

# Generic Moves and Move Strategies in Job Application Letters Written by Pakistani Graduates

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the generic moves and move strategies in the job application letters of Pakistani graduates. In order to analyze the generic moves, by following (Bhatia, 1993; Haji, 2023) and (Al-Ali, 2004; Sattar, Khurshid, and Anwaar, 2024) frameworks, a model containing eleven moves was developed. Using this model, ten job application letters written by Pakistani graduates were manually examined. The findings of the present study revealed that Pakistani applicants frequently used nine moves out of 11 moves. In their job application letters, Pakistani graduates frequently used straight forward and direct strategies to provide explicit information in their job application letters while keeping professional tone and still follow courtly expressions. It also observed that Pakistani graduates also use the techniques to grab the attention of the potential employer. The results of present study were mostly agreed with previous studies (Al-Ali, 2004; Bhatia, 1993; Henry and Roseberry, 2001; Khan and Tan, 2012). The results of the present study will be helpful for fresh graduates to write an effective job application letter. It is advised that to conduct further study to create a genre-based syllabus.*

## KEYWORDS:

Generic, lexico-grammatical, job application letters, moves, move strategy

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## INTRODUCTION

A job application letter, often known as a cover letter, is a formal business letter that employs specialized language (Bhatia, 1993; Pierini, 2014). It adheres to some standards that are recognized by the business community. The initial communication between a possible employer and the candidate is through a letter of job application. "The main function of a job application letter is persuasive," claims (Bhatia, 1993; Rahman, 2020). It is merely intended to draw attention to the key and crucial elements of the candidate. Thus, clarification is considered to be the letter's primary purpose.

Job application letters create their own genre since they not only have clear communicative goals but also a clear organizational structure (Bhatia, 1993). The first researcher to examine the format of job application letters was Bhatia (1993). His research inspired others to do the same (Nahar, 2013; Rahim and Arifin, 2017), and others studied the linguistic elements and tactics of application letters (Rasmussen and Engberg, 2017). The genre's communicative goals are met by the move structure (Henry and Roseberry, 2001). Move is described as a "discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" by (Haji, 2023; Swales, 2004). Poe wrote that "each move has its own communicative purpose, which together with other moves, contribute to the general communicative purpose of the text" (p. 17). Basically, a move is a text's functional component that emphasizes the rhetorical goal. "Step" is the text unit that comes after "move". Bhatia called it a "strategy" since it refers to how a writer or speaker chooses to interpret the action. The most common set of rhetorical options to accomplish certain communication goals is the step in a move.

There are just a few studies (Bhatia, 1989; Khan and Tan, 2012; ul Ain, Mahmood, and Qasim, 2015) that have looked at the genre of job application letter in the setting of Pakistan. (Bhatia, 1989) examined over 200 scholarship and job application letters from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. His findings demonstrate that South Asian applicants did not want to take advantage of the opportunity to provide a self-evaluation of the strength and stability of their candidature.

(Khan and Tan, 2012) conducted a second study to examine employment application letters in Pakistan. Their results reveal that Pakistani applicants did not show a greater interest in employing the self-degrading techniques examined in Bhatia's study (1989). Additionally, (Brown, 2022; ul Ain et al., 2015) looked the lexico-grammatical characteristics and generic patterns of Pakistani job application letters. Their conclusions demonstrate that every candidate continued to use an unchanging structure that was at odds with global trends.

To learn which techniques and strategies Pakistani graduates employ when writing job application letters, it is still necessary to explore and comprehend the genre of Pakistani job application letters. This study will also be useful for



understanding the communicative practices of Pakistani graduates in this genre within the Pakistani setting.

## Objectives

The goals of the current study are to (1) investigate the generic moves in job application letters written by Pakistani graduates using Bhatia's (1993) and Al-(Al-Ali, 2004) models, and (2) investigate the move strategies in the job application letters of Pakistani graduates.

## Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the generic moves employed by Pakistani graduates in their job application letters?
2. What move strategies do Pakistani graduates use in their job application letters?

