Towards a Contrastive Pragmatic Analysis of Congratulation Speech Act in Persian and English

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This paper aims at studying the speech act of congratulation in Persian and English with regard to semantic formulas. To gather the semantic formulas related to congratulation, the researchers chose 100 movies (50 in Persian and 50 in English) as the instrument of the study. The only model of cross-cultural comparison was related to that of Elwood (2004). Therefore, we used Elwood's model as the yardstick to design a new classification for coding congratulation utterances. The new model which is designed in this study covers the categories of the Elwood's model but omits the overlapping strategies which were observed in that model. The new model enjoys more clarity and is more clear-cut. Also, the non-congratulatory categories of Elwood's model are deleted in the new design. Six generic categories were recognized as the model of analysis: (1) offering congratulation; (2) mentioning the occasion; (3) blessing wish; (4) expressing feeling; (5) divine statement; and (6) complimenting. In order to investigate the significant of differences between Persian and English categories, the researchers employed Chi-square formula. The results of the study revealed that a) there is a significant difference among various semantic formulas in each language and b) Persian and English congratulation utterances are significantly different with regard to *mentioning the occasion*, *expressing feeling*, and *divine statement*. However, no

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significant difference was observed with regard to *complimenting*, *offering congratulation* and *blessing wish*. Pedagogical implications are discussed in the context of EFL to link theory into practice.

Keywords: Contrastive Pragmatics, Congratulation Speech Act, Movie Analysis, Chi-square

Through the lens of Grammar Translation Method camera, language was viewed as an end in itself without considering the intentions and the purposes of the people who employ the language. With the advent of communicative approaches toward language learning and teaching, a more focused attention was paid to the context, appropriateness, and the sociocultural features. It was no more the people who were at the service of the language; individuals used the language as a tool to communicate their minds in a culturally-based environment. As the attention was shifted from usage to the use of language in a meaningful context, knowledge of pragmatics came to forefront. As Kasper and Roever (2005) put it, "Pragmatics, the ability to act and interact by means of language, is a necessary and sometimes daunting learning task for second and foreign language learners" (p. 317). The challenging feature of pragmatic competence is considerable since learners have to know how to do things with words and at the same time establish an appropriate link among words, situations, and social relationships (Austin, 1962). In the same vein, Leech (1983) referred to two umbrella terms as sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence which deal with pragmatic aspects of language. Pragmalinguistic is concerned with speakers' intentions and hearers' reaction. As it is postulated by Brown and Levinson (1987), sociopragmatic competence deals with the intersection between communicative action and power, social distance, and the imposition related to an event.

Language learning does not take place in a vacuum. Hence, the quality of interactions should be analyzed according to mutual constraints which exist among interlocutors. Likewise, Bronfenbrenner (1979) was one of the pioneers who argued about the ecology of language which takes into account the

environmental factors of learning which in turn put emphasis on language use. The idea flourishes with what Williams and Burden (1997) schematized as ecological perspectives of language.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to four factors affecting the learner; macrosystem, which is placed at the most outer layer, takes into account the entire culture of the society; mesosystem deals with more important relationships such as the relationship between family and the school; ecosystem considers the personal and close relationship between the teacher and students outside of the classroom situation; and microsystem which is the closest environmental layer, embraces parents, teachers, siblings, and peers. These ecological perspectives, represented by Williams and Burden (1997), which are not dissimilar to the structure of an onion, show that human beings are influenced by cultural and societal layers covering them—the learner is placed at the center of an onion-like structure. Therefore, individuals may have different styles and strategies when talking together since they are from different social status and there are, of course, power relations which are likely to influence the quality of talk among interlocutors. With regard to the speech act, the conventions of the society are strong predictors of how individuals perform different acts in relation to others.

