

A Sociopragmatic Study of the Congratulation Strategies of Saudi Facebook Users

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim in this sociopragmatic study was to identify the linguistic and nonlinguistic types of responses used by Saudi Facebook users in the comments of congratulations on the events of happy news status updates on Facebook. People usually express their feelings and emotions positively to others when they have happy occasions. However, the ways of expressing congratulation may vary because the expressive speech act “congratulations” is not the only way to express happiness and share others their happy news, especially on the new social media such as Facebook. The ways of expressing congratulation have been investigated widely in face-to-face communication in many languages. However, this has not yet been studied on Facebook, which lacks prosodic strategies and facial expressions that help to convey feelings, despite a few contributions on studying various expressive speech acts such as compliment, condolences, and wishing, among others. Therefore, a total of 1,721 comments of congratulation were collected from 61 different occasions and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively by using the frame-based approach to understand the construction of politeness of congratulation on Facebook. The results showed 23 verbal types of responses used by the users; however, the use of “congratulations,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” were the most frequently used strategies. The results also showed 100 patterns of verbal compound strategies, but the use of “congratulations” with “offer of good wishes” was the most frequently used compound strategy. In addition, 42 types of emojis were found in the comments and categorized into seven different functions. However, the function of

expressing endearment was the most frequently used one. Finally, the results showed that the posts received 31 sharings and 3 types of emoji reactions, such as “like” (Thumbs up), “love” (Beating heart), and “wow” (Surprised face), but the use of “like” was the most frequent emoji reaction to the posts. The explored different ways of expressing congratulation and sharing with others their happy news indicated that the linguistic strategies are not the only way to express happiness on Facebook. Therefore, users employed nonlinguistic strategies to express happiness and intensify their congratulations.

DEDICATION

To my Mother and Father

and

To my wife, Maryam Mahzari

and

To my children, Abdulelah and Abdulmuhsen

and

To my sisters and brother

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Facebook is one of the most widely used online social networks, not only in Saudi Arabia but also around the world. It plays an important role in the everyday life of people by communicating with friends, colleagues, relatives, and so forth by commenting on their posts, or sharing with them pictures, videos, life events, and personal news such as graduation, marriage, arrival of a baby, and so forth. People usually interact with these posts of news by expressing congratulation, posting emoji reactions to the posts, and sharing the news to express happiness, praise, pride, and so forth. Although it was found in most of the studies that on Facebook, expressive speech acts are used more frequently than the other speech acts. In a few of these studies, particular types of expressive speech acts, such as compliments, salutations, and condolences, among others, have been investigated. However, congratulation has not yet been studied on Facebook although much work has been conducted on it in face-to-face communication. The studies explored that the idea that the patterns of congratulation vary across cultures because the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) “congratulations” is not the only way to express congratulation (Elwood, 2004).

However, the difference of patterns is not only in face-to-face communication but it can also be on computer mediated communication (CMC), such as Facebook, because of the absence of nonverbal cues and prosodic strategies when offering congratulation. In other words, Facebook is a multimodal communication platform, and users use not only linguistic ways but also nonlinguistic ways and emojis to express congratulation or happiness and interact with the status update of happy news. Therefore, the aim in this

dissertation was to study the linguistic and nonlinguistic types of responses that are called the verbal and nonverbal types of responses to understand how congratulations are expressed in the different situations of happy news status update on Facebook. In this study, the “verbal responses” were used to refer to the textual types of responses on Facebook. On the other hand, the nonverbal types of responses refer to the nonlinguistic responses such as the use of emojis and sharing. This research study is a sociopragmatic study, which correlates language with users and communities to understand language in contexts.

Background

Searle and Vanderveken (1985) defined congratulation as “expressing pleasure at the good fortune of others” (p. 212). It has also been defined by Bach and Harnish (1979) as one’s having done something good. Congratulation is used to express happiness or pleasure to people to convey a warm message to them (Wierzbicka, 1987). Searle (1976) classified the speech act of congratulation as an expressive speech act that is “to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (p.12), based on its function.

However, Leech (1983) reclassified speech acts based on the social goal from the perspective of politeness. Therefore, congratulation was classified under the convivial illocutionary function which seeks opportunities for comity. Leech (1983, 2007) stated that congratulation is an intrinsically courteous speech act that needs no mitigation, but it can be used with intensifiers or gradable expressions such as “Warmest congratulations!” to be more extreme. Also, the notion of face was introduced by Brown and Levinson

(1987) into the theory of politeness to understand it. Face was divided two different categories: (a) positive face and (b) negative face. The positive face means that everyone wants his/her desires/needs to be liked, approved, and appreciated. Congratulation is a positive politeness strategy and a face enhancing act the aim of which is to enhance the positive face of the addressee (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997). The reason is that positive politeness strategies are used “as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy” and “as a kind of social accelerator, where S, in using them, indicates that he wants to ‘come closer’ to H” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 103). However, the patterns of the strategies of politeness vary not only in the same culture but also across cultures. In addition, people perform and perceive the functions of speech in a different way indifferent cultures (Holmes, 1995).

Therefore, congratulation needs to be studied in its authentic situations and contexts to understand how people use and express congratulations. This is the frame-based approach (Terkourafi, 2001, 2005a) that aims to establish the regularities of co-occurrence between linguistic realizations of speech acts and the particular types of contexts of use in real-life situations. It is data-driven, not theory-driven, because norms are discovered from the bottom-up analysis of the empirical data. Terkourafi (2005a) stated that the expressions are not polite by themselves, but it is in the regularity of the co-occurrence of the expressions, based on the perception of politeness about them. That perception is created and constituted by the regular co-occurrence of specific linguistic expressions in specific types of context, which also reflect the previous experience of language users about what expressions to use in particular contexts, based on the

knowledge of community norms. In this approach, data are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to establish the regularities of co-occurrence for both expressions and types of context.

Goals

The aim in this study was to explore the verbal and nonverbal types of responses in the speech act of congratulations, which are called the strategies of congratulation, on the events of happy news status update on Facebook. The first goal was to identify the verbal types of responses and frequency to explore the most frequent expressions or strategies used in Saudi Arabic culture in general and, in particular, in the informal digital messages when offering congratulations. Also, these identified expressions were compared across the different occasions to identify the similarities and differences in order to understand the relationship between the effect of different situations on choosing the appropriate way to express congratulations. The second goal was to identify the verbal compound strategies used in each comment and its frequency of use to explore also the most dominant patterns in the congratulation comments on Facebook. In addition, these patterns were compared across the events to identify the similarities and differences and the association between events and choosing particular patterns. The third goal was to identify the nonverbal types of responses, such as sharing and emoji reactions to the posts for instance, the emoji of like, love, wow, and so forth to understand the types of interactions on the posts of happy news. Also, the emojis that are used in the comments of congratulation are identified with their functions to understand how they are used and why. The frequency of the nonverbal types of responses are also

identified and compared with the number of comments to learn which one is more frequently used than the other. The fifth goal was to identify the construction of congratulation, which is exploring the types and the compound types of interactions on the posts, such as only like, only comment, comment with like and sharing, and so forth.

Significance

The speech act of congratulation has been examined widely in many languages and cultures in face-to-face communication, with a few studies on written communication, such as Arabic (Al-Khatib, 1997; Al-Qudah, 2001; Emery, 2000), Persian (Allami & Nekouzadeh, 2011; Ghaemi & Ebrahimi 2014), Spanish (García 2010; Hernández, 2008; Trujillo, 2011), English (Willer, 2001), Greek (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2001; Theodoropoulou, 2015), Latin (Kočovska, 2013; Unceta Gómez, 2016). Other studies have also been conducted on cross-cultural analysis of congratulations such as Jordanian Arabic and American English (Bataineh, 2013), English, Persian, and Arabic (Dastjerdi & Nasri, 2013), Persian and English (Pishghadam & Moghaddam, 2011), English, Armenian, and Persian (Nasri, Dastjerdy, & Ghadiri, 2013), British English and Turkish (Can, 2011), American English and Japanese (Elwood, 2004), English and Montenegrin (Nikšić, 2016). Congratulation exists in languages, but the patterns of congratulation can vary across cultures in face-to-face communication. In other words, speech functions are performed and perceived differently in the same culture and across cultures (Holmes, 1995). Based on the results of previous studies, it can be said that we have a better understanding about how congratulation is expressed in face-to-face communication. However, the ways of expressing congratulation can also vary in the informal digital

messages because of the absence of nonverbal cues and prosodic strategies when expressing congratulations.

However, congratulation has not yet been examined in the informal digital messages such as on Facebook. The users of Facebook not only use verbal strategies to express congratulation but also employ nonverbal strategies to express congratulation and interact with the posts of happy news/events, such as sharing and posting emoji reactions to the posts, such as like, love, wow, and so forth. Facebook users also employ various types of emojis in the comment of congratulation to express happiness, praise, appreciation, and so forth as well as to intensify congratulating. In addition, it was found that expressing emotions is more frequent and explicit in computer mediated communication than in face-to-face communication because of the absence of nonverbal cues that support clarity (Derks, Fischer, and Bos, 2008). This difference enforces the importance of exploring the patterns of congratulation also in computer mediated communication.

Although many studies found that expressive speech acts were the most frequent types on Facebook (Appling, Briscoe, Hayes, & Mappus, 2013; Carr, Schrock & Dauterman 2009; Carr, Schrok, & Dauterman, 2012; Ilyas & Khushi, 2012), only a few studies have examined particular types of expressive speech acts on this social network site, such as compliment (Eslami, Jabbari, & Kuo, 2015; Maíz-Arévalo, 2013; Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez, 2013; Placencia & Lower, 2013) salutations/opening and closing (Pérez-Sabater, 2013), condolence (Al-Shboul & Maros, 2013), and wishing (Theodoropoulou, 2015).

New social media is considered as extensive corpora for authentic and naturalistic data in general and about life events and personal news in particular. On Twitter, for instance, Li, Ritter, Cardie, and Hovy (2014) analyzed 72,000 tweets and found that there are 42 types of events that indicate significant life events, such as a job, wedding/engagement, award, and so forth. They also identified the frequent words associated with the events, but not the ways of expressing congratulation. Facebook reinforces the importance of these types of events by giving higher ranking for the comments of congratulation in the news feeds. As a Facebook user, I am aware that Facebook users usually interact with happy events/news alongside with the sad news more than with the other types of status update. Based on this observation and the results of previous studies on expressivity on computer mediated communication, there is a need to understand how Facebook users express congratulations and how they interact with the status update of good news to fill the gap.

To this researcher's knowledge, this current study is not only the first study to describe Saudi Arabic congratulation strategies, but it is also the first one to understand the politeness of Saudis in Arabic online environments, such as Facebook. The number of Facebook users is 8.4 million, which is considered 93% of the Internet users in Saudi Arabia according to the Social Clinic (2015). The speech act of congratulation has not yet been investigated for Saudis, either in face to face interaction or on computer mediated communication, although much work has been conducted on studying various Saudi Arabic expressive speech acts, such as greetings and leave takings (Hassanain, 1994; Turjoman 2005), compliment (AlAmro, 2013; Salameh, 2001), thanking (Altalhi,

2014), apology (Suuriyallah & Allaheebi, 2014) or the other types of speech acts, for instance offering (Al-Qahtani, 2009), refusal (Al-Shalawi, 1997), and request (Al-Ammar, 2000) in face-to-face communication.

Finally, because of the dearth of studies on congratulation in general and on Arabic in particular in computer mediated communication, the aim in this study was to contribute to the field to understand the ways of expressing congratulation and how Saudis interact with the posts of happy news in Saudi Arabic and to identify the cultural values of Saudi culture on Facebook. The new contribution is not only to understand the verbal congratulation strategies but also the nonverbal strategies and the construction of congratulations on Facebook, which is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world.

