

Congratulations across Cultures: Punjabi and British Speakers

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the investigation of congratulation strategies employed by Punjabi EFL learners as compared to British English speaker's in the light of taxonomy of congratulation speech acts proposed by Elwood (2004). There were 120 speakers participated in this study distributed into four different groups: 30 British English speakers, 30 Punjabi EFL learners of Elite class, 30 Punjabi EFL learners of Middle class and 30 Punjabi EFL learners of the Lower class. For the purpose of data collection, two research tools were employed (a) demographic informative questionnaire and (b) a discourse completion test (DCT). The data was analyzed by using raw frequency, percentage and t-test of two independent samples assuming unequal variance. The findings of the study reveal that the most frequently used types of congratulation strategies were Initialism of Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) followed by overlapped strategies (combination of two). The results showed that Punjabi EFL learners' usage of strategies was different as compared to British English speakers in the production of L2.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization, learning of the second language has become an important aspect of one's life in order to keep pace with the world. According to Hymes (1972, 1992), learning of the second language does not mean to equip oneself with the grammar of the second language i.e. competence but it also demands performance (the use of the knowledge of the second language). Due to a recent shift from grammatical to communicative competence, the interest of researchers increased in the area of speech acts. It has been observed that Punjabi EFL learners lack pragmatic competence though they have achieved grammatical competence of L2 at an advanced level (Jabeen & Akhtar, 2013) and no consideration has been given to this issue (Saleem & Anjum, 2018) and thus, it has not been accounted so far.

Hymes (1992) claimed that communicative competence needs to be considered as the central concept in the achievement of information and perception of cultural norms of a particular community. This can be done with the investigation of communication activities within a peculiar setting. Wierzbicka (1985) argued that "all cultures have its own range of verbal repository regarding the concept of a communicative category of verbal acts" (p. 49), that could be authorized with the help of all-encompassing research works related to different kinds of communicative acts. According to Adrefiza and Jones (2013), the research related to the investigation of different speech acts pointed out that the realization of speech acts varies from language to language and from culture to culture in research of their semantic and contextual perspectives. Similarly, Al-Momani (2009) pointed out that to be a culturally potent orator means to know the comprehension of different speech situations as constructed through that particular culture. In addition to this, Cohen (2008) pointed out that, speech acts are regarded as one of the most researchable areas of pragmatics due to the relationship that they form between reference and inference. Moreover, the awareness of communicative acts is a marker of sociolinguistic and sociocultural capacities of the speaker (Saleem & Anjum, 2018). On the other hand, regarded metalinguistic features as the bricks on which the success of communication relies upon. From the aforementioned concepts regarding speech acts, it can be summarized that the use of linguistic acts is regarded as appropriate if these are produced through suitable linguistic forms and if they are considered felicitous according to a particular considered cultural setting.

In the last two decades, there has been a series of research works on pragmatic competence in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. According to Thomas (1983), pragmatic competence is regarded as the ability of the learner to use language in an appropriate way in order to attain particular purposes (Thomas, 1983, p. 94). The comprehension and production of speech acts vary across languages and different cultures. It becomes necessary to investigate the typical realization (comprehension and production) of speech acts within many languages. Therefore, keeping in mind the present situation of teaching and learning of the second language within Pakistani context in mind, the present study examined the realization of speech acts of Congratulations.

1.1. Research Questions

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the basic categories of congratulation strategies employed by Pakistani EFL learners?
2. What are the differences in the use of Congratulation strategies between native English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners?

2. Literature Review

Recently, there has been a shift in research from pragmatic competence towards intercultural competence, i.e. the use of language by foreign language learners in accordance with the pragmatic rules adopted by native speakers (Saleem & Anjum, 2018). In a number of studies, the researchers tried to investigate a universal theory related to speech acts which could be applied on different languages and cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983). Furthermore, in many studies, the researchers tried to bring into the limelight that there could be sharp differences in the realization of speech acts between two different speech communities (Blumkulka & House, 1989; Eslani Rasekh, 1993, 2004; Olashtain & Kleinbach, 1985). All these studies cover how the speaker of a language comprehends and performs speech acts within different contexts. Thus, in interlanguage research studies, a prominent place has been occupied by the cross-cultural studies of speech acts. Some of the linguistic acts such as apologies, compliments, complaints, and requests have been investigated by numerous scholars, but the speech act of congratulations has not been investigated on a large scale across different languages.