In the context of EFL classrooms, learners should be exposed to sufficient amount of input in order to increase their grasp of pragmatics and to learn the appropriate use of language in authentic situations. However, textbooks are not so rich at providing students with sufficient amount of input in the realm of pragmatics (Kasper & Rose, 2001). Besides, the problems of teaching pragmatics are increasing and more studies are needed to pave the way for those teachers who encounter difficulties in teaching speech acts (Delen & Tavil, 2010). Richards and Schmidt (2002) determined the scope of pragmatics as three different areas (p. 412):

§ How the interpretation and the use of utterances depend on knowledge of the real world;

§ How speakers use and understand speech acts;

§ How the structure of sentences is influenced by the relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

As pointed out by Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 3), a pragmatically sound communication in L2 depends on the following factors:

(1) our proficiency in that L2 and possibly in other (especially related) languages, (2) our age, gender, occupation, social status, and experience in the relevant L2-speaking communities, and (3) our previous experiences with pragmatically competent L2 speakers and our multilingual/multicultural experiences in general.

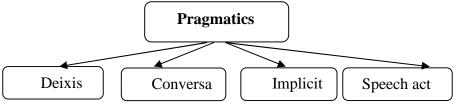According to Verschueren (1999), there are four common topics in pragmatics (p. 18):

Figure 1. Common Themes in Pragmatics

Theoretical Background

One of the important theories used as the theoretical basis of the present study is the speech act theory proposes by Austin (1962) and further flourished by his student, Searle (1969). Searle's Speech act: An essay in the philosophy of language was a development of Austin's How to do things with words. Their theories were a criticism of logical positivism paradigm in which the reality was restricted to observable phenomenon and "any statement which could not be tested either via logic, or via experiment, was meaningless" (Belza, 2008, p. 23). As argued by Austin, statements are not just some utterances as being true or

false but can be of various kinds such as statements, questions, exclamations, commands, and expressions of wishes. There are sentences that cannot be reduced to true-false dichotomies. The following examples make the point clear:

1. I promise to bring back the book.
2. I bet you five pounds that he won't win.

The aforementioned sentences have hidden messages in their meaning. In the first sentence, the act of promising made the speaker to consider the perlocutionary meaning of the sentence. Therefore, by promising, we not only state something but we should try to do what we have promised—a kind of obligation. In the second sentence, the act of betting should be fulfilled in case the speaker will be proved to be wrong. Austin rejected the true-false nature of sentences and declared that 'whether the sentence works or not' should be of paramount importance. As a matter of relevance to this study, it should be mentioned that Austin's emphasis was on social conventions rather than truth value of sentences. Therefore, a particular speech act may be performed differently with respect to miscellaneous social conventions. Austin (1962, pp. 150-151) classified various functions of illocutionary act under five generic categories:

1. **Verdictives**: they are typified by the giving of a verdict (e.g., by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire).
2. **Exercitives**: they are the exercising of powers, rights, or influence (e.g., appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, etc.).
3. **Commissives**: they are typified by promising or otherwise undertaking. They commit you to doing something.
4. **Behabitives**: they have to do with attitudes and social behavior (e.g., apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging).
5. **Expositives**: they make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words (e.g., I reply, I argue, I concede, I assume, etc.).

As a development to Austin's theory, Searle (1975) mentioned five categories of speech act as follow:

1. **Representative**: e.g., asserting, concluding
2. **Directives**: e.g., requesting, ordering
3. **Commissives**: e.g., promising, threatening
4. **Expressives**: e.g., thanking, congratulating
5. **Declaratives**: e.g., excommunicating, declaring war, marrying, firing

Congratulation is a kind of speech act which relates to Austin's behabitives and Searle's expressives. The politeness maxims of Leech (1983, p, 132) can be viewed in relation to congratulation. Congratulation deals with the "approbation maxim" which states (a) minimize dispraise of other and (b) maximize praise of other. It is defined variously in the Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003, p. 262). The first definition reads as "to express pleasure to (a person) on the occasion of success or good fortune"; the second one is "to express sympathetic pleasure at (an event)"; and the third defines congratulation as "to express salute or greet". The following sentences exemplify each of the definitions mentioned above:

1- I congratulate you for winning the election.
2- I congratulated them all on their results.
3- Happy Christmas!