Research Questions:

Nine questions were proposed to explore the verbal and nonverbal strategies of congratulation of Saudi Facebook users. The aim in these questions was to identify the strategies, frequency, semantic formulas/compound strategies, and similarities and differences, nonverbal strategies, and construction of congratulations on Facebook:

1. What are the verbal strategies used by Saudis in Arabic to express congratulation in the situations of happy news on Facebook?
2. How frequently are the verbal congratulation strategies used by Saudis in the situations of happy news on Facebook?
3. What are the similarities and differences of using the verbal congratulation strategies used by Saudis across the situations of happy news?

4. What are the semantic formulas/compound strategies of congratulation used by Saudis in each comment in the situations of happy news on Facebook?
5. How frequently are the semantic formulas/compound strategies of congratulation used by Saudis in each comment in the situations of happy news on Facebook?
6. What are the similarities and differences of using the semantic formulas/compound strategies of congratulation used by Saudis across the situations of happy news?
7. What are the nonverbal strategies used by Saudis to offer congratulation on Facebook?
8. How frequently are the nonverbal strategies used by Saudis in the situations of happy news on Facebook?
9. How congratulation is constructed on Facebook?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the earlier theoretical work and empirical studies that are related to the dissertation's topic are introduced in order to understand the speech act theory and politeness. The first two sections in this chapter show the beginning and development of the speech act theory and the meaning of the congratulation speech act. The third section shows and discusses politeness in terms of the historical background, the important contributions of Leech's (1983) maxims politeness principle, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, and Terkourafi's (2001) frame-based approach. The fourth section shows the earlier contributions to empirical studies on speech acts in face-to-face communication, on expressive speech acts by Saudis, on congratulations in Arabic varieties, on congratulations in non-Arabic societies, and on congratulations in more than one language, such as comparative and contrastive studies. The fifth section shows the contributions to studying speech acts in general and expressive speech acts in particular on Facebook.

Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory began with Austin's (1962) philosophy in his book "*How To Do Things With Words*" and it was developed by Searle (1969) in linguistics. The speech act theory analyzes the way meanings (both speaker and linguistic meaning) and acts are linguistically communicated to capture the possible functions of language. Searle defined speech act as "the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication" (p.16). Searle (1969) also commented that "the unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence ...but rather the production

or issuance of the symbol, word, or sentence in the performance of the speech act” (p. 16). Therefore, the reason for studying the speech act is that “all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts” (Searle, 1969, p. 16).

The theory began with Austin (1962) when he observed that language is not only used to describe or report things but also used to do things, which is the most important discovery in his theory. In other words, language is action (Mey, 2001). The reason is that, based on Austin’s observation, some statements lack “a truth value.” As a result, he distinguished between constatives (e.g., declarative statements), which can be judged by truth/falsity, and performative verbs (e.g., I promise...) that rely on felicity/infelicity, based on contextual and textual conditions. Austin examined three relations in constatives and performatives (i.e., “implies,” “presuppose,” and “entails”) and found various similarities between them that led him to attempt to identify the differences and the ways of distinguishing between constatives and performatives. Ultimately, Austin found that there is no clear-cut distinction between constatives and performatives because both of them involve truth/falsity, felicity/infelicity, and contextual and textual conditions. The focus of his argument shifted from sentence (i.e., the difference between constatives and performatives) to utterance in terms of locution (meaning) and illocution (force) in a speech situation.

Austin (1962) distinguished three levels of acts in utterance: (a) *a locutionary act* (the production of sounds and words with meanings), (b) *an illocutionary act* (the issuing of an utterance with conventional communicative force achieved “in saying”), and (c) *a perlocutionary act* (the actual effect achieved “by saying”). Searle (1969), on the other

hand, contradicted this distinguishing and said, “I am not saying, of course, that these are separate things that speakers do, as it happens, simultaneously..., but rather that in performing an illocutionary act one characteristically performs propositional acts and utterance acts” (p.24). It means that they are not independent because they are performed simultaneously.

Austin (1962) also classified five classes of utterance according to their illocutionary force: (a) *Verdictives* are verbs used by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire to give a verdict, for example, to estimate, to reckon, to appraise, and so forth; (b) *Exercitives* are verbs used to exercise powers, rights, or influence, for example, to appoint, to vote, to order, and so forth; (c) *Commissives* are verbs used to express commitments, for example, to promise, to covenant, to contract, and so forth; (d) *Behabitives* are verbs that are used to express reaction to other people’s behavior and fortunes, for example, to apologize, to congratulate, to commend, and so forth; and (e) *Expositives* are verbs that are used in argument or conversation for expository, for example, to reply, to argue, to assume, and so forth (pp. 150-163). They are explicit performative verbs that make the illocutionary “force” of an utterance. Finally, Austin classified the circumstances (the conditions) that allow utterances to act as performatives.

However, Searle (1976; 1979) observed that Austin did not distinguish clearly between illocutionary verbs and acts. Therefore, Searle (1969) developed the speech act theory and incorporated the theory into linguistics due to his principle of expressibility. It means that what can be meant can be said (Schiffrin, 1994). As a result, the principle

mainly brings the study of language (production and interpretation), meaning (speaker and linguistic meaning), and communication together.

Searle (1969) built upon Austin's (1962) work to incorporate speech acts into linguistic theory, and he posited constitutive rules that govern a conversation and draw upon both context and text. Shiffrin (1994), in her discussion of the rules, pointed out that these rules are shared by people and considered as a part of linguistic competence that is responsible for the creation of new forms of acts. The rules are called constitutive, and they create or define new forms of behavior. The constitutive rules are: (a) propositional content (the most textual), (b) preparatory conditions (background circumstances and knowledge about speaker and hearer), (c) the sincerity condition (speaker's psychological state in the performance of illocution), and (d) the essential condition (it is the point of what is said). These rules are extracted from the conditions.

Searle (1976) proposed five classes of speech acts because of the unclear distinction between illocutionary verbs and acts in Austin's (1962) taxonomy: (a) *Representatives* (called assertives in Searle, 1979) are statements that are used to describe states or events and judged true or false because the speaker is committed to "the truth of the expressed proposition," such as describing, calling, classifying, and so forth; (b) *Directives* are statements that are used to get the addressee to do something, such as ordering, commanding, requesting, and so forth; (c) *Commissives* are statements that commit the speaker to a course of action, such as promising, pledging, vowing, and so forth; (d) *Expressives* are statements that are used to express psychological state, such as congratulating, thanking, welcoming, and so forth; (e) *Declarations* are statements that

change or make a difference in the world, such as declaring, naming, resigning, and so forth (pp. 10-21).

These illocutionary acts, which are central in Searle's (1976) framework are considered as the basic unit of human communication. Also, they are intentional and governed by the rules and conditions. Therefore, Searle (1969) argued that analyzing the illocutionary act enables identification of the intentional and conventional meaning according to the constitutive rules. Also, Searle (1975) discussed multiple functions that are a part of indirect speech acts that comprise two acts: illocutionary and statement. He mentioned that they rely on the conditions underlying speech acts, and the interpretation is based on the knowledge of the speech act. Searle (1975) suggested textual and contextual information as contributions to identifying the meaning of the indirect speech act along with the conditions.

However, speech act theory has been criticized by many scholars because it has many problems in studying the aspects of meaning, functions, and acts (Cohen, 1996; Levinson, 1983; 2013; Mey, 2001; Schiffrin, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1991). For instance, the theory predetermined conditions, rules, meaning of verbs, and illocutionary devices that convey the force of the speech act in an abstract context without taking into consideration the matter of relationship, culture, and situation. Also, the complexity of real communication in daily life affirms the impossibility of being done within a framework that, in advance, constrains the meaning of words and the rules/conditions that make the situation appropriate for achieving a particular meaning of a speech act. Another problem is that intentionality is relevant and central to understand the utterances of the

speaker. In addition, the theory works on single utterances, a single speaker, and a single addressee in isolated situations without taking into account the complexity of speech situations. However, it is not “what a speaker says” that determines the meaning of a speech act, but the whole situation. In other words, the speech act theory only constitutes an action in individual utterances and users rather than in interaction which is the most important role or factor in communication. The reason is that meaning and action are constituted through social interaction.

Therefore, it was suggested that speech acts should be studied in their real contexts (speech event) and cultures because different languages and different cultures have different ways of performing and perceiving different speech acts (Holmes, 1995; Wierzbicka, 1985). For example, Bataineh (2013) found differences between native speakers of American English and native speakers of Jordanian Arabic in performing congratulations and congratulations responses. Bataineh found that Jordanians used expressions that are religion based in most of the social contexts (e.g., *assalaatu :cannabi! mabru:k ma ja:ku* “prayers be upon the prophet! May what you have got be blessed!” as a congratulation in the birth of a baby or *allahysalmak* “may God preserve you” as a congratulations response). In contrast, Americans used simple forms such as “congratulations” or “thank you” as a response. However, this does not mean that these forms are the only way to respond but that religious expressions can also be found in the communities that have religious concerns in the United States.

Also, with regard to speech act verbs, there is no particular speech act verb for every single speech act (e.g., *to verdict; Mey, 2001), and sometimes some speech acts

can be produced by several verbs, (e.g., wish as a congratulations strategy is found in most of the studies on congratulations). Therefore, there is an assumption says we do not need speech act verbs to perform a speech act at all, and performativity is not bound up with speech act verbs.

One of the alternative suggestions for speech act verbs is speech act formulas that were classified by Verschueren (1979, as cited in Mey, 2001), such as verbal expressions and verbless expressions. The first one is that the verbal expressions, for instance, are affected by style or variations on a semantic theme (e.g., I want to express my gratitude/I want to thank you). The second one is verbless expressions (e.g., many thanks/a big thanks). It means that people can do many things with words, not necessarily with verbs or verb phrases. The theory deals with utterance types more than actual utterances.

Finally, the speech act becomes a pragmatic act (“uptake”) because any act is a matter of interaction in context, not a matter of individual utterances in isolation (Mey, 2001). Therefore, speech acts should be studied in actual situations (speech events) based on the context of the situation. This is the pragmatic view that emphasizes meaning change and function of speech act according to the context of the situation.

Speech Act of Congratulations

Congratulation is defined by Bach and Harnish (1979) as “congratulating expresses gladness for H’s having done or received something good noteworthy” (p. 51). Also, Searle and Vanderveken (1985) added another definition that indicates the situation of fortune as “expressing pleasure at the good fortune of others” (p. 212). This speech act

is used to express happiness or pleasure to people when something good happens to them, referring to “happy events” and “impressive actions” (Wierzbicka, 1987).

Congratulation was classified by Austin (1962) under “behabitives” in terms of the verbs of speech acts, which is to express reaction to other people’s behavior and fortunes. It was reclassified by Searle (1976) under “expressive,” as mentioned previously. According to Searle (1976), the illocutionary point of expressives “is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (p.15). In the expressive illocutionary forces, a speaker expresses his/her feelings and attitudes about the state of affairs that can be good (e.g. pleasure) or bad (e.g. sorrow), represented in the propositional content. Therefore, a speaker is not trying to get the world to fit the words or the words to fit the world in performing expressives (Searle, 1979). In other words, expressives have no direction to fit into because the truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed. In addition, the expressive verbs such as congratulate, thank, apologize, and so forth do not take *that* clauses; instead, they require a gerundive nominalization transformation or other some nominal. For instance, one says “I congratulate you on winning the race (congratulations on winning the race),” but s/he cannot say “I congratulate you that you won the race” (Searle, 1979, p. 15). Searle (1969) formulated the following constitutive rules for congratulation:

1. There is some event that is related to the hearer (propositional content rule).

2. The event is in the hearer's interest and the speaker believes the event is in the hearer's interest (preparatory rule)

3. The speaker is pleased at the event (sincerity rule).

4. It counts as an expression of pleasure at the event (essential rule). (p. 67)

Austin (1962) considered the circumstance of congratulation when the speaker does not feel pleased as insincere. However, according to Bach and Harnish (1979), the speaker acknowledges the event which is mutually recognized, even if he/she does not show the sincere feelings for satisfying the social expectation. As a result, Bach and Harnish classified congratulations under the category of acknowledgments, which correlates between the type of illocutionary act and type of expressed attitude.