2.1. Congratulations: A Speech Act

The speech act of Congratulations is categorized just as an expressive communicative act in which addressees represent their sentiments when something positive happens to another individual who is the listener, the addressee offers his/her good thoughts and ideas about that happening. And, if someone does not do so then, it is considered as a sign of jealousy on his part. In such situations, people usually show their happiness by saying “congratulations” and other types of verbal strategies to say “congratulations”. They can vary from situation to situation (Elwood, 2004). It is thought that when someone says congratulations to another person, it represents joy or happiness on his/her part. According to Searle (1969, p.67), there are certain principles for congratulatory speech acts, which are stated below:

1. There should be an event associated with the addressee.
2. The particular happening should be of hearers’ interest and addressee believes it.
3. The addressee should be happy at the happening of the event.
4. The congratulatory act should be counted as an expression of extreme happiness related to that joyful happening.

The act of Congratulations as a communicative act was introduced by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The fundamental assumption of speech act theory is that we use language to perform a certain sort of actions. According to Austin (1962), all those utterances are

connotative and declarative in nature; whose truth conditions can be verified. Another type of utterances is performative which is also declarative, which is directly used to do an action but whose truth conditions cannot be verified. They mention that the speech act involves both textual and contextual conditions in order to take place. Moreover, in a particular setting, a speech act can involve truth and falsity along with the felicity and infelicity conditions as well.

According to Austin (1962), congratulation speech acts are regarded as performative for example in the saying, "I congratulate you" the speaker uses a performative verb in order to perform an action in a particular setting. It is considered that such linguistic actions directly lead to the realization of an action, which further do not demand any action. Therefore, Verschueren (2000) pointed out that, performative verbs, which are used in performative utterances, are regarded as the part of Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs). Austin (1962) further elaborated that performative utterances are also comprised of implicit performative intentions according to the demands of a particular setting in which they have been used. As for Searle (1969, p. 21), there is a logical connection which is found between communicative acts and what the elocutionist intends to say by the use of some linguistic units, the dictionary meaning of the produced sentence, the contextual meaning of the utterance, and the rules that govern the linguistic elements. On the other hand, Austin (1962) explains the communicative acts on the basis of three components: the production of sound and words with meaning, the act performed in uttering a locution and the desired effect by saying something. On this basis, they both had their own distinguished definitions of speech acts.

Congratulations, which is the focal point around which the present study revolves, is regarded as "Behabitives" in the light of the classification of illocutionary acts put forward in the influential work of Austin (1962), while on the other hand under the taxonomy of speech acts propounded by Searle (1969), it is regarded as an expression in nature. Behabitives allude to the expressions that are used to demonstrate the attitudes and reactions of someone about something in an appropriate context (Austin, 1962). Similarly, expressions are used to refer to the feelings and psychological state of the speaker towards a situation in a particular setting (Searle, 1969). Searle (1979) argued that in the act, the elocutionist does not predict the future, rather talks about an event that has already happened. For this reason, an individual would not utter the expression "congratulations to you to be victorious in the competition of race" and would rather say "I congratulate you for winning the race (1979, p. 158).

2.2 Previous Studies

The studies conducted related to this area of speech act have been done on a variety of types of data, for instance, Al-Khatib (1997) studied the congratulatory behavior of writers. Another research was done on Australian arts and sciences data by Wierzbicka (2006). A small number of such studies focused on the congratulations as an act, solely (Marki-Tsilipakou, 2001), while others focused comparing it with other linguistic acts (e.g. Congratulations & Acknowledgements).