Brown and Levinson (1978) referred to the speech act of congratulation as one of the positive politeness strategies. Therefore, the illocutionary force behind congratulations is intrinsically polite and positive; hence, congratulations are termed 'convivial' by Leech (1783).

According to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003, p. 262), there are two types of congratulation: (1) congratulation for doing and (2) ritual congratulation. The following sentences are examples of these two types of congratulation respectively:

1- Congratulations on your new job!
2- Wishing you a happy birthday.

Through the literature of speech act studies, a good deal of research has been conducted on congratulation but many aspects of this particular speech act have remained unveiled. For instance, some have tried to target the general meaning of the act (Leech,

1983). Other studies have moved toward distinguishing types of congratulations. Still some researchers have dealt with the syntactical features of congratulation (Leech, 1983; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985).

Quirk et al. (1985, p. 852) distinguished a new type as constitutive congratulation formulae which is used for stereotyped communication situations. For instance, using 'Congratulation!', 'Well done!' and 'Right on' (AmE slang) are examples of stereotypical use of congratulations. Quirk et al. believed that such formulaic utterances can be seasonal greetings as well. Using 'Merry Christmas' or 'Happy New Year' are two examples in this case.

Some researchers compared congratulation with other speech acts. Tomaszczy (1989) mentioned that compliments in certain contexts have the same function as congratulation. Praise is another term used to equate with congratulation (Tannen, 1993). Although there are slight differences between them, both are synonymous in that they express approval or being proud of as the following example shows:

§ Congratulation! Your speech was excellent.

To the researchers' best knowledge, the studies which are done on congratulation fall under three categories; (a) those that deal with a cross-cultural analysis (Murata, 1998), (b) studies that investigate the speech act within a particular context or speech event/situation (e.g., Al-Khatib, 1997, congratulation messages in newspapers), and (c) those that deal with differences and similarities in the meaning and use of the congratulation expressions in a specific culture (e.g., Tsilipakou, 2001; Wierzbicka, 1986). Among the studies which are related to congratulation, some focus entirely on the speech act of congratulation (e.g., Tsilipakou, 2001) and others compare it with other speech acts (e.g., Al-Khatib, 1997, comparing congratulating with thanking).

Among the studies which have mainly focused on congratulation, Tsilipakou (2001) probed two Greek congratulatory expressions and via the dictionary definitions of the two expressions, syntactical features, and their illocutionary

function, she came across a cultural framework. She concluded that Greek people are more traditional and conventional in their use of congratulations. In the same vein, Garcia (2009) studied Peruvian Spanish-speakers' realization of congratulation. She figured out that congratulations have a rapport-maintenance orientation which establishes an in-group harmony. In this case, as it is endorsed by Behnam and Amizadeh (2011, p. 65), compliments and congratulations share the same function in that both are used "to grease the social wheels and thus to serve as social lubricants that create or maintain rapport."

The focal speech act in Can's (2011) study is congratulation. She studied the email congratulation messages among Turkish university students. She came to this realization that there is variation among exchanged congratulation messages depending on the gender and the topic of the congratulation messages. In another study, Al-Khatib (1997) examined congratulation along with thank you announcements in Jordanian newspapers. As it was concluded by Al-Khatib (1997, p. 157), the two speech acts "are primarily and essentially friendly social acts which aim at establishing and maintaining good relations between individuals." Finally in a cross-cultural study accomplished by Murata (1998), British and Japanese interpretations of congratulation letters were examined. The results showed that cultural styles (indirect or direct speech) play a pivotal role in misinterpretation of congratulation messages.