Acknowledgments means to "express perfunctorily if not genuinely, certain feelings towards the hearer [and] these feelings and their expression are appropriate to particular sorts of occasions" (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 51). The role of congratulation in the satisfaction of social expectation is reflected in Bach and Harnish's (1979) disjunctive definition of congratulation as:

- *Congratulate*: (compliment, congratulate, felicitate)
- In uttering *e*, *S* congratulates *H* for *D* if *S* expresses:
 - gladness for *H*'s having *D*(-ed), and the intention that *H* believes that *S* is glad that *H* has *D*(-ed), or
 - the intention that his utterance satisfy the social expectation that one express gladness for good fortune like *D*(-ing), and
 - the intention that *H* take *S*'s utterance as satisfying this expectation (p. 52).

In the situation of congratulation, the speaker assumes that the addressee is happy because something good occurred to him/her.

Bach and Harnish (1979) stated that

commonly, but not necessary, such an occasion, when it arises, is mutually recognized by S and H, and then it is not only appropriate but expected by H that S will issue the relevant acknowledgment ... they are often issued not so much to express a genuine feeling as to satisfy the social expectation that such a feeling be expressed. (p. 51)

According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), “in congratulating, one expresses pleasure with the preparatory condition that the thing in question is beneficial or good for the hearer” (p. 212); therefore, congratulation is more addressee oriented than speaker oriented (Wierzbicka, 1987). In this act, the speaker shares with the addressee the good event by expressing his pleasure to convey a warm message to him/her. Wierzbicka (1987) formulated the illocutionary goal of congratulation in terms of “causing the addressee to know,” which is how the speaker feels to convey his/her reaction towards the event. In addition, Wierzbicka (1987) explained the nature or the meaning of a situation of congratulation between the speaker and addressee in the following cultural script:

- I know that something good has happened to you
- I think it wouldn't have happened if you didn't do something
- I assume that you feel something good because of that
- I want to say that I feel the same because of that
- I say: I feel something good because of that
- I say this because I want to cause you to know how I feel because of it

- I assume that you would want me to say this (p. 229)

From the perspective of rituals, Jakubowska (2003) categorized congratulation under “supportive rituals,” which are used for the sake of mutual support. This classifying was in comparison with “remedial rituals” that aim to remedy an offence committed in advance, such as apology. Congratulation has a social function that is to strengthen social relationship and intimacy (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2001) between individuals because the addresser is able to share the experience and feelings of the hearer (Norrick, 1978). In Norrick’s (1978) words “in this altruistic sense congratulating is a cordial gesture which strengthens ties between individuals and make[s] life more pleasant” (p. 286). In addition, congratulation can include both an expression of personal pride and pleasure as in the following situation “when a trainer congratulates his prize trainee on a victory” (Norrick, 1978, p. 286).

However, congratulations has similarities and differences with other speech acts such as a compliment that is also used as a strategy in congratulating. Norrick (1978) showed the close relationship between them and how they are complex because they follow the same pattern. For instance, the hearer can be an agent (e.g., winning a race) or patient (e.g., having inherited some money), and the observer, the speaker, evaluates the state positively. People sometimes use one or both of them in some situations. For example, “I can compliment or congratulate someone on his victory in a game of tennis, but only compliment him on his improved backhand. Conversely, I can congratulate, but not compliment someone on his having reached the age of eighty” (Norrick, 1978, p. 286). In addition, Bach and Harnish (1979) considered compliments as a subcategory of

congratulations, along with felicitates in the category of acknowledgements. Therefore, Hernandez Ramirez (2008) considered congratulation as a broader category that involves compliments. According to Sifianou (2001), compliments “often appear as reinforcing devices along with or instead of acts like thanks, greetings, congratulations, requests, and advice” (p. 394).

In contrast, Ruhi (2006) clarified the differences between compliments and congratulations. That is, a compliment can be a personal positive assessment of a situation where the hearer can agree or disagree with it. However, “in response to a congratulation on having received a prize in a contest, for example, it is possible to deny the worth of the achievement, but it is not possible to deny having received the prize” (Ruhi, 2006, p. 47). Searle and Vanderveken (1985) and Wierzbicka (1987) provided a detailed explanation for speech acts along with compliment, praising, and congratulation which was explained above. A compliment, which can be assertive or expressive, is to express approval of the addressee for something (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). It requires a positive judgment towards persons, directly or indirectly; for example, X complimented Y on Z to please the addressee (Wierzbicka, 1987). In other words, compliment is used to refer to something about the hearer which means that the person is the direct object in this act. With regard to praising, it is to express approbation (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985), to express someone’s positive judgment with or without wishing to please the addressee (Wierzbicka, 1987). Someone can praise “a person for something they have done” or “praise that thing they have done” (‘X praised thing Z’; Wierzbicka,

1987, p. 201). However, a compliment only takes a person as a direct object; therefore, “one can praise, but not compliment, someone who is absent” (Wierzbicka, 1987, p. 201).

According to the Al-muheet dictionary, congratulations “mubarak” literally means blessed in Arabic. The source of congratulations, “mubarak” is from *barakah* “blessing,” which means accretion and happiness as mentioned in the same source. The verb of *mubarak* is *yubarik*, which means “to ask Allah to bless people or others” according to the Lisan al Arab and Assihah dictionaries, such as may Allah bless you. This act is uttered with reference to Allah, who has the power. *Mubarak* has changed in Arabic varieties in general and in Saudi Arabic in particular to another lexicon that is *mabruuk*. The expressions *mubarak* and *mabruuk* are the active participles, and they are de-verbal nouns. Both template forms *mufaʕal* (as in *mubarak*) and *mafʕuul* (as in *mabruuk*) exist in standard Arabic. In the Saudi variety, however, there is only the template *mafʕuul*. As a result, *mubarak* has been changed to *mabruuk* in the dialect. Although *mubarak* is used in the dialect, it means both “congratulations” and “blessed.”

According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), “to bless is to place the hearer in a state of God’s grace by declaring him to be in that state” (p. 209). In other words, the addressee wants good things to occur to the hearer by blessing (Wierzbicka, 1987).

Blessing is similar to wishing a person good things; however, in wishing,

this power is purely imaginary: the speaker doesn’t assume that his wish could really be self-fulfilling, he merely imagines it ..., while in the case of blessing, the speaker seems to assume that his utterance may indeed have some power.
(Wierzbicka, 1987, p. 226)

In addition, blessing is a religious speech act, which differs from wishing, and few people use it in modern society because they doubt the power of words according to

Wierzbicka (1987). However, Muslims believe in blessing and the power of words with reference to Allah, not to humans, as mentioned in Bataineh's (2013) example in the previous section. In the case of wishing, it is performed to express a particular mental wish that something good would happen to the hearer because the speaker has good feelings towards him/her (Wierzbicka, 1987). In addition, wishing differs from congratulation in terms of the illocutionary point. In congratulating, a speaker shares the pleasure for the good thing that occurred to the hearer, but in the case of wishing, he/she has good feelings towards the hearer.

Finally, congratulations also can be used ironically in some situations and with some acts. For instance, Brown (1980, as cited in Can, 2011) mentioned that irony is used by the speaker with some speech acts, such as congratulations, thanking, and requesting, not only with assertions to refer to the absence of sincerity conditions. In addition, it is used ironically as an indirect blaming to criticize the addressee, which can be socially acceptable in formal contexts (Anolli, Infantino, & Ciceri, 2002). At an important business meeting, for example, the addressee utters "congratulations, John! You are so punctual this morning!" when he arrived late at the meeting" (Anolli et al., p. 142).

From the perspective of politeness, Leech (1983) reclassified speech acts based on the social goal in the politeness principle; therefore, congratulation was classified under "convivial" illocutionary function. Congratulation is also a positive politeness strategy that is considered as a face threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and a face enhancing act (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997) based on the notion of face in understanding

politeness. Congratulation will be discussed in detail in terms of politeness in the next section.

Politeness Theory

This section is comprised of four sections to discuss politeness theory. In the first section, the historical background of politeness that appeared in Grice's (1975) maxims of cooperative principle and Searle's (1975) work about the indirect speech act, in addition to Lakoff's (1973) rules of politeness, which are considered as an establishment for the politeness theory, are discussed. In the second section, there is an explanation of Leech's (1983) maxims of politeness principles, which are based on the pragmatic scale, such as the cost-benefit scale, the optionality scale, and the indirectness scale. In the third section, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory that is based on the notion of face is discussed. Finally discussed will be Terkourafi's (2001) frame-based approach that departs from the common assumptions between the traditional and post-modern view of politeness.

Historical Background

The politeness notion appeared in some glances into Grice (1975) and Searle (1975) before it was established as a theory by Lakoff (1972) and developed by Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). In the Cooperative Principle in *Logic and Conversation*, Grice suggested four maxims: (a) quantity, (b) quality, (c) relation, and (d) manner that assist the addressee in recovering an implicature by connecting what is said to what is mutually assumed. Grice (1989;1967, as cited in Terkourafi, 2005, p. 239) made a fleeting reference to politeness when he mentioned that "there are, of course, all

sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social, or moral in character), such as “Be polite,” that are also normally observed by participants in talk exchanges, and these may also generate nonconventional implicatures.” As a result, Grice restricted himself to the maxims that are about exchanging information. Similarly, Searle (1975) in *Indirect Speech Acts* considered politeness as one of the motivations behind using indirect expressions. He asserted that “The chief motivation, though not the only motivation, for using these indirect forms is politeness” (p.177).

Lakoff (1972) proposed rules for politeness to discuss Grice’s theory from a different perspective, which is establishing and maintaining social relationships rather than a matter of conveying information. Lakoff (1973) suggested two basic rules that guarantee “pragmatic competence:” “Be clear” and “Be polite.” She used Grice’s maxims of conversation as rules of clarity for her first rule, which is “Be clear.” For the second rule “Be polite,” she proposed three rules: “Don’t impose,” “Give options,” and “Make others feel good.” However, this was criticized due to the difficulty and impossibility of applying these two rules together in some situations or using them for politeness/polite purposes. In addition, establishing and maintaining social relationships in real life are more important than focusing on a piece of information in communication (Chapman, 2011).

However, politeness was developed by Leech (1983) by proposing the maxims of politeness principles and by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) by using the notion of face in the theory, which introduces sociopragmatic concerns in the field of pragmatic research. They will be discussed in detail in the next section. Nevertheless, Lakoff

(1973), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson's (1987) works of politeness are based on the premises of Grice's co-operative principle and speech act theory. In general, speech act theory concerns how we negotiate and perform various different acts (Austin, 1962; Searle 1969) while conversational implicature concerns how we convey messages and interpret them indirectly (Grice, 1975).

Those classical theories used different ways and considerations in interpreting what the meaning of language use is and why. In addition, they generally rely on individual rationality and face and consider politeness homogeneous in cultures because of relying on abstract ideas, not empirical data. Terkourafi's (2005a) frame-based approach, on the other hand, relies on face, rationality, and the speech act; however, this approach is based on empirical data that was adopted for this study because it departed from the common assumption between the traditional and post-modern view of politeness. It will be explained at the end. In the next sections, the maxims of politeness principles, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and Terkourafi's frame-based approach are discussed

The Maxims of Politeness Principle

Leech (1983) developed the maxim of "Be Polite" that was suggested by Lakoff (1973) by proposing politeness maxims and three pragmatic scales that are related to his politeness principle. These maxims complement the Gricean "Cooperative Principle" and explain the reasons when speakers do not follow the Gricean maxims. The politeness principle is a goal-oriented approach; therefore, Leech distinguished between a speaker's illocutionary goal (e.g., the speaker's intention by the speech act) and a speaker's social

goal (e.g., the relation between situation and the speech act performed), for example, to support or to compete in communication (Leech, 1983; 2007).