One of the earlier studies related to the concept of sociopragmatic extension of congratulatory behavior was investigated by Garibova (2009). It was about the occasions and holidays in Azerbaijan and particular happy events. In these events, an individual

performs the speech act of congratulations. According to this research, people have some holidays such as Ramadan and Eid in which people visit their relatives and offer congratulations to each other. They use statements like, "I pray that you may live long." They also wish for other people's health, prosperity and good fortune.

Emery (2000) administrated research on speech acts by comparing acknowledgments, congratulations, and condolences in Omani Arabic. In this piece of work, the researchers investigated solely on the congratulation statements which were employed by elders and youngsters within different social contexts. The data in this study was collected with the help of questionnaires and introspections by native speakers. The collected data was analyzed on the basis of the classification system of the politeness schemata propounded by Tannen and Oztek (1981). The findings of the study showed that old and young people differ from each other in the use of congratulation strategies.

In the Greek context, Marki-Tsilipako (2001) investigated the differences between Greek "congratulations and bravo" strategies. In her analysis, she pointed out that inhabitant of Greek culture does not often use the statements of "congratulations" because it can express the fact that the elocutionist is a member of the literate class in which the speaker and hearer are not very close to each other in terms of their relationship. In Greek culture, the concept of "congratulations" was used to mark the social difference and distance between the addresser and addressee. The speaker employed congratulatory remarks in an official context and generally, they do so by a handshake instead of a clinch and which marks acquaintance. Through her analysis, she represents the fact that, in the Greek context, it is considered inappropriate to wish congratulation to the mothers on the birth of the baby unless, they are close to them. Instead, people can only offer congratulation to their fathers by using the expression "I hope you bring him up as an exquisite boy". She also pointed out that Greek people offer congratulation on different occasions including New Year, winning a certain prize and reappearing after performing pilgrimage.

Recently Elwood (2004) conducted one of the most closely relevant research on the communicative act of congratulation taking into account American native speaker and Japanese EFL learners. She formulized different congratulation expressions which was employed as the coding scheme for the collected data for the present study. Elwood used 45 American students of English, 45 Japanese EFL learners of English and 45 Japanese native speakers studying in America. All the participants were asked to fill a DCT having seven situations. The findings of the study revealed that Japanese and English speaker varies from each other in terms of their use of strategies which are employed by the participants in the response of good news. The study also focused on the difference between the responses of the situation regarding the use of IFIDs (Illocutive Force Indicating Devices). They were considered as the most employed form of strategies within the workplace environment. In contrast with the context of endowment and marriage the most commonly used strategy was the "expression concerning joviality". Furthermore, she pointed that the "expression of validation" was mostly used in the context of grant, while it was used by Americans in the context of a wedding. So, Americans and Japanese differ from each other in terms of their use of congratulation strategies.

Akram (2008) investigated another very significant research on linguistic acts in two different languages: Urdu and English. The findings of this investigation revealed that, for Christmas, English speakers wear and tear the statement of "Merry Christmas" in contrast with the speaker of Urdu language because they use the expression "Ko/tumhein nya Saal

Mubarak ho". On the occasion of New Year, the native English speakers use the statement "Happy new year" whereas, in contrast, the speaker of Urdu language adopts the expression of "Munbarakaan". On religious holidays the Urdu speaker uses the expressions such as, "Ramezan ka maheena Mubarak ho" (congratulation on Ramadan) and Jashen-e-Milad-u-Nabi Mubarak ho" (congratulation on the birth of Prophet PBUH).

Recently one more significant study related to congratulation speech acts was conducted by Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011). The authors studied the feature of the congratulatory speech behavior in the light of the framework of the categories put forwarded by Elwood (2004) in order to represent the basic communicative procedure employed by Iranian Persian speakers to offer congratulations. To this end, fifty participants completed a DCT, consisting of 9 situations associated with joyful news. The findings of the research revealed that the most commonly employed kinds of congratulatory expressions were: "indicator device of illocutive force ", "Goodwill" and "Expression of pleasure". Similarly, in another cross-cultural study, Nasari and Dastjerdi investigate the differences in the performance of speech acts of congratulation among three different groups from different speech communities. They concluded that the most frequently used strategy of congratulation by the three groups was IFID which was 60% around.