Purpose of the Study

After a close examination of current trends and studies in speech act theory, the researchers realized that the speech act of congratulation is underresearched. To fill the gap, this study tries to investigate cross-cultural variation among Persian and English speakers in performing congratulations. In this article, a comparison is made between Persian and English speech act of congratulation to investigate the similarities and discrepancies between the two languages. Since there is not much at hand about the congratulation speech act in Iranian context, this study can provide researchers with the motive and yardstick for further research on congratulation speech act. Few studies are conducted

to investigate cross-cultural patterns in congratulation speech act among different speakers with miscellaneous native languages (Murata, 1998). In line with the aforementioned purpose, this research is going to deal with the following questions:

Q 1: What type of congratulation utterances do Persian speakers use?
Q 2: What type of congratulation utterances do Persian speakers use?
Q 3: Are there any significant differences between congratulation utterances in Persian and English with respect to linguistic devices?

Method

Instrument

In order to compare and contrast Persian and English speech act of congratulation, 100 movies (50 Persian-speaking and 50 English-speaking movies) produced from 2000 to 2010 were selected. The selection of the movies was based on whether they had congratulation dialogs. Movies were employed to gather information about the way native speakers in both languages perform congratulation speech act. Although movies do not purely show the authentic features of a language and there is some prearrangement for scenarios, they show to a great extent the cultural and societal characteristics underlying each language (Dundes, 2001; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorelli, & Shanahan, 2002).

Corpus

The corpus of this study includes 1039 congratulation sentences (502 in Persian and 537 in English). These sentences were obtained and transcribed through movie analysis. These sentences were the basic information for designing a pragmatically-based classification of congratulation utterances.

Procedure

The only model of cross-cultural comparison was related to Elwood (2004). Therefore, we used Elwood's model as the yardstick to design a new classification for coding congratulation

utterances. The new model which is designed in this study covers the classification of the Elwood's model but omits the overlapping categories which were observed in Elwood's model. The new model enjoys more clarity and is more clear-cut. Also, the non-congratulatory categories of Elwood's model are deleted in the new design. To make the classification, first, the congratulation utterances were transcribed. Secondly, each congratulation sentence was placed under specific category. The criterion for placing congratulation sentences under specific categories was the nature of semantic formulas. Based on the common semantic formulas, six generic categories were recognized. The categories are: (1) offering congratulation; (2) mentioning the occasion; (3) blessing wish; (4) expressing feeling; (5) divine statement; and (6) complimenting. It should be mentioned that the categories are named based on the patterns which were identified among congratulation sentences in the movies. In other words, the sentences with similar patterns in purpose and meaning were classified under its own generic category up to the last sentence. The Congratulation Strategies and Sub-strategies Coding based on Elwood (2004) are represented in Table 1.

Table 1

Congratulation Strategies Proposed by Elwood

Strategies	Example
illocutionary force indicating device(IFID)	Congratulation!
exxpression of happiness	So glad to hear that!
request for information	How did you do that?
expression of validation	Hats off to you!
self-related comments	Wish me luck too.
exclamation/expression of surprise	Wow!
offer of good wishes	For your marriage, we wish you all the best.
encouragements	Always try your best.
joking	Congratulation on your new mess made.
affection expression	I love you
suggestion to celebrate	This calls for a celebration.
thanking God	Thanks God
offer of help	I can come in handy if you needed.
statement assessing the situation negatively	You have done nothing worthy.

Though comprehensive, Elwood's model has some shortcomings. First of all, some strategies overlap the other. For

instance, expression of happiness, exclamation, and affection expression can be integrated into one category—expressing feeling. Some common congratulation strategies fall outside of the Elwood's model such as 'May the blessing of Lord be with you'. This sentence cannot be placed in Elwood's model. But in our new design, we have assigned a strategy as 'divine statement' which considers all congratulation sentences related to religion. And last, some strategies in Elwood's model are only indirect ways of congratulating and some strategies are not congratulatory at all (e.g., offer a help, self-related comments, etc.). The edited and refined version of a cross-cultural model of congratulation is proposed in Table 2. The validity of the analytic framework needs to be defended. Since the framework of analysis is the outcome of the present project, its theoretical strength should be defended in the light of pragmatic theory. As the new designed model is a refined and abridged version of Elwood's model, its validity is claimed by mentioning that the present model has the merits of the previous model and removed the shortcomings of Elwood's model through revising the strategies. Moreover, to substantiate the content validity of the new classification, two experts were consulted.