In addition, the politeness principle is associated with speech act theory, for example an illocutionary act (i.e., the utterance as a form of act or activity; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) that is considered one of the aspects of speech situation in addition to addressers or addressees, the context of an utterance, the goal(s) of an utterance, and the utterance as a product of a verbal act. Leech (1983) defined the politeness principle as “minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize the expression of polite beliefs.” Later, Leech (2007) defined the politeness principle as “a constraint observed in human communicative behavior, influencing us to avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain communicative concord” (p.173). Therefore, the politeness principle aims to show peoples’ goals with which they seek to maintain communicative concord. It focuses on minimizing impolite beliefs and maximizing polite beliefs. Leech posited six maxims for his politeness principle that deal with polite behavior and three pragmatic scales that can explain the degree of politeness. The politeness principle includes the following maxims:

1. TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives): Minimize cost to *other* [(b) Maximize benefit to *other*]
2. GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives): Minimize benefit to *self* [(b) Maximize cost to *self*]
3. APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives): Minimize dispraise of *other* [(b) Maximize praise of *other*]

4. MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives): Minimize praise of *self* and Maximize dispraise of *self*)
5. AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives): Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other* and Maximize agreement between *self* and *other*),
6. SYMPATHY MAXIM (in assertives): Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other* and maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*).(Leech, 1983, p. 132)

Leech's pragmatic scales are important because they help to interpret and understand Leech's (1983) maxims. They are:

1. The Cost-Benefit Scale (p 107) on which is estimated the cost or benefit of the proposed action A to S or to H.
2. The Optionality Scale on which illocutions are ordered according to the amount of choice which S allows to H (p 109).
3. The Indirectness Scale on which, from S's point of view, illocutions are ordered with respect to the length of the path (in terms of means-ends analysis) connecting the illocutionary act to its illocutionary goal (p. 123).

For example, doing things that cost the hearer (e.g., ordering, commanding, requesting) are considered less polite. In contrast, doing things that benefit the hearer are considered more polite, such as promising and offering that need to be convivial and performed in the interests of the hearer. Later, Leech (2007) mentioned two kinds of politeness scale that indicate two ways of looking at politeness: semantic (or absolute) politeness scale and pragmatic (or relative) politeness scale. The first one is a look at utterances out of the context that is defined as "unidirectional and registers degree of

politeness in terms of the lexicogrammatical form and semantic interpretation of the utterance” (p. 174). The second scale of politeness is “relative to norms in a given society, group, or situation ... it is sensitive to context, and is a bi-directional scale” (p. 174). Leech did not claim that they are discrete. Culpeper (2011) explained his point of view on the scale by saying that although a linguistic expression or context can determine the semantic (im)politeness or pragmatic (im)politeness, it cannot guarantee the interpretation of (im)politeness. However, the interaction between the two scales is needed for interpretation. Culpeper (2011) also mentioned that there is a scale of conventionalization, which means that pragmatic meanings become semanticised when the meaning becomes conventional for most speakers of the language.

In Leech’s (1983) politeness principle, the speech act of congratulation was assigned to the convivial illocutionary function, which is that the illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal. Congratulation is “intrinsically polite” and “intrinsically courteous” in Leech’s politeness principle because positive forms (e.g. congratulating, greeting, thanking, and so forth) that have convivial functions seek opportunities for comity. With regard to the maxims, “the approbation maxim” and “the modesty maxim” concern expressive speech acts. For instance, congratulation is parallel to the “approbation maxim,” that is, minimizing dispraise of other and maximizing praise of other. It concerns the degree to which the addresser’s remarks convey some good evaluation of others. However, the modesty maxim concerns expressives that minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self, such as apologies. In addition, the former maxim is focused on other whereas the latter is focused on self. Therefore, the

approbation maxim “appears to be a more powerful constraint on conversational behavior than the modesty maxim” (Leech, 1983, p. 133).

Leech (2007), in his article *Politeness: Is there an East-West divide?* connected expressives with the sympathy maxim that aims to minimize antipathy and maximize sympathy between self and other in his politeness maxims¹. It explains why we put a high value on other people’s feelings in some speech acts when we show sympathy or concern towards them, such as congratulations and condolences. In other words, showing others your empathy means being polite. Congratulations is an intrinsically courteous speech act that needs no mitigation; however, it can be used with intensification or gradable expressions to be more extreme, such as *warmest congratulations!* In addition, Leech (1983) did not connect expressives and the maxims with the cost-benefit scale. However, Mendoza and Baicchi (2007) showed the ability of making a connection between expressive speech acts in general and congratulations in particular to the cost-benefit scale in their Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model. In the situation of congratulation, they stated the following convention: “If it is manifest to A that a state of affairs is beneficial to B and B has brought it about, A should feel pleased about it and make this feeling manifest to B” (Mendoza & Baicchi, 2007, p. 112). It shows that the addressor is pleased that something occurred to the hearer, and s/he expresses his/her feeling to the addressee.

Leech (1983) stated that the maxims are less or more universal because they are “the general functional ‘imperatives’ of human communication.” Based on some

¹Maxims are named constraints of Grand Strategy of Politeness to avoid misunderstanding of the term maxim that is used in the Gricean sense (Leech, 2007, p. 203)

observations, however, he indicated that the weights of the value of those principles vary from one culture to another. However, Leech's politeness principle has been criticized by Brown and Levinson (1987) because the maxims are open-ended. Therefore, they are subject to proliferation without restriction to the number of maxims. Other scholars also found that Leech provided little guidance on how to apply the maxims except the tact maxim that he focused on more, and it perhaps reflects the British culture (Chapman, 2011).

Therefore, Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced their theory, which was based on the notion of face in politeness and linking language use to sociological variables, such as distance, power, and ranking. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory will be discussed in the next section.

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced sociopragmatic concerns in the field of pragmatic research and the notion of face into the theory of politeness that is maintained or enhanced in interaction to explain politeness. The notion of "face" goes back to the 1950s and the sociologist Erving Goffman who explored the ways that individuals present themselves in social interaction. Goffman (1967) defined "face" as the positive social value and posited two rules: the rule of self-respect (e.g., the positive social value that is claimed by the speaker him/herself) and the rule of considerateness (the desire of others to maintain their face). In other words, a speaker maintains both his/her face and the face of the addressee in social interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) employed this

notion, face, and divided it into two different categories: Positive face and negative face. Brown and Levinson defined both of them in two ways.

For example, the positive face is defined as "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61) or "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others executors" (p. 62). The goal of using positive politeness strategies is to redress the addressee's positive face wants to be closer to him/her, such as exaggerate (e.g., interest, approval, and sympathy with hearer), use of in-group identity markers, seek agreement, and so forth. Negative face is defined as "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction-i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61) or "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (p. 62). The goal of using negative politeness strategies is to redress the addressee's negative face wants, which increase the social distance, such as be conventionally indirect, minimize the imposition, give deference, apologize, and so forth. Therefore, Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that "face is something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (p. 61).

In addition, Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguished between two aspects of politeness: "positive" and "negative." Positive politeness is "redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable" (p.

101). On the other hand, negative politeness is “redressive action addressed to the addressee’s negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 129).

A speaker sometimes needs to damage the face of the addressee in some acts; that is to perform a face threatening act (FTA), which is performed “on record” (baldly) or “off record” (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In “on record,” performing an act can be without redressive action (baldly) or with redressive action that is oriented towards either positive or negative face. However, deciding how to produce a FTA depends on the calculation of the weightiness of sociological variables, such as social distance between speaker (S) and hearer (H), the relative power of H over S, and the ranking of imposition in a particular culture, as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). Brown and Levinson’s idea of politeness theory was focused on acts that threaten face because “some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require ‘softening’” (p. 24) to redress those threatening acts. However, they neglected face enhancing acts (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997; Leech, 2007). Therefore, Leech (2007) added the notion of a face enhancing act to his principle, which considered some speech acts as inherently polite rather than inherently face threatening.

For instance, congratulation is considered as a positive politeness strategy because, by addressing the hearer’s want to be liked, the addressee’s positive face is enhanced. Also, it conveys that “X is admirable, interesting,” which involves the speaker claiming “common ground” with the hearer. The linguistic realizations of positive politeness strategies are used “as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy” and “as a

kind of social accelerator, where S, in using them, indicates that he wants to ‘come closer’ to H” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 103). However, congratulation is also considered as a threat to the addressee’s negative face because it indicates “that the speaker (S) does not intend to avoid impeding H’s freedom of action” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). Thus, it causes the addressee to take action to find a convenient way of responding. Some acts (e.g., compliments, and expressions of envy or admiration) are classified by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a threat to the H’s negative face. Brown and Levinson considered them as “those acts that predicate some desire of S toward H or H’s goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S’s desire, or give it to S” (p. 66). Moreover, congratulation can damage the speaker’s positive face “because of his basic positive-face wants of self-control and self-respect” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 286). The latter can be observed in the following situation of speech act of congratulation (Burgoon & Bacue, 2003, as cited in Can, 2011):

Imagine the unpleasant task of informing a close friend that you have won admission to a prestigious organization for which you were both under consideration but he or she has not. The situation calls for controlled rather than unfettered displays of joy, as well as for tact and empathy but not cloying sympathy for the friend’s hurt and embarrassment. In addition, it calls for understanding if the friend is not enthusiastically congratulatory and for temporary distancing if the friend wishes privacy rather than conversation.

Also, congratulation can damage the hearer’s positive face. In some communities, for instance, it is considered “embarrassing” when they might not feel they deserve it. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) proposed a term into Brown and Levinson’s model, as counterparts of *face threatening acts*, that is *face enhancing acts* (FEAs), such

as wishes, thanks, or compliments. This was also later employed by Leech (2007) in his principle of politeness. Kerbrat-Orecchioni explained that compliment, which is a threatening act in Brown and Levinson's theory because it threatens the addressee's *negative face* and, possibly, *positive face*, is also a flattering act to enhance the addressee's face and it is "an anti-threat." She distinguished between *face threatening acts* (FTAs) and FEAs because they are confused in Brown and Levinson's theory. She stated that the form of speech act relies on the state of its FTAs (e.g., "FTAs are to be softened and minimized" (such as criticism) and FEAs (e.g., "FEAs are to be hardened and maximized"), such as thanks a lot, thank you very much, and so forth), based on the context and the intrinsic features of the speech act. She defined *negative face* as "all the 'territories of the self'" while positive face is "all the enhancing images that speakers try to make up of themselves in interaction" (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997, p.14). In addition, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) redefined *negative face* as "abstentionist or compensatory in nature: it consists in avoiding FTA occurrence, or in softening its formulation by any means" (p. 15). In contrast, *positive face* is "a productionist character: it consists in performing any flattering act or the other face of the addressee" (p. 15). Finally, she considers positive politeness as "genuine politeness" where a speaker produces FEAs in interaction. However, negative politeness is a "restricted impoliteness" that needs to be mitigated by some redressive action to soften the expression of FTAs. As a result, congratulation can be seen as a positive politeness strategy that is used to enhance the addressee's positive face rather than a face threatening act. Because congratulation is

intrinsically polite, it does not need mitigation, but gradable expressions, as Leech (2007) proposed.

Although most of the work on politeness has been conducted based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, it has been criticized for some points. First of all, Brown and Levinson claimed universality for their model although they only used data from three different languages with different cultures, such as Tamil spoken in southern India, Tzeltal spoken in Mexico, and English spoken in the United States and England, for general application of the theory. The main question raised by scholars is whether or not these three languages are sufficient for the claim (i.e., universality; Chapman, 2011). Politeness is a universal phenomenon (Coupland, Grainger, & Coupland, 1988); however, the principles of politeness and speech acts are language-specific and culture specific (Wierzbicka, 1985). Second, culturally, others argued that Brown and Levinson focused on individualism that reflects the Anglo-Saxon culture and neglects cultures that give priority to collectivism. Therefore, the model cannot be universal. Third, Brown and Levinson's (1987) focus was on how we maintain politeness and mitigate face threatening acts. Therefore, Brown and Levinson ignored the individual's conception of politeness and the conception of context.