It is clear that the speech act of congratulations varies across cultures and different languages. It is also evident from the literature review that this particular speech act has not been investigated adequately within Punjabi culture and no any research has been conducted related to the speech act of congratulations with Punjabi EFL learners belonging to Pakistan. Therefore, it would be beneficial to investigate the speech act of congratulation used by Punjabi EFL learners that would fill the gap in cross-cultural comparison. The present study intends to highlight the significance of interlanguage pragmatics among EFL learners in acquiring appropriate congratulations behavior, which will improve their performance in intercultural communication.

3. Research Methodology

The study focused on the investigation of pragmatic transfer in congratulation strategies adopted by Punjabi EFL learners. The researchers used quantitative research design in accordance for data analysis operations. For the purpose of data collection, the following tools were employed including: (a) DIQ (demographic informative questionnaire), and (b) A DCT (discourse completion test). The collected data was then further investigated numerically. The participants of this study were Punjabi EFL learners and British English speaker.

3.1. Participants

The total participants of the study were 120, which were further divided into four different groups: (a) 30 British English speaker (ES), (b) 30 Punjabi EFL learners belonging to the Elite class (PEFLE), (c) 30 Punjabi EFL learners from middle class (PEFLMC) and (d) 30 Punjabi EFL learners from lower class (PEFL). The ES respondents participated in the study from Leeds and Pennsylvania University of UK. The PEFLE respondents participated from the Bahria University of Pakistan. Whereas, the sample of PEFLMC was from MUST university of AJK and 30 participants of Punjabi EFL learners of lower class

came from University of Gujarat in Pakistan. The participants of the study were graduate and postgraduate students studying in their final years of the course of study. The Punjabi EFL learners and EL speakers, who took part in the study came from diverse disciplines including; M.Phil. Management Sciences, Language, and Linguistics, BSc. in Computer Sciences, M.A. English and Literature and Arts. The sample of the present study was relatively heterogeneous because the research participants were in contrast with each other in terms of their cultural, academic experiences and linguistic behavior.

3.2. Research Tool

The researchers used two tools for collecting data (a) Demographic informative questionnaire and (b) a discourse completion test (See Appendix). The demographic informative questionnaire was used as a filtering tool in order to know the potential participants based on their age, gender, and language proficiency level and naïve languages. A discourse completion test having 12 situations based upon six social combinations based on social power and distance was designed. In line with researchers (Kasper, & Dahl, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig, & Hartford, 1993; Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Blum Kulka et. al., 1989 Brown and Levinson, 1987; Hudson et al., 1995; Wolfson, 1986), the design of each situation was based on two culturally sensitive contextual variables that may affect the perception and production of speech act in different situations. These two variables were named as:

- a) Social power (status)
- b) Social distance (degree of familiarity)

Social Power deals with the power of speaker over the hearer and it is defined by the designation held by the interlocutors. The following three possibilities have been postulated in relation to social power: a) speaker has more power than hearer (+p), b) speaker and hearer have equal power (=p) c) Speaker has less power than the hearer (-p). Contrastingly, social distance refers to the degree of familiarity between the speaker and hearer; it can have one of the two conditions: a) speaker and hearer are familiar with each other (-d), b) speaker and hearer are unfamiliar with each other (+d). The combination of these two contextual variables results in these combinations; (+p, -d), (-p, -d), (=p, -d), (+p, +d), (-p, +d) and (=p, +d). In order to increase the reliability of data, DCT consisted of 12 situations, with 2 situations per divided combinations of the contextual variable.

Table 1

Representation of situations according to the contextual variable combinations

Contextual variable combinations	(+p, +d) (=p, +d) (-p, +d) (+p, -d) (=p, -D) (-p, -d)
Situations	(S11, S12) (S2, S8) (S5, S7) (S1, S6) (S3, S9) (S4, S10)

This DCT was comprised of 12 real-life situations along with their description that demonstrates a particular social context in which the speaker had to imagine himself/herself. The speaker had to fill in the responses as if they were in real-life settings.