Table 2

A Cross-cultural Classification for Congratulation Utterances in Persian and English

Category	Examples
1) Offering congratulation	My congratulation
2) Mentioning the occasion	Congratulation for having a son at your age
3) Blessing wish	Wishing you a happy marriage
4) Expressing feeling	I am so happy for you
5) Divine statement	God bless you in this happy day
6) Complimenting	Well done!

Results

This study intended to compare and contrast congratulation speech act in Persian and English. Table 2 reveals the congratulation classification and exemplar sentences transcribed from English and Persian movies.

As Table 2 manifests, there are six generic categories which reveal the macrocategories of congratulation speech act among Persian and English speakers. The first category is 'offering congratulation'. At this level, speakers directly mention the word congratulation but they do not convey the reason for their congratulation. Among the sentences in this category are: (1) congratulation; (2) congrats (informal); (3) sincere congratulation; and (4) double congratulation. Persian speakers use some sentences as: (5) tæbrik migæm; and (6) mobāræk bāše. The second category is 'mentioning the occasion'. Unlike the first category, at this level the speakers use propositional phrases attached to the message in order to convey the reason for the congratulation. For example, English speakers use sentences such as congratulation for, congratulation on, etc. Persian speakers use sentences like 'qæbooli šomā ro tæbrik migæm' or qædæme no reside mobāræk' are in this category. The third category deals with 'blessing wishes'. At this level English speakers use sentences which starts with I hope or I wish. Persian speakers use sentences such as 'bā ārezooye xošbæxti' or 'xošbæxt bešid'. The fourth category is about 'expressing feeling'. English speakers produced utterances such as 'I'm blissfully happy for your promotion' and 'that is a cheerful moment' to convey their feelings and attitudes toward the occasion. Persian speakers produced sentences such as 'vāqeæn xošhāl šodæm' and 'xæbære xoobi bood'. The fifth category is about 'divine statement' which takes into account spiritual comments like 'God bless you'. In Persian movies, a sentence such as 'Inšāællāh mobāræket bāše' is used. In this category, most of the sentences originate from religious beliefs. Finally, compliment embraces examples such as 'well done' and 'good job'. Persian counterparts are 'āfærin' and 'kāret ālī bood'.

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Table 3

Results of the Chi-square Test for the Speech Act of Congratulation in Persian

Categories	Observed N	Expected N	df	Sig.	χ²
Offering congratulation	130	83.7	5	.000	66.685
Mentioning the occasion	66				
Blessing wish	107				
Expressing feeling	81				
Divine statement	85				
Complimenting	33				
total	502	-		-	

As it is revealed in Table 3, there is a significant difference among the congratulation utterances used by Persian speakers (χ^2= 66.685, p <.05). Table 3 shows that offering congratulation (N= 130), blessing wish (N= 107), and divine statement (N= 85) are used more than the expected frequency (N= 83.7). Besides, the findings make it clear that while Persian speakers used offering congratulation, divine statement, and blessing wish more frequently, mentioning the occasion, expressing feeling, and complimenting were used less frequently respectively (N= 66, 81, 33). Complimenting was the least used category among Persian speakers.

Table 4

Results of the Chi-square Test for the Speech Act of Congratulation in English

Categories	Observed N	Expected N	df	Sig.	χ²
Offering congratulation	96	89.5	5	.000	80.531
Mentioning the occasion	135				
Blessing wish	100				
Expressing feeling	118				
Divine statement	40				
Complimenting	48				
total	537	-		-	

The results obtained from Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference among various strategies used by English speakers with respect to congratulation speech act (χ^2= 80.531, p <.05). As for the English speakers, mentioning the occasion, expressing feeling, blessing wish, and offering congratulation (N= 135, 118, 100, 96) were used more often than the expected (N=

89.5). Comparing Table 3 with Table 4, it can be figured out that English speakers used mostly the utterances which are less frequently used in Persian congratulation utterances. For English speakers, the least used category is divine statement (N= 40).