## Literature Review

Several studies have employed Bhatia's (1993) model for the analysis of job application letters in different contexts (Al-Ali, 2004; Maasum, Darus, Stapa, and Mustafa, 2007). In their study, (Henry and Roseberry, 2001) found eleven moves in 40 letters written by native English speakers. Their move structure differed from Bhatia's (1993) in a few areas. They introduced four different moves that Bhatia did not present: Citing the job posting, Outlining the Reasons for Applying, Defining the rules and assigning referees. Henry and Roseberry (2001) found no evidence for using Bhatia's moves Using pressure tactics.

Al-Ali (2004) also looked into the lack of contrastive move analysis in the context of several languages in a study he conducted on Arabic and English job application letters. Al-Ali (2004) found ten moves in Arabic and English job application letters and observed that applicants who were native Arabic speakers frequently employed techniques like extolling the virtues of the institutions of the potential employer and appealing to sympathy. These techniques were absent from application letters written by native English speakers.

In addition, Ajmal Khan and Tan Bee (2012) analyzed Pakistani job application letters and identified six moves with establishing credentials as the most significant move. Their findings discovered that Pakistani applicants did not use self-degradation move which was identified by Bhatia (1989). They also noticed that a lot of students faced trouble in expressing themselves creatively and efficiently in their job application letters. Another study reported by (Phanupong and Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017) on the analysis of Indonesian, Filipino, Thai, Singaporean, and Vietnamese Job application letters. They observed that different candidates used different moves because of cross cultural effects. They also proposed a genre-based teaching approach to the learners how to write an effective job application letter.

In order to assist students in writing a successful job application letter, (Tatsanajamsuk, 2017) not only conducted a research on the genre of job application letters but also designed a syllabus based on the move analysis and grammatical understanding of tenses for the students to write an effective job application letter. (Tatsanajamsuk, 2017) also noticed that native English speakers frequently employed simple, present progressive, present perfect, past simple, and future simple tenses.

Moreover, (Rohayati, 2018) analyzed job application letters of agribusiness students and found fourteen moves. Rohayati's (2018) moves structure appeared weak by students' inability in creating impressive effective language used in application letters. This study shared its contribution to the improvement of effecting teaching writing in ESP classes. She also realized differences in her study and previous studies of Bhatia (1993), (Henry and Roseberry, 2001), (Khan and Tan, 2012), and (Wijayanti, 2017).

Another significant study was conducted by (Saleem, Sharif, and Shah, 2019) on the analysis of letters of application written by British university students. Their findings revealed that certain well-established and persuasive moves were absent in job application letters of British university students. They also found that generic organization patterns were not properly followed and even 'homogeneity' in discourse patterns was absent. Their findings also revealed that these application letters' content lacked crucial information and self-evaluation communicative technique.

Moreover, (De Mello et al., 2021; Wijayanti, 2017) analyzed application letters written by Malaysian graduates and they held interviews with five managers from five different organizations. Their results showed that Malaysian students used five moves out of seven moves and the moves that were absent did not create any kind of difficulties in the communicative purposes of job application letters.

Although Bhatia's (1993) model has been applied in the genre of job application letters in earlier researches, but no study to date has employed a comprehensive move model by following Bhatia's (1993) and Al-Ali's (2004) frameworks for the analysis of job application letters written by Pakistani graduates. To fill this literature gap, the current study will analyze the generic moves and move strategies in the job application letters of Pakistani graduates.

## METHODOLOGY

For the current study, ten application letters were collected randomly from ten different Pakistani graduates who had completed their first university degree, and were looking for a job (Keshf and Khanum, 2021; KHAN, RASHEED, RASHID, ABBAS, and MAHBOOB, 2022). The reason for choosing only those job application letters which were written by graduates was to make sure that graduates have certain abilities, skills, and credentials to elevate themselves, have an experience in applying for a job and particularly have until now written application letters. Each application was manually analyzed to identify moves in these letters of application. Qualitatively, the analysis of these job application letters was conducted to identify the moves by using existed Bhatia's (1993) Al-Ali's (2004) model of move analysis of job application. Quantitatively, second step was to count the number of occurrences of each move in all letters and the percentage of each move was put in table.