After each situation in DCT blank space was given in which the participants had to write their responses as it had to be kept open-ended to generate rich written information.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

For the purpose of data collection from British speakers, a colleague who was studying at the Leeds University UK was asked to administer the data collection instrument with the help of telephonic conversation and through e-mails, he was instructed by the researcher to administer the research tools. Furthermore, the research tools were e-mailed to the faculty members of the University of Pennsylvania for completion. The researcher himself accessed the participants of the University of Gujarat in order to collect data. A colleague studying at the Bahria University of Islamabad, Pakistan, was requested to administer the research tools from the university students. In addition to that, to collect data from the middle class, a colleague who is a professor at MUST University was asked to collect data from the participants. The participants who volunteered to participate in the study were selected. They were also asked to complete a DIQ and further, they were asked to consider all the instructions mentioned for the completion of a DCT in order to give their responses in accordance with the context. This was done to ensure that the given responses are naturally occurring.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained through DCT was scrutinized statistically through the help of SPSS and Excel software programs. In the data analysis procedure, at first-hand data was obtained from DCT with respect to congratulation expressions which were coded in the light of taxonomy of congratulatory strategies proposed by Elwood (2004).

Table 2

Coding Scheme of data in the light of Elwood (2004) categories

Names of strategies	Instances of Congratulations
1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device	Congrats....., Congratulations dear.....
2. Expression of happiness	I am so happy to hear this..... It's amazing
3. Request for information	Are you satisfied with your marriage now?
4. Expression of Validation	you deserve it..... I know you are capable of
5. Self-related comments	Longings, Jealousy, Forecasting
6. Expression of surprise	Really! Wao!, What!
7. An offer of good wish	I wish you happy married life.....
8. Encouragement	You should work hard if you achieve your goal
9. Joking	Are you kidding
10. Affection Expressions	I am always with you
11. A suggestion of celebration	let's go out for a treat
12. Thanking God	Thanks to God
13. Offer of help	I wish I can help you
14. assessing the situation negatively	why did you get engaged?

After the coding of data, analysis was done through SPSS by obtaining raw values for frequency, percentage, and correlation. These values were required in order to examine the differences and similarities between British and Punjabi EFL learners’ realization of the speech act of congratulations.

4. Results/ Data analysis

This particular section shows the results of the study on the basis of analyzed data obtained with the help of DCT. The percentage results are as illustrated in the following table:

Table 3

Percentage results for basic categories used by British and Punjabi EFL learners

Name of Situation	RFI	IFID	OOGW	EOH	EOV	EOS	EOE	SOC	Encouragement	Overlapped
Frequency	118	316	218	131	40	55	48	38	95	238
Percentage	9.08	24.33	16.78	10.0	3.23	4.23	3.69	2.93	7.31	18.32

Note: %= percentage value of the responses, RFI= Request for information, IFID= Illocutionary force indicating a device, OOGW=Offer of a good wish, EOH= Expression of happiness, EOV= Expression of validation, EOS=Expression of surprise, EOE=Expression of envy, SOC= Suggestion of celebration, EFL= English as a Foreign language learner.

The aforementioned table shows the categorization of “congratulations” responses obtained from the sample of the study; both British and Punjabi EFL learners wrote 1299 English congratulatory expressions in total. An “Illocutionary Force Indicating Device” was recorded as one of the most used strategies of “congratulations”, which constituted 24.33% of the total responses (n=316). On the other hand, on the second level of usage, there was the use of “overlapped strategies” combination of “IFID” and “an offer of good wish” along with the “expression of happiness”, which was recorded approximately as 18.32% of the total number of strategies (n=238). On the third rank, the use of “an offer of good wish”, which contained 16.78% of the total responses (n=218). 10.08% of the responses demonstrated the use of “expression of happiness” (n=131), and 9.08% of the total responses (n=118) contained the use of “request for information”. The fifth most used strategy was “expression of encouragement” at 7.31 (n=95) of the total congratulation strategies. The “expression of surprise” (Wao! Really!) was the sixth most frequently used strategy by the respondents in the 4.23% of the total responses. The respondents used the “expression of envy” in approximately 3.69% of the situations. The “expression of validation” was regarded as the seventh most employed strategy by the respondents in 3.23% of the situations while the use of the “suggestion of celebration” was noticed as the lowest strategy among the other mentioned above, at 2.93% of the strategies being employed in different responses (n=38).