The current goal for studying politeness is not for exploring universal trends or claiming universality; however, it is to understand the linguistic behavior of politeness in terms of how people interact in different languages, cultures, and social contexts and why they use particular expressions in specific situations. The main reason for this is that the meaning of expressions emerge in their use in context and interaction. As a result, the

modern understanding of studying politeness defines politeness as “politeness is discursive” (Culpeper, 2012, p. 410) in modern approaches, such as Spencer-Oatey’s (2000) “rapport management,” and Terkourafi’s (2001) frame-based approach, and Locher and Watts’s (2005) “relational work.” These three approaches include some characteristics belonging to the discursive approach, such as no one meaning of the term politeness, the centrality of the perspective of participants, an emphasis on situated and emergent meanings, an emphasis on context, connection of politeness to social norms (sociocultural view of politeness), the reduction of the role of intention in communication, a focus on the micro, not the macro, and a preference for qualitative methods (Culpeper, 2012).

However, Culpeper (2012) stated that the relational work and rapport management are forms of relational work but with different terms, having “interpersonal relations” as a central focus in common rather than individual performing of politeness. Therefore, Culpeper describes Terkourafi’s (2001) “frame based approach” as a coherent, rich, pragmatic account because it is based on analyzing linguistic realizations in particular contexts of use, which are determined by participants in the dynamic social contexts. The next section will explain Terkourafi’s “frame-based approach” in detail.

Frame-based Approach

Terkourafi (2001) created the frame-based approach to identify and classify the speech act of offers and requests in order to understand politeness in Cypriot Greek data by recording a large corpus of spontaneous conversational exchanges between native speakers of Greek. This approach departs from the common assumptions between the

traditional view of politeness and the post-modern view as a complementary approach to understand the politeness phenomena, “seeking to account theoretically for observed regularities in the data, and that acknowledges generalized implicatures of politeness alongside particularized ones” (Terkourafi, 2005a, p. 254).

The goal is to establish regularities of co-occurrence between linguistic realizations of speech acts and its particular types of contexts of use in real life contexts. This approach is data-driven, not theory-driven, and the context in terms of speakers, addressees, relationship, and setting is certain to explore the regularities of co-occurrence. Therefore, norms are discovered from the bottom-up analysis for the empirical data. Some regularities are considered as polite behavior in this approach because they are regular (Terkourafi, 2005a). As seen in the previous sections, Leech (1983) stated that some speech acts are intrinsically polite, whereas, Brown and Levinson (1987) mentioned that some acts are face threatening acts. However, Terkourafi stated that the expressions are not polite by themselves, but it is in the regularity of the co-occurrence of the expressions that creates the perception of politeness about them. That perception is created and constituted by the regular co-occurrence of specific linguistic expressions in specific types of context, which also reflect the previous experience of language users about what expressions to use in particular contexts, based on a knowledge of community norms. This reflects Terkourafi’s pragmatic inferencing conventionalized polite expressions. She defines conventionalization as

a relationship holding between utterances and contexts, which is a correlate of the (statistical) frequency with which an expression is used *in one’s experience* in a particular context. It is thus a matter of degree, and may well vary for different speakers, as well as for the same speaker over time. This does not

preclude the possibility that a particular expression may be conventionalised in a particular context for virtually all speakers of a particular language, thereby appearing to be a 'convention' of the language. (2001, p. 130)

Culpeper (2011) commented on the impact of culture on norms and says that culture affects not only the norms of group behavior but also the attitudes towards the norms. The expressions that are used unchallenged by interlocutors are polite because politeness passes unnoticed, which is not like impoliteness that is commented on (Kasper, 1990). In this approach, data are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to establish the regularities of co-occurrence (i.e., expressions and types of context) because "the formulaic speech carries burden of polite discourse" (Terkourafi, 2002, p. 197).

Culpeper (2011) stated that Terkourafi's approach is important because it labels politic behavior by analyzing expressions associated with contexts based on frequency that show the regularity of co-occurrence of both of them that create the perception of politeness. In other words, politeness is explored among other things. The evidence of this concept is also similar to Haugh's (2007) claim about politeness that is "the reciprocation of concern evident in the adjacent placement of expressions of concern relevant to the norms invoked in that particular interaction" (p. 312). Politic behavior is, as defined and distinguished from politeness by Watts (2003), based on expectation and acceptability, "linguistic behavior which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, i.e., as non-salient, should be called *politic behavior*" (p. 19). In contrast, politeness is defined as "linguistic behavior perceived to go beyond what is expectable, i.e., salient behavior, should be called polite or impolite depending on whether the behavior itself tends towards the negative or positive end of the

spectrum of politeness” (Watts, 2003, p. 19). However, Leech (2007) does not distinguish between them because he considers politeness as a scalar phenomenon of human communicative behavior which “can be relatively salient or relatively formulaic and routine” (p. 203).

The frame-based approach relies on speech act theory in classifying acts (i.e., to its illocutionary act), face-constituting that is seen in linguistic behavior, and rationality. Brown and Levinson (1987) also employed face and rationality in politeness theory; however, they limited rationality to individual rationality, not to the societal rationality that was acknowledged by Terkourafi, based on Mey’s inclusive definition of pragmatics (Mey, 1993; 2001). Terkourafi (2005a) explained that “individual intentions” and “the ways of threatening/enhancing face” are socially constituted. In other words, the societal rationality assists the addressee to recognize the speaker’s individual intentions and the positive or negative acts that are performed to threaten or enhance face. Because how the interpretation of a particular act and face are done in the interlocutors’ society, their uptake is a result of their experience and repeated ratification in interaction. Therefore, the individual rationality is mainly based on the societal rationality as a constraint for it because the societal rationality has appeared first as a result of the sociohistorical conditions that determine what is regular. Terkourafi (2005a) claimed that identity, network structure, and salience can clarify how the sociohistorical conditions are done. Politeness, as Terkourafi stated, is habit and frames, not a rational calculation as Brown and Levinson (1987) do in their theory.

Terkourafi (2005b) proposed some revisions on the Gricean Co-operative principle because the reliance on the frame-based approach on face-constituting and rationality helped in revising that principle to comprise all communication, even conflictual exchanges. In all interaction and exchanges, the goal of co-operation exists and a speaker interacts either to enhance or to threaten the addressee’s face. In other words, enhancing and threatening the addressee’s face are co-operative in interaction. In this approach, Terkourafi (2005a) stated that politeness relies on a generalized implicature, although Terkourafi (2003) did not neglect the importance of the Gricean work in understanding politeness in specific situations (see Table 1 below as cited in Culpeper, 2011, p. 128). The role of generalized implicature in interpreting politeness is explained as:

Politeness is achieved on the basis of a generalized implicature when an expression *x* is uttered in a context with which-based on the addressee’s previous experience of similar contexts-expression *x* regularly co-occurs. In this case, rather than engaging in full-blown inferencing about the speaker’s intention, the addressee draws on that previous experience (represented holistically as a frame) to derive the proposition that “in uttering expression *x* the speaker is being polite” as a generalized implicature of the speaker’s utterance. On the basis of this generalized implicature, the addressee may then come to hold the further belief that the speaker *is* polite (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 251 beyond frame).

Table 1

Terkourafi’s Generalized Implicature

Non-conventional pragmatic	Conventionalised pragmatic		Conventional semantic
Particularised implicature (utterance-token meaning derived in nonce context)	Generalised implicature I (utterance-type meaning presumed in minimal context)	Generalised implicature II (utterance-type meaning presumed in all contexts <i>ceteris paribus</i>)	Coded meaning (sentence meaning)

Terkourafi's argument of politeness, which is based on the generalized implicature, explains how an addressee relies on a previous experience, not the addressor's intuitions, in interpreting expressions as polite because of the regularity of co-occurrence. Although Leech (2014) complimented the usefulness of the frame for studying routinized and conventionalized polite expressions of linguistic behavior, he said that the frame "does not supersede the more pragmatically based inferential approach to pragmatic meaning" (p. 39). Kasper (2006) commented on the conventional view of meaning in the studies of speech acts, which include semantic formula or speech act realization strategies, saying that the disadvantage of conventional meaning is that it depends on coding, which varies among taxonomies of speech acts. Also, Clark (1979) mentioned that the linguistic convention is seen as a stable fixed association and the semantic formulae are conventions of means in the speech act. The next section discusses the empirical studies of speech acts and congratulations.

Studies on Speech Acts in Face-to-Face Communication

Many studies of speech acts and the speech act of congratulation have been conducted on face-to-face communication. In the first section, the previous/earlier studies on expressive speech acts and the other types of acts by Saudis are discussed. In the second section, the contributions of studying the speech act of congratulation in Arabic are discussed. In the third section the previous studies on congratulations in non-Arabic languages are also discussed. In the fourth section, the earlier cross-cultural studies of congratulation in the other languages and cultures are discussed.

Studies on Speech Acts by Saudis

Many expressive speech acts have been investigated in Saudi society, such as greetings and leave takings (Hassanain, 1994; Turjoman, 2005), compliment (Al Amro, 2013; Salameh, 2001), thanking (Altalhi, 2014), apology (Suuriyallah & Allaheebi, 2014). However, the speech act of congratulation has not been explored yet on Saudis or Saudi Arabic according to the best of my knowledge.

For example, Turjoman (2005), in her dissertation, investigated greetings/replying and leave takings/replying of Saudi males and females when they interacted with the same sex, as Saudi Arabia is a gender segregated society. Turjoman recorded naturalistic data to identify the differences among them in terms of identifying the influence of gender, age, social status, relationship, and settings to examine the linguistic variables such as formulaic expressions, length, and hyperbole. The study included 237 participants: 127 males and 110 females of different ages, relationships, and places. Turjoman found that the influence of age, social status, setting, and gender were not significant in the Saudi greeting. Regarding the greeting reply, it was also found that social status and gender had no significant effect, while age, relationship, and settings significantly affected how to reply to the greeting. In general, however, the greeting “peace be upon you” and the reply “and peace be upon you” were the most frequent expressions in Saudi greetings and replies.

With regard to leave taking and the reply, Turjoman (2005) found that the results also showed that age, social status, and settings had no significant influence on Saudis; however, relationship and gender had a significant effect on the way leave taking and

replying to the leave taking expressions were used. For instance, women tended to take much time in greetings and leave takings and used more metaphors and superlatives than men did. Also, women used more small talk in the leave taking than men did. In addition, Turjoman found that “with Allah’s peace/peace be upon” as a leave taking expression and “in Allah’s peace/peace be upon you” as a reply in leave taking were used more frequently than the other expressions. In Saudi greetings, most of the greetings, leave takings, and 87 replies are religious in their content in Arabic (Hassanain, 1994).

Salameh (2001) conducted a cross-cultural study to examine the compliment responses of native speakers of Saudi Arabic and the responses of native speakers of American English and Saudi EFL learners. Salameh used naturalistic observation, elicitation, and interviews in collecting the data from 150 subjects (50 in each group). The goal was to identify both whether the patterns of compliment responses are universal across languages or cultural-specific and to identify the impacts of gender, social status, and social distance on the responses to compliments.

Salameh (2001) found that Americans accepted and rejected compliments more than Saudis, but the difference was slight. However, Saudis accepted more and rejected less when the speaker and addressee were of the same sex. The opposite result was found with Americans. The findings also found that the American and Saudi deflection response category was affected by the social status and social distance of the complimenter. In other words, deflection can be observed more frequently in two situations: (a) when the social status of the complimenter is high and (b) when the complimenter’s social distance is close to that of the complimentee in both languages.

However, Saudis deflected more than Americans did. Salameh mentioned that “the Saudi culture based on the dominant Islamic values of cooperation and group work among believers expects individuals to be humble and modest when talking about themselves and attribute all their successes and failures to God’s will” (p. 158). With regard to gender effect, it was found only in the acceptance response category of both languages and was affected by the respondent’s gender and the gender-pairings of respondent and complimenter.