To facilitate the investigation process, by following Bhatia's (1993) and Al-Ali's (2004) frameworks, a comprehensive model consisting of 11 moves has been developed. The following move model was used for the move analysis of job application letters of Pakistani graduates.

**Table 1:** Move Model for Job Application Letters

Move	Function
1. Establishing contact details	The writer "introduces and sets the scene and the communicative chain" (Snatos, 2002). It consists of two steps.
(a) Contact details of the addresser	The writer mentions his/her name, residential address, contact number, and e-mail address.
(b) Contact details of the addressee	The writer lists the name and designation of the potential employer and company's name and address.
2. Opening	The writer addresses the intended reader.
3. Referring to the job advertisement	The writer refers to the source of information of job advertisement.
4. Introducing candidature	The writer presents his/her candidature for the job.
5. Promoting candidature	The writer lists his/her work experience, skills, abilities and qualification to persuade his/her candidature.
6. Enclosing document	The writer encloses/attaches some other documents such as resume/curriculum vitae.
7. Soliciting response	The writer shows his/her keen desire for further contact by giving his/her contact number and e-mail address.
8. Using pressure tactics	The writer urges the prospective employer to take a quick decision about the services.
9. Ending politely	The writer ends the letter on polite note.
10. Signing off	The writer signs his/her name in a respectful manner and claims the ownership of the letter.
11. Postscript	The writer mentions an additional remark at the very end of the application.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Moves in Job Application Letters of Pakistani Graduates

In answer to research question 1, (Al-Ali, 2004; Bhatia, 1993; Shahnaz, 2022) frameworks were not only used to give names and to define the moves but also to analyze the move structure of 10 job application letters written by Pakistani graduates. The moves that were identified in all job application letters of Pakistani graduates can be seen in table 2, following the existing studies conducted by Bhatia (1993) and Al-Ali (2004).

**Table 2:** Moves in Job Applications Letters of Pakistani Graduates

Moves	Number of letters
1. Establishing contact details	10
(a) Contact details of the addresser	10
(b) Contact details of the addressee	10
2. Opening	10
3. Referring to the job advertisement	08
4. Introducing candidature	10
5. Promoting candidature	10
6. Enclosing document	10
7. Soliciting response	10
8. Using pressure tactics	01
9. Ending politely	10
10. Singing off	10
11. Postscript	02

The table 2 shows that there are 11 moves which are identified in Pakistani job application letters: 1) Establishing contact details 2) Opening, 3) Referring to the job advertisement, 4) Introducing candidature, 5) Promoting candidature, 6) Enclosing documents, 7) Soliciting response, 8) Using pressure tactics, 9) Ending politely, 10) Singing off, and 11) Postscript.

Based on the analysis of Pakistani job application letters, table 3 shows that there are variations in occurrences of moves employed by Pakistani graduates. The move of establishing contact details had put in first rank in all the tables which was used by all the applicants (100%); followed by the move opening (100%) and referring to a job advertisement (80%) respectively. Meanwhile, the moves of introducing candidature, promoting candidature, enclosing documents, ending politely, and singing off showed similar frequency (100%). The moves of soliciting response and using pressure tactics had 100% and 10% frequency respectively. The last move, postscript, was identified only in two letters with 20% frequency.

**Table 3:** Number of Occurrences of a Move and its Percentage

Moves	Frequency	Percentage
1. Establishing contact details	10	100%
(a) Contact details of the addresser	10	100%
(b) Contact details of the addressee	10	100%
2. Opening	10	100%
3. Referring to the job advertisement	08	80%
4. Introducing candidature	10	100%
5. Promoting candidature	10	100%
6. Enclosing document	10	100%
7. Soliciting response	10	100%
8. Using pressure tactics	01	10%
9. Ending politely	10	100%
10. Singing off	10	100%
11. Postscript	02	20%

## Move 1: Establishing contact details

The move of establishing contact details consists of two steps. In this move, the applicant provides his contact details and also the contact details of his/her potential employer. This move was not included in the move models proposed by (Bhatia, 1989, 1993), (Henry and Roseberry, 2001), (Al-Ali, 2004), (Khan and Tan, 2012). But (Phanupong and Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017; ul Ain et al., 2015) included this move in their schematic structure of job application letter.

