

## EXPLORING DISCOURSE THROUGH POSTCARDS

### ABSTRACT

Communication through writing has undergone significant changes and has become an essential part of people's lives, with various forms of written communication being established over the years. In the past, postcards were one of the most popular mediums for written communication, but their usage has significantly decreased in modern society. Nevertheless, many people worldwide still make use of postcards to communicate, with 'Postcrossing' being one such platform. The purpose of this study is to examine the politeness strategies used by Postcrossers in recent years when writing postcards, using Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory (1987), and to compare the similarities and differences in the approach taken by Westerners and Easterners. The data analyzed comes from a small sample group of 35 postcards from 17 countries worldwide. The study reveals that the majority of strategies used are Positive Politeness Strategies, accounting for 62.84% of the occurrences. Both Westerners and Easterners mostly use positive politeness, with a higher frequency shown by Eastern writers. Additionally, although Off-record and negative politeness are also used, the study did not observe Bald on Record.

To gain a broader perspective on postcard communication, the study also applied Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics (2006) to examine the relationship between the viewers and the participants represented in postcard pictures. The study shows that 80% of the images were landscapes, indicating a lack of personal connection. Although both Eastern and Western individuals prefer 'offer' images to 'demand' images, there are cultural differences in social

distance practices and angle preferences. Westerners prioritize formal and impersonal relationships, giving more power to the viewer, while Easterners show equal importance to detachment and involvement without indicating personal relationships. The study's results are expected to contribute to a better comprehension of communication through postcards.

**Keywords:** Postcards, Postcrossing, Politeness, Written Communication, Social Semiotics, Relationship, Easterners, Westerners, Discourse Analysis