The second research question of the study was answered through the use of t-test in order to determine the difference between the British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners (Elite-Middle-Lower). The data were analyzed in three different groups so that the

significant differences in the use of congratulation strategies could be observed by the participants. First, the data responses were compared between British English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners of the Elite class, then British English speakers' responses were compared to that of Punjabi EFL learners of Middle class and later, the responses of British English speakers were compared to the responses of Punjabi EFL learners of the lower class. The results for the comparison of the use of congratulation strategies by a British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners of Elite class shows that there is no significant difference between the responses of the British English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners of Elite class. The p-value of the t-test marked as 0.42 which is considered of little significance and DF value was recorded at 14 as mentioned in the table.

Table 4

Comparison of Congratulation strategies between British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners (Elite Class)

Participants	M	V	O	HMD	DF	t-state	P (T<=t)	two-tail t-critical two tail
Group A	44.7	1607.789	10	0	14	.82	.42	2.14
Group B	32.7	505.5667	10					

Note: Group A (British English speaker), Group B (Punjabi EFL learners), M (Mean), V (Variance), O (Observation), HMD (Hypothesized mean difference) and the mean difference among the responses of both groups were recorded as (P=.42).

As far as the results for the comparison of the use of congratulation strategies by British English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners of Middle class were concerned, the p-value of the t-test was marked at 0.44 which is considered of little significance and DF value was recorded as 17 as it is less than 0.05

Table 5

Comparison of Congratulation strategies between British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners (Middle Class)

Participants	M	V	O	HMD	DF	t-state	P (T<=t)	two-tail t-critical two tail
Group A	44.7	1607.789	10	0	17	.79	0.44	2.1098
Group B	31.6	1137.378	10					

Note: Group A (Native English speaker), Group B (Punjabi EFL learners), M (Mean), V (Variance), O (Observation), HMD (Hypothesized mean difference) and the mean difference among the responses of both groups were recorded as, .44.

The results of the above table show that the difference exists between the use of congratulation strategies between the British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners of Middle class as compared to Elite class.

The results for the comparison of Native English speaker in contrast to Punjabi EFL learners of the lower class were represented in the following table:

Table 6
 Comparison of Congratulation strategies between British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners (Middle Class)

Participants	M	V	O	HMD	DF	t-state	P (T<=t)	two-tail t-critical two tail
Group A	44.7	1607.789	10	0	17	0.78038	.45	2.1098
Group B	31,9	1082.544	10					

Note: Group A (British English speaker), Group B (Punjabi EFL learners), M (Mean), V (Variance), O (Observation), HMD (Hypothesized mean difference) and the mean difference among the responses of both groups was recorded as, 0.45 which shows that Punjabi EFL learners are at distance from native English speaker as compare to Punjabi EFL learners of Elite class and Punjabi EFL learners of Middle class.