The speech act of compliment was also examined on Saudis by AlAmro (2013), whose dissertation was on Najdi Saudi Arabic speakers. Najdi Arabic is a Saudi dialect spoken in the middle of Saudi Arabia. AlAmro collected 592 compliments and compliment responses by observation in order to examine the influence of gender, age, and relationship on the features of compliments and compliment responses. AlAmro found that there is a limitation in the formula of Najdi compliments in terms of the number of syntactic patterns, for example NP (mashallah) (INT) ADJ, which was the most frequent one (25%), and the number of adjectives which are predictable in the Najdi society. This word, *mashallah*, is dominant in Najdi compliments because of the belief that it can protect the complimented person from destruction by the evil eye.

AlAmro (2013) stated that Najdi speakers accept compliments in an indirect way, which means that they are between the agreement maxim and the modesty maxim. With regard to the impact of social factors on compliments, the results showed that women focused on appearance, and their compliments were lengthier than men’s due to repetition, while men focused on personality and performance. In regard to the age

factor, AlAmro found that young and middle-aged speakers focused their compliments more on appearance, but older speakers focused more on personality and performance. Also, nonacknowledgment was used more by middle-aged speakers and old people than by the young speakers. In addition, non-acquainted speakers used more compliments on performance, and their responses to compliments included invocation and blessing. For instance, expressions like *Allah yagzaak kheer* “may Allah reward you” was used more frequently as a compliment response among middle and older generations as invoking Allah’s favors upon complimentees that is a part of Prophet Muhammad’s teachings. Finally, the previous examples of compliment or compliment responses emphasize the differences of the cultural values in the way of complimenting others.

Unlike compliment, Altalhi (2014) studied the way Hijazi females express gratitude and respond to it based on the kind of benefit, as in the following situations: (a) thanking exchanges for low imposition favors, (b) thanking exchanges for serving a meal, and (c) thanking exchanges for receiving a gift. Altalhi used naturally occurring data in this study. Altalhi collected 400 thanking exchanges that occurred naturally in the Hijazi dialect that is spoken in the West of Saudi Arabia. Altalhi found that, although Hijazi females used various strategies when they express and respond to thanking in the situation of a low imposition favor, they used a limited number of strategies in both thanking and responding for the other two situations, serving a meal and receiving a gift.

The results of Altalhi’s (2014) study showed that there was a preference for using the Bald Thanking strategy with strangers when expressing gratitude for a favor, whereas the preferable strategy used with relatives and friends was either the Explicit Benediction

or using various thanking strategies to show sincerity with the interlocutor. In responding to thanking for a favor, it was found that Hijazi females preferred Minimizing the Debt with acquaintances, relatives, or friends, but with strangers, they used the Opting Out strategy. In expressing gratitude for a meal, Altalhi found that Hijazi females preferred using Expressing Benediction, for example using blessings and prayers to express gratitude, which are the most polite ways that indicate the cultural values in Hijazi society. With regard to the response of thanking in that situation, Hijazi females used Wishing as a strategy to respond to that gratitude. In expressing gratitude for a gift, Hijazi females used Expressing the Non-necessity of the Favor as a strategy and the response in this situation was by Minimizing the Debt and by using Wishing and Acknowledging the thanks in the second turn.

The last expressive speech act is apology, and it was examined by Suuriyallah and Allaheebi (2014) to identify the types and sequencing of strategies used by Saudi Arabian undergraduate students. They used ethnographic observation and a Discourse Completion Test to collect data from 370 students from five regional universities in Saudi Arabia. The findings found that Saudis do not like to apologize frankly, which is perceived as an embarrassment to a person's family and tribe. Therefore, the strategies of apology are "either shift responsibility away from or bind the offender" in Saudi culture (Suuriyallah and Allaheebi, 2014, p. 21). In addition, it was found that the shifting strategies are dominant in Saudi culture.

The previous studies showed the results of the studies of expressive speech acts. Also, some other types of speech acts have been examined in Saudi Arabic, such as

refusal (Al-Shalawi, 1997) offer (Al-Qahtani, 2009), request (Al-Ammar, 2000), and invitation (Alfalig, 2016).

For example, Al-Shalawi (1997) conducted a cross-cultural study on Saudi and American male undergraduate students to investigate the semantic formulas in the speech act of refusal. He used a Discourse Completion Test to collect the data from 100 participants (50 in each group). Al-Shalawi found that Saudis and Americans used similar semantic formulas in refusing; however, the difference was in the number of semantic formulas used in each situation (e.g., requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions) and the way they offered explanation. In addition, the results showed that Saudis used religious expressions in their refusal, which indicated the influence of religion on Saudi culture in language use. Moreover, Saudis were ambiguous and less direct than Americans who focused on their explanations being clear. Therefore, there was a significant difference in the use of the direct “no.” Saudis used more semantic formulas, avoidance strategies (e.g., postponement, hedge, repeat), and positive and negative politeness strategies than Americans. Al-Shalawi interpreted the performance of Saudi refusal by mentioning that people are encouraged to comply with a request because of the concern with social approval in the Saudi culture. Finally, he mentioned that these differences reflected the collectivist culture for Saudis and the individualistic culture for Americans.

According to Leech (2007), however, the two concepts are positions on a scale, although there is more power of group values in the East, which is different from the

power of the individual values in the West. Therefore, “there is no absolute divide between East and West in politeness” (Leech, 2007, p. 170).

The other speech act that was studied by Al-Qahtani (2009) is offering. By using a Discourse Completion Test and interviews, she conducted a contrastive study between Spoken Saudi Arabic and Spoken British English to investigate female use of politeness strategies in the speech act of offering. The participants were 103 females: 53 Saudi females and 50 British English females. Al-Qahtani (2009) found that the applicability of Brown and Levinson’s model was high in the Saudi context. The results showed that the strategies such as Bald on record (BOR) and positive politeness (PSP) were used more frequently by Saudis, while the strategy of negative politeness (NGP) was more frequent among the British speakers. Although the addressee’s power-status did not affect the type of politeness strategies in both cultures, the social distance and the degree of involvement in the event of offering showed a significant effect on the use of politeness strategies in both groups. Also, the rank of the imposition and the gender of the addressee had a significant effect, but only on the Saudi groups. Regarding the influence of social distance, it was found that Saudis used PSP with known people rather than with unfamiliar ones, whereas British speakers used PSP, NGP, and mixed strategies. In the degree of involvement in the event, it was found that the strategy of BOR was used more frequently by both groups. With regard to the rank of the imposition, Saudis used the strategy of NGP more. In the influence of gender, Al-Qahtani found that the addressee significantly affected Saudis more than British speakers; therefore, Saudis used the strategy of off record (OFR) and Don’t-do-the FTA with men more. The findings

showed that British females showed their respect for other's privacy by using indirect strategies; however, Saudi females tended more towards using the strategies of solidarity. Finally, the results indicated significant cultural differences between the two groups in terms of using the strategies of offering speech act.

Al-Ageel (2015) investigated the speech act of request, but it was on the Saudi Pidgin of Najdi Arabic between Saudis and Asian workers by recording two Saudi female speakers. Al-Ageel found that the use of request was very limited to the simplest forms of verb and noun phrases and did not follow the systematic features and the rules of Najdi Arabic. In addition, the social factors, such as power, status, social distance, and the age of the requester influenced how request was used and the relationship between Saudis and Asian workers. Finally, the results showed the tendency of the younger generation to employ English expressions in communication.

Finally, in her dissertation, Alfalig (2016) examined the speech acts of invitations and responses to them in Saudi Arabic. She collected 170 invitation exchanges by observing and recording (via notetaking) invitation situations and screenshots of WhatsApp text conversations that included invitations. Alfalig found that invitations and responses were affected both by social relationship and the type of event/formality, but not by gender. She found that, in close relationships, the nature of this relationship allowed for imposition, insistence, and the use of imperatives. In contrast, distant relationships called for using expressions such as acknowledgement and the use of lengthier responses and allowed for the use of formal lexical choices and honorific markers. In addition, the common expressions used in formal events were blessings and

want statements where acceptance was the typical response in this situation. In the informal events, on the other hand, the commonly used expressions were suggestory formulas, query preparatory, mood derivables, and so forth, and the response tended to refusal. Alfalig found that responses were lengthier in formal situations and used more strategies, for instance, blessings, thanking, excuse, and so forth to soften the refusal, while in informal situations fewer strategies were employed, such as refusal and an excuse due to the casualness.

According to Alfalig (2016), in the Saudi culture, formal invitations are perceived as face-enhancing acts, whereas informal invitations are perceived as face-threatening acts because of their imposition. In addition, the dominant religious expressions in Saudi invitations and their responses reflect the influence of religion, just as those expressions are also rooted in the other speech acts, as was mentioned in previous studies. Finally, it was found in Alfalig's results that Saudis employed various direct and indirect strategies by using various linguistic tactics to convey politeness, for example the use of religious expressions, metaphorical and poetic language, insistence, and so forth.

To sum up, this section has shown the studies that examined the expressive speech acts and the other types of speech acts of Saudis. In many cases, it was observed that religious expressions were used in the different speech acts, and this reflects the cultural values and the role of religion in Saudi society. However, all the types of speech acts of Saudis have been explored in face-to-face communication, as mentioned above. According to this literature review, speech acts of Saudis have received little attention on computer mediated communication (CMC). In addition, the expressive speech acts, such

as congratulation, have not yet been examined either in face-to-face communication or in CMC. Therefore, this study can be considered as a new contribution to understanding the speech act of congratulation on CMC in Saudi Arabic.

Studies on Congratulations in Arabic Societies

Much work has been done on congratulation in face-to-face communication and written discourse (e.g. newspapers and greeting cards) in many languages and cultures. Arabic, however, which is spoken in more than 20 countries, has received little attention. In other words, congratulation has been examined in only two varieties: Omani (Emery, 2000) and Jordanian Arabic (Al-Khatib, 1997; Al-Qudah, 2001).

Emery (2000) conducted a study on Omani Arabic to identify politeness formulas of congratulations as well as greetings and commiserating. Emery collected the data by using a questionnaire and introspection by native speakers to investigate two variables: age and gender. Emery examined the expressions of four situations: wedding, the birth of a baby, religious festivals, and after rain. The results showed that different expressions were used by older men, older women, and younger people. In the occasion of a wedding, for example, older people used this expression “*allahybaarik fil- amaar*” (May God bless your lives). Younger people, however, used the term “*Mabruuk*” or “*mbaarak*” (May you be blessed) which are simple expressions. Furthermore, older women utilized some prayers such as “*inshallaah bikurkum wild*” (God willing your first-born child be a boy) and wishing a long life for the addressee.

On the occasion of the birth of a baby, older women used sympathetic formulas, such as “*ahwan anshaallaah*” (get better soon God willing). Generally, Emery (2000)

found that, for older men, it is not appropriate to congratulate mothers unless they are relatives. Younger men tended to use some expressions such as “*mabruuk*” (congratulations) or “*mabruuk ‘ala wuSuul waliil-’ahad* (congratulations on the arrival of the heir apparent!). On the other hand, younger women preferred using “*al-Hamdulillaah ‘ala s-salaama or mabruuk*” (thanks God, you are well/congratulations). After rain, the researcher found that young people do not exchange specific expressions on this occasion. Finally, older people and younger ones had similarities and differences in using expressions in religious festivals. Emery found unique linguistic rituals and discourse structures with different ways of expressing congratulation among the different groups of males and females and elders and youngers. In addition, Emery indicated that youngers have a tendency to use pan-Arabic usages to simplify the situation, while elders preserve using forms from the traditional vernacular.

Congratulations was also investigated in Jordanian Arabic by Al-Qudah (2001) to identify the patterns of congratulations on happy occasions, such as passing the Tawjiihi (high school), graduation, wedding, promotion, and giving birth to a baby. He also examined the influence of social factors, such as age, sex, social status, education, intimacy, and residence in using congratulations. Al-Qudah’s study was focused on the spoken (e.g., by recording naturalistic data) and written expressions (e.g., daily newspapers and actual post cards) in Jordan. The findings showed that there were two types of expressions: restricted (short expressions) and elaborate (long expressions) according to their length and the patterns of congratulation. For example, short expressions (restricted) meant that they were used commonly by people with no emotions

because they become conventional. On the other hand, the long expressions (elaborate) are newly created and often have more than one sentence. In addition, the use of expressions was affected by the social factors.