### Step (a): Contact details of the addresser

The applicant provides his/her contact number or e-mail address for the ease of the intended reader in case he wishes to consider the applicants. This step was present in all letters of job application. An interesting finding is that this step appears to be the first step of the first move.

It was also noticed that applicant's name was written in capital letters followed by address, contact number, and e-mail address. May be the reason for providing details at the very start of the application for the sake of addressee's convince.

### Step (b): Contact details of the addressee

The applicant lists the name and designation of the potential employer and organization's name and company's address in this move. It is noteworthy to notice that all the applicants with one exception wrote the name and designation of the addressee.

Another important finding is that no applicant did write "To" at the very start of listing the contact details of the addressee. This finding does not agree with the finding of Qurrat-ul-Ain et al. (2015) in which they identified the use of "To" in the job application letters of Pakistani applicants. It means that Pakistani applicants have started to adopt the native English application patterns (consult Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary, 2010, Writing Tutor Page).

It is also observed that some Pakistani graduates mentioned the designation of the addressee first and then the name of the addressee. There was only one applicant who also mentioned the date.

## Move 2: Opening

Opening is the second move and it means to identify and address the target reader in an honorable and respectful way such as 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam'. This move is also called salutation (Henry and Roseberry, 2001) and addressing (Qurrat-ul-Ain et al. 2015). This move shows the interpersonal relationship between the applicant and the recipient. This move was identified in all application letters of Pakistani graduates. It is also noticed that applicants mentioned the name of the intended reader. This finding contradicts with Khan and Bee's (2012) study which was also conducted within Pakistani context.

## Move 3: Referring to the job advertisement

This move indicates the source of information of the available position. A typical job application letters starts with referring to a job advertisement. This move shows when and where the job applicant came to know about the available job. This move appeared as an obligatory move as it was identified in eight application letters of present study. This move was perceived as an obligatory move not only by Al-Ali (2004) but also by Khan and Bee (2012). This move is included as a "step" of Bhatia's Move 2, establishing credential. The sources from where the applicants got information about the job vacancy were "newspaper", "social media", and "company's websites". Examples that are extracted from the Pakistani job application letters are given in the following:

1. I got information from (social media website) that your company is going to hire a security supervisor. ( sample 9)
2. I came to know about the vacancy after visiting the website of your company. (sample 8)
3. I learned about vacancy after visiting your website. (sample 1)

## Move 4: Introducing Candidature

In this move, the applicant presents his/her candidature for the job. This move was recognized in all the application letters of Pakistani graduates. (Nahar, 2013; Saleem et al., 2019) named this move as "offering candidature" while Bhatia (1993, p. 64) presented this move as a move which was divided into further three "steps". This move is realized in the following samples extracted from the job application letters of Pakistani graduates.

1. I am overwhelmed to apply for the post of clerk in (company). (sample 6)
2. I am thrilled to apply for the post of Marketing Services Manager (company). (sample 1)
3. I am writing to apply for the post of Search Engine Optimization Specialist. (sample 5)

## Move 5: Promoting Candidature

Promoting candidature is the detailed and pivotal part of job application letters. In this part, applicants provide important information about themselves. It covers details about “qualification and experience, interest, abilities and achievements etc.” (Bhatia, 1993: 65). The function of this move is not only self-representation and self-appraisal but also to persuade the reader. Bhatia (1993) considered promoting candidature as the most crucial part a job application letters.

Moreover, the findings related to strategies for promoting candidature were amazing. The most common strategies were included: (1) work experience, listing relevant skills, and abilities, (2) listing qualifications. The strategies which did not use by Pakistani graduates are: (1) stating personal interest/hobbies (2) stating reason for apply.