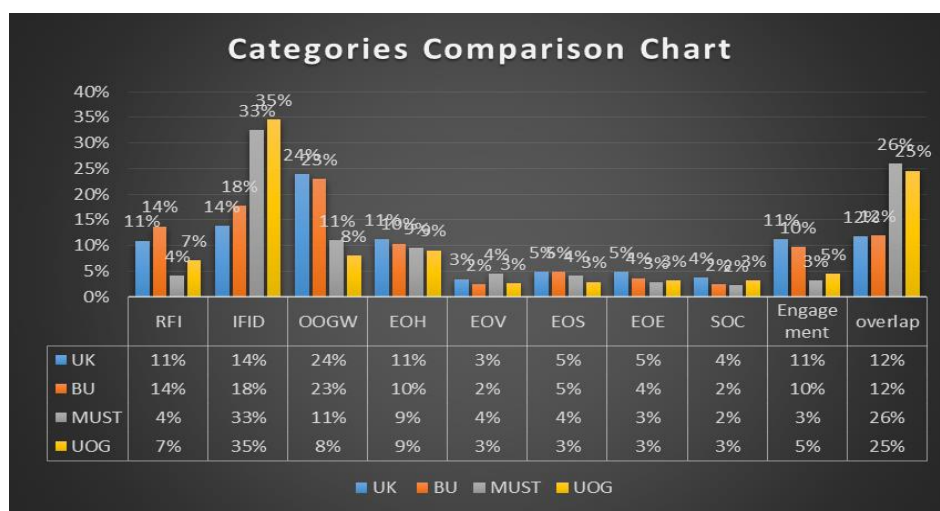


Figure 1 Representation of the congratulation strategies employed by NE speaker and Punjabi EFL learners

Note: %= percentage value of the responses, RFI= Request for information, IFID= Illocutionary force indicating a device, OOGW=Offer of a good wish, EOH= Expression of happiness, EOV= Expression of validation, EOS=Expression of surprise, EOE=Expression of envy, SOC= Suggestion of celebration, EFL= English as a Foreign language learner.

5. Discussion

The current study investigated the use of congratulation strategies employed by British English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners (Elite-Middle-Lower), which would help the EFL learners in understanding the speech acts in general and congratulation speech in particular. In general terms, the major types of congratulations strategies used were “an offer of good wish”, “Illocutionary force indicating Device”, “overlapped strategies” (combination of two or more congratulatory strategies). The “expression of happiness” was

also used in all the situations, while the degree of use of the strategy of request for information was lower as compared to the “expression of happiness”. The least type of used strategy was the “suggestion of celebration”. The other types of categories employed amidst the higher and lower level were “expression of surprise”, “expression of envy”, “expression of validation” and encouragement. As compared to all these strategies, the strategy of “thanking God” and “offer of help” were not employed at all by both British and Punjabi EFL learners. The summary of the results related to the first proposed research question was represented in the results section (see figure 1). It is worth mentioning here that the use of “IFID” as a congratulation strategy by the majority of the participants might be the over-use of this strategy in daily routine by Punjabi EFL learners.

The findings of the study revealed that Punjabi EFL learners and British English speakers vary from each other in terms of their use of strategies which are employed by the participants in response to the good news. The results also indicated a difference between the responses of the situation regarding the use of IFIDs (Illocutive Force Indicating Devices) which was considered as the most employed strategies here. Furthermore, the “expression of validation” was mostly used in the context of grant, while it was used by Americans as mentioned by Elwood (2004) in the context of a wedding. Thus, Punjabi EFL learners and British English speakers differ from each other in terms of their use of congratulation strategies. This difference in the use of these strategies also highlights the cultural differences between Punjabi and British as one belongs to individualist culture (Western, UK) and the other belongs to collectivist culture (Eastern, Pakistan) as mentioned by Hofstede (2011).

The findings of the study were in line with the prior including studies, conducted in respect of “congratulation strategies” by using Elwood’s categories, Allami and Nekhouzedhi (2011) and Dastjerdi and Nasri (2013) who found that EFL learners more often produce language-specific and cultural-specific expressions in the target language. There are differences found in the groups can be due to the cultural differences found in both groups and to some extent, the instruction of the foreign language which is not up to standard within the Pakistani context (Saleem & Anjum, 2018).