In spoken expressions, for instance, women elaborated more than men. Older people used shorter and less elaborated expressions than younger people. Al-Qudah (2001) said the reason is that older people are less educated than younger people. High class people preferred using elaborated expressions to show superiority and prestige, while low class or ordinary people used more restricted and common expressions. Educated individuals elaborated expression and Standard Arabic on the one hand. On the other hand, uneducated individuals used common and colloquial expressions. With regard to intimacy, relatives used elaborated expressions while nonrelatives preferred using the restricted expressions rather than the elaborated ones. Finally, because of education and occupation, urban individuals used more elaborated expressions than did rural individuals. However, the difference was slight between urban and rural subjects.

In written expressions (e.g., newspapers and post cards), Al-Qudah (2001) found that, although women and men were more elaborated when they congratulated the same sex, women were more elaborated than men in general. Also, young people used elaborated expressions more than the older people did because of the knowledge of etiquette by youngers. Relatives used long expressions to show their intimacy and feelings to the recipients, while nonrelatives were formal and less elaborated and did not show emotions to the recipients. Finally, the expressions of congratulations were longer

and more elaborated in written discourse than in spoken discourse. Al-Qudah stated that the patterns of congratulations are systematic in Jordanian Arabic.

Similarly, Al-Khatib (1997) also examined the communicative functions of congratulation along with thank-you announcements (e.g., structure, size, pattern, and so forth) in Jordanian Newspapers, attempting to identify the sociolinguistic information for communication. The data were collected from five newspapers, and the total number of announcements was 122. There were 94 announcements of congratulation and 28 announcements of thanks.

Al-Khatib (1997) found that the announcements of congratulations communicated a lot of information about the addressee. In the wedding ceremony, for example, there was information about the bride and the bridegroom, their families, their social and economic status, place and time of celebration, honeymoon, and so forth. The findings also showed that a number of sociocultural factors, such as gender, economic status, and occasion had a correlation with congratulations and thank-you announcements. Al-Khatib indicated that the two acts “have the specific function of communicating pleasure, approval, or praise to a particular person(s), and ... are primarily and essentially friendly social acts which aim at establishing and maintaining good relations between individuals” (p. 157).

To sum up, Emery (2000) identified the forms of congratulations in the traditional vernacular and pan-Arabic usages and the influence of age and gender on the occasions in Omani society. Al-Qudah (2001) identified two types of congratulations in spoken and written discourse according to the length: short and elaborated expressions and the impact

of social factors on language use. Al-Khatib (1997) also identified the communicative functions of congratulations in newspapers. However, the strategies of congratulations have not been studied yet.

Studies on Congratulations in Non-Arabic Societies

Congratulations also has been explored in many languages in face-to-face communication, such as Persian (Allami and Nekouzadeh, 2011; Ghaemi and Ebrahimi, 2014), Spanish (García, 2010; Hernandez, 2008; Vélez Trujillo, 2011), and Greek (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2001). Also, it has been investigated in letters/greeting cards in Latin (Kočovska, 2013; Unceta Gómez, 2016) and English (Willer, 2001).

In Persian, Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011) studied the speech act of congratulations to identify the congratulation strategies and the types of positive politeness strategies in the Iranian society. They collected data, using a discourse completion test, from 50 Iranian Persian male and female speakers with ages ranging from 17-75 who were from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The researchers identified five types of congratulation strategies used by Iranians, such as the “Illocutionary Force Indicating Device” (IFID), “Expression of happiness,” “request for information” and “offer of good wishes.” However, the most frequently used strategies were “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “Expression of happiness.” The findings showed five strategies were used in all the situations, but they differed in the frequency of using them across the situations. The highest number of used strategies was in “wedding” and “getting a trophy.” In contrast, the least number of strategies used was the situation of “New Year.” The other strategies, such as “Thanking god,” “a suggestion

to celebrate” and “offer help” were the least used congratulation strategies among Iranians. In regard to the positive politeness strategies, Allami and Nekouzadeh found that Iranians used various strategies. For example, “Giving gift to listener” was the greatest frequency in all situations. The smallest frequency of use were the following strategies: “Joking,” “White lies,” “Safe topic,” and “Giving or asking for reason.”

Ghaemi and Ebrahimi (2014) examined congratulations among male and female Persians to identify the differences in terms of frequency and content of semantic formulas and using congratulations in formal and informal situations. The researchers collected the data by using a DCT from 26 males and 24 females with an age range between 13-53 years old who had different educational backgrounds and were from different areas in Iran. The researchers found that the IFID, expression of happiness, and best wishes were the most frequent expressions used by Iranians. The results also showed that there is a slight difference between Iranian men and women in expressing congratulation. That is, women expressed their emotional feelings, such as stating exclamation and complaint more than men did. However, there was no difference between men and women in the use of formal and informal codes when they expressed congratulation. Finally, Iranians used “best wishes” referring to expressions like praying for the addressee and religious expressions such as “in God’s will” or “God helps you” because of their religious belief.

In Spanish, Hernandez (2008) investigated the speech act of congratulation, along with gratitude, by native speakers of Peninsular Spanish to identify the strategies of the two acts, gender differences, and cultural aspects by using the rapport management

approach. The data were collected by using open role play situations (e.g., a promotion and salary raise) in Valencia in Spain. The participants were 11 males and 11 females from the middle class ranging between 22 to 55 years old. The findings showed that solidarity was the major conversational exchange; therefore, it was strengthened and enhanced. Despite the participants' tendency to threaten some of the components of the rapport management principles, it was considered a permitted behavior in the culture of that specific group. However, respecting principles (e.g., the equity and association principles) occurred more than threatening them. With regard to the gender variable, females respected both principles more than did males. It was also found that men balanced respecting and threatening the principles; however, the difference was obvious among women. In addition, the findings showed that strategies, such as expressing approval and happiness or making celebration plans, were more commonly used than the strategy of congratulating in the data that were used only by women. Hernandez stated that the speech act of congratulation was used to convey harmony to strengthen the positive relation between people. Finally, Hernandez mentioned that the Spanish culture is a positive politeness culture that can be observed in behavioral expectations, face sensitivities, and interactional wants.

In addition, García (2010) conducted a study on Peruvian Spanish-speakers to examine behavioral expectations, types of face respected or threatened, and interactional wants in congratulation by using Spencer-Oatey's rapport management theoretical framework. The data were collected from 10 men and 10 women who were in their 30s by using an open role play about a situation of a widow who will get married soon. The

results showed that participants used strategies in congratulating with a rapport-maintenance orientation that reflected relatedness or interdependent self-construals among Peruvian Spanish speakers. As a result, the interactional wants of participants were mainly relational. The strategies that were used by participants were strategies for enhancing the interlocutor's identity face (56%), such as expressing approval/acceptance, expressing happiness for the interlocutor, congratulating, well-wishing, hinting desire to be invited, and grounders, which is a way to excuse or support what was said before. In addition, other strategies were used for undermining the interlocutor's identity face (44%) such as inquiring (e.g., identity/origin/place/length of acquaintance) and arguing (e.g., questioning one's feelings, quality of relationship, decision, and so forth). García found that the response to good news in Peruvian Spanish was achieved in three stages: (a) expressing emotions and inquiring, (b) arguing, and (c) ending the interactions by using the strategies of enhancing the interlocutor's identity face. The first and second stages indicated the close relationship between participants and their friends. Their interest was to assure the interlocutor's well-being before offering their support and congratulations. Finally, the participants enhanced both their own identity and respectability face and the identity and respectability face of the addressee by exhibiting their concern for him/her.

Moreover, Vélez Trujillo (2011) studied congratulations in Colombian Spanish to demonstrate whether Colombians show courtesy of solidarity or deference when expressing congratulations. The researcher used a method of open role play with 20 men and women in two different groups, based on age (30-36 and 55-65 years old) to examine age and gender differences. The results indicated that Colombians showed positive

politeness with solidarity strategies, such as pride and approval and expressions of gratitude and support, when they offer congratulations. Vélez Trujillo found that the participants showed pride and approval in the first stage of conversation. In the second stage, most of the expressions used by the participants were expressions of thanks and support, while requesting information and criticism were used less than the previous expressions. In the third stage, some expressions were used repetitively in the conversation, such as congratulations, support, gratitude, and so forth. In addition, the results explored a significant difference (95%) between men and women. Women used more strategies of solidarity and but men used more expressions of criticism, which indicated that males were more open and direct than females in this study. Regarding the age variable, the researcher found that the difference between young and old people were not significant, but it is considered as a tendency. Although most of the strategies used by Colombians were to enhance the image of the party, some strategies were used to weaken the image of the party, such as expressions of direct criticism.

In Greek, Makri-Tsilipakou (2001) examined the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic properties of the use of “congratulations” and “bravo” as well as the social parameters. Makri-Tsilipakou found that “bravo” can be more of an exclamation than congratulation, which has no urgency/spontaneity in terms of its semantics and syntax. Also, the results showed that “congratulations” is not used frequently in Greek occasions (e.g., congratulating the parents of a new baby, an engagement, a wedding, and so forth) because it offers the meaning of formality and/or distance. In addition, it is used by the educated/urban class. Moreover, it is used in situations where the relationship is not

familiar between the speaker and the addressee. Therefore, expressions of offering wishes were used more than “congratulations” in congratulating the parents of a new baby, for example, “may that s/he live to you/have good luck/be healthy/proudly watch her.” With regard to the expression “bravo,” it is not clearly bounded by situations like “congratulations” because it is used spontaneously as a result of an exclamatory nature when parents use it to their kids for behaving appropriately or teachers to their pupils. Finally, the use of congratulations and the other forms of expressing joy in Greek may prove that different languages and cultures make different speech acts (Wierzbicka, 1985).

In Latin, Kočovska(2013) examined the realization patterns of the speech act of congratulation by analyzing Cicero’s correspondence. Kočovska found that the expressions of congratulations can be divided into two main groups in Cicero’s correspondence: (a) expressions with IFID (e.g., the verb *gratulari* “to congratulate” which is the common form) and expressions of joy for the success of the addressee or someone related to him/her. The results showed that the expressions of congratulations are sometimes followed or preceded by expressions of “thanks” and followed by expressions of “well wishes” or expressions of “joy” in some cases. The expressions of well wishes were also used as a congratulation expression. The aim of the various expressions that were used with congratulations was to show the strength of sincerity and the warmth of congratulations to the addressee. The results indicated that not all the expressions of congratulations were identical and interchangeable; however, they were affected by the occasion of congratulation and the degree of the author’s commitment to

the propositional content. Finally, Kočovska mentioned that offering congratulation is considered a kind of ethical obligation in the Roman system of friendship. In other words, this communication occurred between the citizens of the elite who were equal in the hierarchy of the social relationship to strengthen the social ties within the group (Unceta Gómez, 2016).

In addition, Unceta Gómez (2016) analyzed the speech act of congratulation and the sociolinguistic distribution in the Latin language by using the comedies of Plautus (254-184 B.C.) and Terence (ca. 185-159 B.C.) as the corpus. Unceta Gómez found that there are three types of formula used to express congratulations in the Latin of Plautus's and Terence's comedies: (a) the performative expression with the verbs *laudare* ("to praise, extol, approval"), or *gratulari* ("to give thanks, to wish joy, congratulate"); (b) expressions of praise; and (c) expressions of happiness and surprise. In Latin, there is no equivalent word for congratulations; therefore, the form of the verb of congratulation *laudare* is used to express congratulations. This verb was found to be used more commonly in Kočovska's (2013) study; however, it was found in only one example in comedy. In terms of gender and frequency, it was found that women were similar to men in the frequency of using congratulations, but women did not use the expressions of happiness and surprise. This study explored a level of hierarchical inferiority towards the interlocutor in the Roman comedies which is mainly interpreted as a kind of politeness firstly and as a strategy of affiliative politeness secondly.