Table 5
Distribution of Chi-square Formula in Speech Act of Congratulation in English and Persian

Categories	Observed Frequencies		Expected Frequency	Sig.	χ^2
	English	Persian			
Offering congratulation	96	130	113	.024	5.115
Mentioning the occasion	135	66	100.5	.000	23.687
Blessing wish	100	107	103.5	.626	.237
Expressing feeling	118	81	99.5	.009	6.879
Divine statement	40	85	62.5	.000	16.200
Complimenting	48	33	40.5	.096	2.778
Total	537	502	-	-	-

The last level of the analysis considers the comparison between English and Persian congratulation speech act regarding each strategy. Table 5 reveals that there is a significant difference between each category in the two languages except for 'blessing wish' and 'complimenting'. Persian speakers used more utterances related to offering congratulation and there was a significant difference between them (χ^2= 5.115, p <.05). With regard to 'mentioning the occasion', there was a significant difference between English and Persian (χ^2= 23.687, p <.05) congratulations. Therefore, it can be deduced that English speakers use congratulation sentences which include propositional phrases such as of and to more than Persian speakers. In other words, English speakers provide more information in their congratulations. This strategy is the category for which the greatest Chi-square amount was obtained. With regard to blessing wish, the result of the Chi-square did not show a significant difference between the two languages (χ^2= .237, p <.05). It can be said that blessing utterances are a common way to offer congratulation both in Persian and English. Expressing feeling is distributed with a significant difference among Persian and English speakers (χ^2= 6.879, p <.05).

As it is mentioned in Table 5, English speakers expressed their feelings much more than the Persian speakers through congratulation utterances. Also, there was a significant difference between Persian and English speakers with regard to divine statement (χ^2= 16.200, p <.05). And as for complimenting, no significant difference was obtained (χ^2= 2.778, p <.05). In summary, Figure 2 shows the differences regarding the distribution of congratulations in Persian and English:
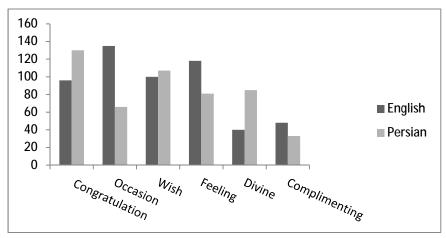

Figure 2. The differences of congratulation utterances in Persian and English

Discussion

This study aimed at investigating Persian and English congratulation utterances with regard to semantic formulas. Some discrepancies have been revealed through the data analysis among Persian and English utterances. This study sheds light on some cultural aspects between the two languages. To understand the nature of culture, one should accept it as a system enjoying a dynamic nature. The results showed significant differences between the two cultures.

Regarding the first and the second questions of this study, which dealt with the type of congratulation speech acts used in Persian and English utterances, the results showed that Persian speakers used offering congratulation and blessing wish more than

the other strategies while English speakers used mentioning the occasion, expressing feeling, and blessing wish more than the other utterances. There was a significant difference among congratulation utterances used by Persian speakers. The results of the Chi-square test showed a significant difference among English utterances too. Most Persian speakers in performing congratulation just offered their congratulation in a way different from English speakers do. In other words, English speakers most often mentioned the occasion of their congratulation through using prepositional phrases. Therefore, English speakers mostly represent a low-context society. Through analyzing the results, it can be deduced that English speakers represent an individualistic culture in which feelings of the speaker and communal relations are of paramount importance. On the contrary, English speakers represent a collectivist society in which establishing a mutual relationship is important. Persian speakers' use of divine comments as a source of unification is an evidence of a collectivist society. Furthermore, Persian speakers are more traditional pragmatically. The utilization of divine comments and God-related utterances can be an evidence for this argument.