The two strategies that only become visible in Tangpoon-Patanasorn (2020) were also identified in present study. These strategies were (1) objectives (2) productive attitude of applicant toward job opportunity. The applicant states his/her determination and dedication in stating career objectives while describing productive and creative attitude towards job opportunity means applicant directly states his/her keen desire for the opportunity to work with prospective employer. Examples are given in the following:

1. I am a passionate UI/UX designer and can bring innovative ideas and concepts to life for client-based design project. My ambition is to use my skills to contribute to an organization's success while seeking a long term career with room for advancement. (sample 4)
2. I want to become a part of progressive organization where I can get opportunities for professional as well as personal grooming and where I can contribute positively towards achieving the goals of the organization. (sample 9)

Interestingly, the moves that were recognized in previous studies, Al-Ali (2004) and Henry and Roseberry (2001), such as stipulating terms and conditions of employment and naming references were not identified in the present study. May be Pakistani graduates were unaware of these moves.

## Move 6: Enclosing document

This move points to another document that is attached with job application letter. That enclosed document may be a resume or curriculum vitae. The recipient can often understand that document without reading the application letter. Enclosed documents lists candidate's qualification, abilities, skills and experience. This move was not only identified in all application letters but was also written in simple wording. Examples are given below;

1. I have enclosed my resume for your consideration. (sample 7)
2. My C.V. is attached for your review. (sample 4)

Bhatia (1993, p. 67) says about enclosing document that “it is clarificatory not descriptive.” It is also observed that the applicants who had attached their resume with their job application letters did not mention their work experience and related qualifications in detail.

## Move 7: Soliciting response

Soliciting response means to continue further communication. This move serves one of the most important communicative purposes to persuade the intended reader for further contact (Bhatia, 1993). In this move, the applicant offers not only his/her personal contact number or e-mail address for communication but also shows his keen desire for an interview. According to Bhatia (1993), interview is a sign of key success for applicants. (Lesikar, 1984; Maasum et al., 2007) calls this particular ingredient as active drive and describes it as “an invitation for further correspondence, perhaps to answer the reader's question”.

All the applicants showed extreme desire for an interview. This finding of present study agrees with previous studies (Al-Ali, 2004; Hou, 2013; Rahim and Arifin, 2017; Tongpoon-Patanasorn and Thumngong, 2020). In the following, there are extract from the job application letters of Pakistani graduates:

1. I am desperately waiting to meet you soon. (sample 5)
2. I am desperately waiting for a hearing for a hearing from you. (sample 6)

Regarding occurrence of this move in all application letters shows that all the applicants were aware of effective communicative skills.

## Move 8: Using pressure tactics

Using pressure tactics means to urge the prospective employ to take a quick decision about the product or service being available and promoted (Bhatia, 1993). Bhatia (1993, p. 66) argued that “it is rare to find applicants using this move” (Peltokorpi, 2021). This move was only employed by one applicant. Example is given in the following:

- I am required to give notice to (institute) in early August and therefore look forward for an interview from you soon. (sample 10)

- From this study, it becomes clear that pressure tactics are not usually employed in job application letters because they can be perceived as aggressive or manipulative and may actually harm the applicant's chance of being hired. Job application letters are typically seen as a way for the applicants to introduce themselves, highlight their qualifications and express their interest in the position.

Furthermore, using pressure tactics in a job application letter, such as making demands and deadlines, can create a negative impression of the applicant and make them appear difficult to work with the organization. Many Pakistani graduates perceive this move as disrespectful to the employer, who is looking for a candidate who is professional and respectful. Moreover, using pressure tactics may indicate poor communication skills and inability to collaboratively.

### Move 9: Ending politely

Ending politely indicates polite and prototypical ending of job application letters. This move functions as a bridge to show kind-heartedness between the applicant and the potential employer. This move is an expression of appreciation and gratitude. According to (Al-Ali, 2006; Haji, 2023; Loughheed, 2003), this expression of appreciation is not only a formulaic phrase and a conventional approach but also indicates that the applicant is going to close the body of application letters. Ending politely demonstrates applicant's professionalism and good communication skills, which are essential qualities that many employers seek in their employees.

