkable insight. Indirectness is a feature of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987, [Leech, 1983](#), and [Searle, 1979](#)) and indirect *speech acts* are used to be courteous in conversation ([Leech, 1983](#)). In pre-invitation directive speech acts are used in order to prepare the ground for invitation. So, politeness, indirectness, and pre-invitation are closely chained. As a convincing device, they accommodate to avoid the problem of non-acceptance before it emerges. Precursory works were almost the same on Pres having the same research designs and research methodology, but this study equates pre-invitation with a politeness that is rooted on [Schegloff \(1973\)](#) model. Prior to the researcher, no work was carried out on the frequency of the pre-invitation in general and specifically in Pakistan. So, the current study is novel and the first of its kind. Taking into consideration ethical issues like confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher collected the data. The current study has been carried out with vigilance to reassure the reliability of the findings and validity as well, however, some limitations should be taken into consideration while giving descriptive details. The participants were from the professional field that is the first delimitation of the study. The convenient sampling technique is also another delimitation. Cutting out the unlettered people, the data were collected from teachers of IUB that was laborious because of their strain schedule. Ultimately the major limitation of the study is to investigate the use of pre-invitation in Urdu (native language) because in our daily life, we use Urdu

language in a professional setup. For this purpose, the researcher devised a questionnaire in code-mixing language patterns to represent the real phenomenon of daily discourse. The reason of developing such kind of questionnaire is that the proficiency level of professional field people might be excellent, but in their daily life, they use their native language following code-mixing pattern. The development of such type of questionnaire is also first in its kind.

Conclusion

The current study disposes the relationship of pre-invitation with politeness in Pakistani context. The results may provide the platform for further study. The results manifest that majority of pre-invitation users are professional field people and their more frequent use stipulates their basic intention and purpose that is to show politeness and to save the face of each other as well. They have to talk to their colleagues, competitors, rivals and boss in day-to-day. They adopt pre-invitation as a courteous gesture in order to avoid expressing negative thoughts towards each other. The utmost rationale of performing this is to shun disputes between the colleagues and parties and to reduce the unpleasant propensity. To be polite is the need of their profession also. For survival of harmony in relationship and avoidance of failure in communication adoption of politeness as a strategy is the need of time.

Recommendations

Hence taking findings into consideration, the researcher has advanced the following aspects for further study: current research was conducted in the Bahawalpur area, it may be duplicated at different levels in other areas. For further research on the same topic, different data collection tools could be utilized like interviews, recordings, observation and descriptive details via adopting a mixed-method research approach.

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