As it is concerned for English speakers, the least used category is divine comments which represent their secular society. In the same vein, Berry et al. (2002, p. 63) mentioned that "English-speaking countries are intermediate on secular and high on self-expressive values. South Asia and Africa are low on both values." Therefore, it can be deduced that culture sheds light on pragmatic features.

The results of Hofstede (1984) studies on different nationalities verify the results which were obtained through this study. In Table 5, it was revealed that English speakers used expressing feeling more than Persian speakers with a significant difference between the two languages. It can be deduced that Western societies are much higher in individualism. As it was revealed, English speakers used sentences such as 'I am glad to hear that' or 'my congratulation', both of which have an individualistic orientation. Persian speakers use the sentences that

show solidarity with the interlocutors, such as 'vāqeæn xošhāl šodæm' and 'xæbære xoobi bood'.

With regard to the third question of this study, it should be mentioned that there was a significant difference among Persian and English speakers with regard to congratulation strategies. The comparison between the two languages revealed that English speakers have a tendency toward self-expressive comments and feelings, which in turn shows their independent individualism society. Comparing the results obtained for each language, the researchers concluded that Persian speakers are more self-transcendence in which they try to use less self-expressive comments but English speakers show more self-enhancement through which they try to show their attitudes as much as possible (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995).

To target the shortcomings of this study, we suggest that congratulation speech act be investigated through other instruments as well. The instrument of gathering data in this study was movies. It is worth mentioning here that "pragmatics has conventionally focused on the spoken medium and has paid little attention to writing, so that we know little about how learners acquire the ability to be functionally appropriate in their written language" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 4). In this study, the spoken medium was the main vehicle toward investigating congratulation speech act. Therefore, researchers can investigate congratulation speech act via analyzing written medium too. Moreover, this study was conducted on native speakers. As it argued by Bardovi-Harlig (1999), there should be more attempts to consider interlanguage pragmatics, that is, congratulation speech act can be investigated based on the way EFL learners employ and learn speech act. In addition, in this study little information is provided about the process of making congratulation utterances. The main focus of this study is the product.

The replication of this study can cover some limitations of this study. The investigation of congratulation speech act can give researchers useful findings if it is examined through other instruments as well. Moreover, interlanguage processes of performing congratulation should be investigated too. Power

relationships can be taken into account too. For instance, one may investigate whether there is any difference between the ways a clerk offers congratulation to his/her boss or vice versa. The roles of age and gender cannot be underestimated. Gender has always been an influential variable especially in the field of behavioral sciences. Moreover, some longitudinal studies should be done in order to find out whether the patterns of congratulation speech act would change over time. To put it in a nutshell, congratulation speech act is in its infancy, in comparison to studies done on other speech acts such as refusals and apologizing. Therefore, large-scale studies are needed to find more information about universal patterns of performing congratulation speech act.

The importance of this study is fourfold. First, it is useful for the EFL learners in that they will be familiar with the way native speakers offer their congratulation to each other. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be a fruitful source for EFL learners in order to be acquainted with the way congratulation speech act is performed. When learning L2, most students resort to their mother tongue in order to come up with different speech acts (Delen & Tavil, 2010). This may cause miscommunication when interacting. This cross-cultural study would shed light on the way natives use congratulation speech act in daily communication. The findings can help EFL learners to overcome the difficulty of using appropriate congratulation utterances in various situations.

Second, teachers as the conductors of the class can use the findings in order to instruct learners and also predict where students may have difficulty using appropriate congratulation utterances. This study also helps teachers find out why some students have problem learning and applying the speech acts appropriately.

Third, this study may be of interest for material developers. Students interact most of their time with their books. Course books are also a road map for most teachers and students. Material developers can use the findings of this study to classify different situations in which congratulations occur. Material developers can also provide beneficial exercises in order to increase the pragmatic competence of learners concerning congratulation. Learning

particular speech acts will increase the quality of interactions among individuals.

Fourth, researchers can use the classification presented in this study to compare congratulation speech acts in other cultures. It is also of great help to those who want to investigate the discoursal features of language. Moreover, it is possible to reach a universal pattern of congratulation utterances.

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