Interestingly, this move was identified in all the application letters. Presence of this move in all the application letters of Pakistani graduates shows that all the applicants were mindful of social norms and cultural expectations, which are important in workplaces. Examples are provided in the following:

1. Thanking you for your precious time. (sample 4)
2. Thanking you for your time and kind consideration. (sample 7,8 )

### Move 10: Singing off

Singing off is the second last move. The writer "signs his/her name in a respectful manner thus claiming the ownership of the letter" (Henry and Roseberry, 2001: 159). Singing off provides a clear and concise ending of the letter and signals that the content of the letter is complete. It can also leave a positive final expression on the reader, which can be important in a competitive job market. In this present study, this move was identified in all the job application letters of Pakistani graduate and it was also noted that all the Pakistani graduates wrote "Yours sincerely" (70%), "Sincerely" (20%), and only one applicant wrote "Yours faithfully". It is important to note that courtly expressions like faithfully and sincerely were used frequently in British era but these expressions are still used in Pakistan and this study proves it.

### Move 11: Postscript

Postscript is the last move and it has positioned at the very end of the letter. The postscript is an additional remark written at the end of the job application letter that provides more information or detail. The primary purpose of using a postscript in a job application is to draw reader's attention to a specific point that the applicant wants to emphasize or to add a piece of information that was not included in the main body of the letter. This move was only identified in two job letters of Pakistani graduates. Example is in the below:

- I would like to show you how my management and supervisory skills improved the marketing rank of a private organization. (sample 1)

This is the most significant finding of this present study. It is important to mention that this move was not included in the schematic structure proposed by Bhatia (1993), Henry and Roseberry (2001), Al-Ali (2004), Khan and Bee (2012), Qurrat-ul-Ain et al (2015). It seems that the use of postscript may be another way of Pakistani graduates to grab the attention of potential employer.

## Move Strategies in Job Application Letters of Pakistani Graduates

In answer to research question 2, the move strategies and grammatical features that were employed in job application letters of Pakistani graduates are presented in the following table 4:

### Move 1: Establishing contact details

Establishing contact details is the very first move and it is divided into two steps: contact details of the addresser and the contact details of the addressee. The lexico-grammatical features were common in these two steps and these grammatical features were noun phrases (name of the addresser and addressee, name of city, designation, etc.). Pakistani graduates mentioned not only their own contact details but also the contact details of their addressee in an explicit way. The pattern that was observed in the job application letters of Pakistani graduates is given in the following:

1. Addressee's name
2. Residential address —contact no.— e-mail address

**Table 4:** Move Strategies in Job Application Letters of Pakistani Graduates

Move	Move Strategy	Common lexico-grammatical feature
1. Establishing the contact details	Explicit information	NP(Noun phrases)
2. Opening	Opening salutation	Dear + NP (Noun phrase)
3. Referring to the job advertisement	Direct strategy	I + verb + NP (job ads.) + PP(Prepositional Phrase)
4. Introducing candidature	Direct strategy	I am + adjective+ to apply for + NP (position)
5. Promoting candidature	Direct strategy	I have (adjective) experience + PP (prepositional phrase)
6. Enclosing document	Direct strategy	I have + verb+ NP
7. Soliciting response	Direct strategy	I + verb+ be reached/contacted + PP
8. Using pressure tactics	Indirect strategy	I am +verb+ PP + NP(institute)
9. Ending politely	Direct strategy	Thanking you for + NP
10. Singing off	Closing salutation	Yours+ adverb
11. Postscript	Direct strategy	1.I + verb + PP + NP + VP +NP 2. I + verb + PP + VP + NP

3. Name of the addressee
4. Designation
5. Company's name
6. Company's address

## Move 2: Opening

The most common lexico-grammatical feature which is frequently used by Pakistani graduates for opening move was: Dear + NP (Noun Phrase). However, all the Pakistani graduates mentioned the position and the name of intended reader of his/ her name. This phenomenon was also identified by (Tongpoon-Patanasorn and Thumnong, 2020). Examples are given in the following:

- Dear Sir
- Dear Marketing department lead (sample 1)

(Lougheed, 2003) asserts that the sender has a variety of choices for addressing the target reader if they are unsure of his name. In addition to Dear Sir or Dear Madam, the applicant may either refer to the recipient by his/her title or use the expression 'To Whom it May Concern'. Thus, opening in formal letters cannot be limited only to use Dear Sir/Dear Madam+ addressee's name.

Hence, the results of this study show that Pakistani graduates use variety of opening salutation. This means that job advertisement not only use the name of potential employer, but only carry the name of institution/company.