As reported earlier in the results section, there is not any significant difference between the use of congratulation strategies between British English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners (Elite- Middle-Lower). The results reveal that the Punjabi EFL learners of Elite class were closer to native speakers as compared to Punjabi EFL learners of Middle class and Lower class for the use of congratulation strategies. The mean difference between British English speaker and Punjabi EFL learners was recorded as (M=.42, M=.44, and M=.45) respectively. The reason behind this difference was the heterogeneity of the participants in terms of culture and native language because both the groups in the study belong to two different cultures of British English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners. This marks a significant influence on the use of congratulation strategies in their respective cultures. The findings of the study showed that the verbal behavior of the participants varies from culture to culture.

5. Conclusion

The limitation related to this study is imposed on the basis of regional dialects which were not discussed in the study because all the participants of the study were accessed from different regions of Pakistan such as Punjab and Kashmir and from the UK. The participants were not regarded as the representative of all native English speakers and Punjabi EFL learners. Furthermore, the restrictions were not imposed as far the academic background of the participants was concerned. A different population of wide range could have provided significant results as compared to the present study. Therefore, the findings of the present study should be regarded as ad interim and should not be implied to other groups of participants having different features. Future studies could use this framework and approach to investigate this phenomenon in different dimensions.

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Appendix A

Demographic Informative Questionnaire- Part A

Gender: M/F Age: -----
Nationality: ----- Native Language: -----
Currently enrolled institution's name: -----
Course of Study: -----
Can you speak languages other than English: ----- If yes
please mention: -----
Currently proficiency level of English: -----

Part B

Discourse Completion Task

Dear Participants,

The aim of the present study is to investigate cross-cultural differences and pragmatic transfer in speech act behavior. It is not a kind of test in which your responses are marked right or wrong. This questionnaire consists of 15 situations. It is requested that please read all these situations very carefully and suppose that you are in the same situation and write in the responses. Please try to provide natural responses as you are in real life situations.

If you have any problem, please don't feel shy. You are welcome to ask.

Thank you for giving your time.

Situation.1: You went in your class and your students inform you that one of the students of your class got scholarship on the basis of which he is going to study abroad. That student isn't present in the class. Tomorrow you see that student standing in the corridor in front of the library. What will you say to him?

You: _____

Situation. 2: You are travelling and one of the passengers sitting beside you received a phone call and he became very excited and happy. You asked him, what's up? He informed you that he is appointed as a surgeon in a government hospital. What will you say to him?

You: _____

Situation.3: You are working as a clerk in a company and you have been informed that one of your colleagues has got promotion. How will you respond in this situation?

You: _____

Situation. 4: You are an employee in a company, and you have been informed that your employer got engaged recently. In the afternoon, you see your employer. What will you say to him?

You: _____

Situation. 5: You are an anchor person of national news channel. Election held two days ago, and newly elected Prime Minister comes in your studio for his first address to nation. How will you respond to him on his success?

You: _____

Situation .6: You are a boss in an office. You have been informed that one of your employees has been blessed with a new born baby after 10 years his/her marriage. How will you respond?

You: _____

Situation. 7: You are working as a junior teacher in a university. Recently, new Head of English department has been appointed. At your first meeting with him/her, how will you respond him/her at his/her appointment as an HOD.

You: _____

Situation. 8: You are working in a company. While working in your office, one of the friends of your colleague comes and wants to talk with your colleague in the same office. There you have been informed by your colleague that his friend has become the managing director of the company. What will you say?

You: _____

Situation. 9: One of your friends meets you after two months. You asked him, where he has been from last two months. Your friend tells you he has a big news for you, that he got a permanent job in the university. What will you say to him?

You: _____

Situation 10: You went to visit a place with your father. There your father see his family doctor, whom he hasn't seen for a long period of time. Your father inquired from him about his absence. He informed that he got married five months ago. What will you say to him?

You: _____

Situation 11: You are a regional sports director and you are visiting a sports complex with your secretary. There he introduces you with a newly selected member of your regional sport team. What will you say to him on his selection?

You: _____

Situation 12: You are working as a dean in a university. You are called as a Chief Guest on the Annual Prize Distribution ceremony at another campus of the university in order to distribute awards among the topper of the university. How you will respond to him/her on his/her great achievement?

You: _____