## Move 3: Referring to the job advertisement

Pakistani graduates used both direct and indirect strategy in this move. Seven application letters of current study used direct strategy with the following lexico-grammatical set: I + verb + Noun phrase + prepositional phrase (source), and written in past tense. This finding supports the results of Upton and Roseberry (2001). Examples are given in the following:

- I got information from social media (website) that your company is going to hire a Search Engine Optimization Executive Manager. (sample 3)
- I saw your job posting in (newspaper) and immediately had applied. (sample 7)

There were, however, eight job application letters where the source of information was identified in the subject line after the opening and only one applicant employed indirect strategy. As far as the linguistic feature of indirect strategy is concerned, the syntactic structure used by only one Pakistani graduate was: Move 4, which was advertised + Prepositional phrase (source). Example is given in the following:

- With reference to your job advertisement in (newspaper) of July 15, 2021 for position of Assistant Forman, I would like to offer myself as a candidate for your consideration. (sample 10)

Furthermore, it also becomes clear that applicant rarely writes prepositional phrase to mention time at the end of the Move 3. It is important to note that all the lexico-grammatical set using an indirect strategy similar to the characteristics when two moves are blended in one sentence. This finding is agreed with the results of previous studies (Al-Ali, 2004; Bhatia, 1989, 1993; Rasmussen and Engberg, 2017; Tongpoon-Patanasorn and Thumnong, 2020).

## Move 4: Introducing candidature

Move 4 can be achieved by using direct and indirect strategy. The most common lexical feature for the direct strategy among Pakistani graduates was the use of the verb "apply". This verb was found mostly in the clause I am + (adjective) + to apply for + noun phrase (position). The other structures were: I am writing to apply for +Noun phrase, and I am (adjective) to apply for + Noun phrase. Examples are given in the following:

- I am thrilled to apply for Customer Services Manager at (company). (sample 1)
- I am writing to apply for security supervisor in (company name). (sample 9)

It becomes clear that Pakistani graduates preferred direct strategy in the move of introducing candidature. This finding is similar with the results of (Tongpoon-Patanasorn and Thumnong, 2020).

### Move 5: Promoting candidature

Pakistani graduates have employed various strategies in the move of promoting candidature. For the strategy of listing skills and abilities, eight applicants used the following structure: I have (adjective) experience/skills + prepositional phrase. Examples are given in the following:

1. I have more than three years of design experience in digital/e-commerce. I experienced at tackle various needs from landing page design and web app interfaces. (sample 4)
2. I have two years of working experience as a assistant manager in (company's name). (sample 10)

Pakistani graduates used two syntactic structure in listing their education including (1) I graduated (noun phrase) + prepositional Phrase and (2) I am a (adjective) graduate of+ (noun phrase). Examples are given in the following:

1. I graduated from (educational institute) in Bachelor of Business Administration.(sample 1)
2. I am a graduate of (educational institute) in physical education. (sample 9)

### Move 6: Enclosing document

In this move, it was recognized that 80% applicants used direct strategy. In other 20% letters, the indirect strategy was found. The strategy to describe this move often appeared with the following lexico-grammatical features: I + enclosed/attached +NP for your reference/review/consideration. Seven applicants used the same syntactic structure. Examples are given in the following:

1. I have enclosed my resume for your reference. (sample 8)
2. I have attached my CV for your consideration. (sample 10)

Moreover, two candidates employed the following syntactic structure for this move: NP (document) + verb + Noun phrase. Examples are given in the following:

1. Please find my attached C.V. for your kind consideration.(sample 1)
2. My CV is attached for your review. (sample 4)

### Move 7: Soliciting response

The most associated linguistic structure used by Pakistani graduates for the move of soliciting response was: I + verb + be reached/contacted + prepositional phrase. Examples are given in the following:

1. I can be reached through (mobile number) and (e-mail). (sample 5,6 and 2)
2. I would like an oral negotiation with you. (sample 1)
3. I would greatly appreciate an in person interview. I can be contacted through my (contact number) and (e-mail). (sample 8)

### Move 8: Using pressure tactics

This move was only employed by one applicant with indirect strategy and had following syntactic structure:

- I am + verb + prepositional phrase + Noun phrase (institute). Example is given in the following:
- I am required to give notice to (institute) in early August and therefore look forward for an interview from you soon. ( sample 10)

### Move 9: Ending politely

This move was identified in all the application letters. The most frequent associated grammatical structural was given in the following: Thanking you for + Noun phrase, which shows that it is a formulaic expression. At the end of this syntactical structure, "time" and "consideration" were used frequently. Example that are extracted from the job application letters of Pakistani graduates are given below:

1. Thanking you for your precious time. (sample 4)
2. Thanking you for your time and kind consideration. (sample 7,8 )

Two applicants wrote this move in a different way. One applicant wrote "Thank you" and the other applicant mentioned "Thanking you". The presence of this move in Pakistani job applications reveals that Pakistani graduates are more interested in presenting themselves as strong candidates and show positive attitude.

## Move 10: Singing off

The most frequent lexico-grammatical set that has been used by Pakistani graduates for singing off was: Yours + adverb. In this present study, it was noted that all the Pakistani graduates wrote “Yours sincerely” (70%), two applicants mentioned “Sincerely”, and only one applicant wrote “Yours faithfully”. According to Loughheed, phrases like ‘Yours faithfully’, ‘Sincerely’, ‘Sincerely yours’ are suitable for formal letters, while the phrase like ‘Yours truly’, and ‘Best wishes’ are used commonly in informal letters (2003, p. 132). This means that all the Pakistani graduates in the present study follow the generic pattern of “Singing off”.

## Move 11: Postscript

This move was only identified in two letters of Pakistani graduates. This move had following grammatical features: I + verb + PP + NP + VP + NP, (2) I + verb + PP + VP + NP. Examples are given in the following:

1. I would like to show you how my management and supervisory skills improved the marketing rank of a private organization. (sample 1 )
2. I look forward to meeting you in person to discuss how can I contribute to your company as a web designer. (sample 10)

## CONCLUSION

This study has not only investigated the moves in job application letters but also looked at the move strategies that Pakistani graduates have employed in their job application letters.

A comprehensive analysis reveals a total of 11 moves in these job application letters. But the moves which were found consistently in all job application letters of Pakistani graduates are: establishing contact details, opening, referring to the job advertisement, introducing candidature, promoting candidature, enclosing document, soliciting response, ending politely, and singing off. Moreover, the majority of the present findings are aligned with previous studies (Lesikar, 1984; Pho, 2009) (Bhatia, 1993; Henry and Roseberry, 2001; Al-Ali, 2004). The move of postscript was identified in the present study. The presence of the move postscript reveals that Pakistani graduates employ the techniques to gain the attention of potential employer. This suggests that Pakistani graduates exhibit certain different characteristics in the genre of job application letter. Furthermore, on the basis of findings of present study, it becomes clear that Pakistani graduates emphasize direct strategies in their job application letters to provide information explicitly.

Overall, this study contributes valuable insights into the generic moves and move strategies of job application letters written by Pakistani graduates. It also sheds light on the preferences and practices of Pakistani graduates, while also establishing connections with previous research.

Due to time constraints, ten application letters were collected from Pakistani graduates who belonged to the province Punjab of Pakistan. It would be more worthwhile if data were collected from all over Pakistan then the results of the present study will be more effective.

This study only investigates the move structure and move strategies in the application letters of Pakistani graduates. However, there are several aspects that could be explored in future research such as tenses, adverbial position, and politeness strategies in Pakistani job application letters. Additionally, future studies could aim to design a genre-based syllabus that will specifically meet the needs of learners in effectively writing job application letters.

Based on the findings, this study makes valuable contribution to genre knowledge of job application letter and also provides professional understanding of job application letter. Such understanding will help out the fresh graduates to write a job application letters more effectively and can enhance the quality of their job applications. For future researchers, this study may play a leading role and they may develop a more extensive model. The present study will be helpful for English language teachers to equip their future students with modern and persuasive patterns of job application letters to secure a job.

## CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

**Muhammad Jawad Ali:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation.,Visualization, Investigation. ,Validation.,Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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