Finally, in English, Willer (2001) conducted a study to analyze the content of linguistic and nonlinguistic differences of the birth of a child congratulations greeting

cards for boy-specified, girl-specified, and no gender specified in English. The researcher used 300 greeting cards to analyze the number of words, message style, message quality, word usage of physical and nonphysical descriptors, and expression of emotions, and experiences. For the nonlinguistic differences, the analysis was on picture representation on the cards and color.

Willer (2001) found that all the cards showed the same number of words. The messages of girl cards were more in prose style with “whirl” and “twirl;” whereas, boys cards rhymed with “joy” or “fun.” In girl cards, the descriptive words, “little,” “tiny,” or “small” were more frequently used than in boy cards. In addition, girl babies were more described as “cute” or “beautiful” than were boys. In describing the nonphysical characteristics of a baby, the most frequent words were “sweet,” “precious,” and “dear.” Girl babies were described by sweet, precious and dear more often than were boy babies. Various words were used to describe girl babies, such as “delicate,” “irresistible,” “trusting,” and so forth. For boy babies, the words were “bold,” “brave,” “tough,” and so forth. In the emotions, the words “love” and “joy” were the most used words in girl cards. Similarly, for boy babies, they were “love,” “joy,” and happiness.

Studies on Congratulations in More than One Language

The speech act of congratulation has not been studied in languages alone but also, by conducting a cross-cultural analysis, it has been investigated with different languages and cultures to identify the similarities and differences in expressing congratulations. Most of the languages have been compared with English, such as American English, and Japanese (Elwood, 2004), British English, and Turkish (Can, 2011), Persian and English

(Pishghadam & Moghaddam (2011), English, Armenian, and Persian (Nasri, Dastjerdy, & Ghadiri, 2013), English, Persian, and Syrian Arabic (Dastrjerdi & Nasri, 2013), Jordanian Arabic and American English (Bataineh, 2013), and English and Montenegrin (Nikšić, 2016).

According to the literature review, Elwood's (2004) study was probably the first study that explored the strategies of the speech act of congratulation. In addition, it was the first cross-cultural study on congratulation in general and between Japanese and Americans in particular. Elwood examined the act of congratulation of American and Japanese students by using a DCT that included three situations: promotion, marriage, and grant. The number of participants were 45 American students writing in English, 45 Japanese students writing in Japanese, and 45 Japanese students writing in English.

The findings of Elwood's (2004) study revealed various responses with different frequencies in English and Japanese. The basic types of congratulation responses used by both groups were use of an IFID (e.g., congratulations), "an expression of happiness," "a request for information," and "an expression of validation." In the majority, Americans tended to ask questions in the case of congratulating a colleague, whereas Japanese participants were more likely to make an explicit comparison between themselves and the person they were congratulating. Also the Japanese participants' responses in both Japanese and English tended to use a self-related comment. Finally, the significant difference was also in the frequency of response types among the different situations. Elwood proposed a taxonomy of strategies for congratulation that showed the ways of expressing congratulation.

Can (2011) examined the cultural differences between “congratulation” in British English and *tebrik* and *kutlama* in Turkish to identify the strategies/components of congratulations and the contexts of use. Can used 47 dictionaries, 442 contexts of congratulation, 339 contexts of *tebrik*, and 348 contexts of *kutlama*, which were collected from the newspapers and blog genres in the three corpora: BYU-BNC, MTC, and Google. The results, in Turkish, found that the performative verbs in congratulating: “congratulate,” *tebrik*, and *kutlama* vary in the use based on the contexts, e.g., achievement, special occasion, and good fortune. *Tebrik* and congratulations appeared in the achievement context, but *kutlama* was used mostly for special occasions. *Tebrik* and *kutlama* appeared in similar contexts of achievement, but congratulation was slightly different. Congratulation appeared more than *tebrik* and *kutlama* in the arts, media, and entertainment with a small difference, and in commerce, business, and economics with a greater difference.

In the data of congratulation (*tebrik*, and *kutlama*), Can (2011) identified five strategies which are the most frequent ones: (a) appreciation of the act, (b) appreciation of the addressee, (c) well-wish, (d) expression of opinion, and (e) expression of feeling. In contrast, thanking, advice giving, and joking were rarely used. The strategies differed greatly between congratulation and *tebrik* and congratulation and *kutlama*. However, the strategies were similar in *tebrik* and *kutlama*. In congratulation, the most common strategies were the appreciation of the act and congratulation. In the *tebrik* and *kutlama* data, well-wish was the most frequently used strategy. The strategies of appreciation of

the address, expression of feeling, well-wish, and advice giving were used more in the contexts of *tebrik* and *kutlama* than in the contexts of congratulation.

In terms of the combinations of congratulation forms or types, also in the congratulation data, the majority consisted of the combination of type 1 (e.g., the formal expression, I would like to...) and type two (e.g., congratulations!). In the Turkish data, the combination of type 1 and 2 were commonly used. More formal expressions of *tebrik* and *kutlama* were used together in the same context. The strategy of appreciation of the act and congratulation were used more in congratulation than *tebrik* and *kutlama*. The strategies of well-wish, appreciation of the addressee, and expression of feeling were used more in *tebrik* and *kutlama* contexts than in congratulation contexts. In events of personal joy in English and Turkish, a greater number of well-wish and expression of feeling were used in Turkish *tebrik* and *kutlama*, compared to congratulation. In the English data, the appreciation of the act and appreciation of the addressee were similar in frequency of use. In Turkish data, the appreciation of the addressee was preferred to the appreciation of the act. In good fortune contexts, different strategies were preferred in English and Turkish. In English, appreciation of the act and expression of feeling were used to congratulate events, whereas, in Turkish, the appreciation of the addressee and well-wish were used.

Pishghadam and Moghaddam (2011) conducted a contrastive study on Persian and English to examine the semantic formula of congratulation by analyzing 100 movies (50 in English and 50 in Persian), including 1,039 congratulation sentences. The choice of movies was based on the time the movies were produced (2000-2010). The authors of

the study identified six generic categories: (a) offering congratulation, (b) mentioning the occasion, (c) blessing wish, (d) expressing feeling, (e) divine statement, and (f) complimenting. The researchers used the Chi-square formula to examine the differences between Persian and English. They found that there was a significant difference between the two cultures in the following generic categories: “mention the occasion,” “expressing feeling,” and “divine statement.” However, the other strategies showed no significant difference, such as “complimenting,” “offering congratulation,” and “blessing wish” in frequency of use. Finally, the researchers concluded that English speakers tended to use self-expressive comments and feelings while Persian speakers’ tendency was more toward self-transcendence. In other words, Persian speakers used less self-expressive comments.

Nasri, Dastjerdy, and Ghadiri (2013) also investigated the speech act of congratulation in Persian with American English and Armenian to identify the similarities and differences of the strategies of congratulation. The data were collected by using a DCT, which includes two events: marriage and the birth of a baby, and two main variables: social distance and power. The participants were 120 male and female university students, 40 from each language group, ranging between 19-30 years old. The researchers found that the “congratulations” strategy was the most frequent strategy in English, Armenian, and Persian. In addition, the second most frequent strategy among Armenians and Persians was “offer of good wishes.” The other strategies such as “IFID,” “request for information,” and “expression of happiness” were the most frequently used formulas among Americans. In contrast, the following strategies: “IFID,” and “offer of

good wishes” were the most frequently used ones among Armenians and Persians, who had more similarities in the patterns. The use of humorous statements were observed among Armenians and Persians, but not in the American data. In addition, “asking the hearer for the sweets” was observed among Armenians and Persians, whereas the request strategy was the least used among Armenians. Regarding the influence of the hearer’s status, the findings showed that Americans and Armenians were sensitive to the status of the hearer. The strategy of “offer of good wishes” shifted in the frequency of use based on the status of the hearer. Thus, shifting of semantic formulas were observed based on the status of the hearer among all groups.

Furthermore, Dastjerdi and Nasri (2013) investigated the situational aspects of congratulations in Persian with American English and Syrian Arabic to identify the frequency of use of each strategy, content of semantic formulas, and the impact of the social status of the hearer. Data were collected by a DCT that included two situations: marriage and the birth of a baby. The number of participants was 142 male and female subjects, ranging between 19-42 years old with BA and MA degrees in different fields.

The results showed that the most frequently used formulas employed by all participants were the “IFIDF,” “offer of good wishes,” and “request for information” in offering congratulations. It was also observed that Arabic and Persian speakers had similarities in the patterns. In addition, the difference that was found was that the strategy of humorous statements and asking the hearer for sweets were used only by Arabic and Persian speakers; however, they had a low frequency of use. With regard to the social status, all the participants asked fewer questions (i.e., the strategy of requesting

for information) when they were lower than the addressee in the social position.

Similarly, all the participants used the least number of questions when the addressee was in a lower social status.

Bataineh (2013) examined congratulating along with other speech acts, such as thanking and apologizing, that are used by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic (JNSs) and American native speakers of English (ANSs) to identify the similarities and differences of using politeness strategies and the responses to the strategies in these two different cultures. The American participants were college students on an exchange program at a university in Jordan. Data were collected by a DCT from 50 Jordanian speakers and 50 American speakers, ranging between 18-54 years of age. They were from different occupational backgrounds, such as students, administrative, academic, and diplomatic personnel. Bataineh found that both groups used the same strategies of congratulations, such as expressing joy and noticing/attending or thanking and agreeing as responses to the congratulations. However, they differed in frequency of use and realizations. In addition, the responses of JNSs included a religious content in most of the social contexts, such as the recurrent use of God in thanking as a response to congratulation (e.g., *allahysalmak* “may God preserve you”) as a prayer. In contrast, ANSs used a simple thank you in engagement and the birth of a baby (e.g., “she is adorable, isn’t she?” in the birth of a baby). Another example of congratulation by JNSs was *assalaatu: cannabi! mabru:k ma ja:ku* “prayers be upon the prophet! May what you have got be blessed!” in the situation of a newborn baby, whereas ANSs often used simple congratulations in both engagement and the birth of a baby. The results showed

that religious expressions are seldom used in English responses to congratulations, which reflects the cultural backgrounds of speakers in the meaning of formulas.

Nikšić (2016) conducted a contrastive study to describe the forms of congratulations in formal and informal use of written and spoken discourse in English and Montenegrin in terms of the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features of expressions of congratulations. Data were collected from various situations, such as dialogues from TV series and talk shows for spoken data, and magazines and the British National Corpus for written data without providing more details about the corpus.

Nikšić (2016) found that the forms of congratulations were oriented toward the speakers and others were oriented toward the interlocutor. In both languages, Nikšić found forms expressing praise, admiration, and blessing that were used toward the addressee. It was also found that the speech act of congratulations contained expressive forms, such as praise and compliments in spoken formal discourse more often than those found in formal written discourse in both languages. In English, the forms of written formal discourse usually contained the form of congratulations while Montenegrin forms contained the present tense of the verb congratulate and its plural forms. Nikšić mentioned that it is difficult to find a clear distinction between the expressions found in the informal style of written discourse because the distinction is a stereotypical structure. For instance, the distinction can be in the choice of the illocutive forms, the words, the manner of addressing, and the length of the greeting text. For example, English speakers like to use the form of “congratulations,” which is usually followed by expressions such as “to be happy for you/your success” in informal written discourse. Montenegrin lacks

the present tense of the verb “congratulate” in informal expressions of congratulations in written forms, and the forms often contain the adjective “happy.” The forms of congratulating consist of “wish,” referring to the addressee both in English and Montenegrin. Similarly, the expressions of congratulations in formal and informal discourse has no sharp line between them.

However, what were used in informal spoken discourse are said to be stereotypical. In informal spoken discourse, English speakers usually used forms such as congratulations, well done, bravo, good for you, and so forth, while Montenegrin speakers used the present tense of congratulations and other phrases such as good luck, happy either, and so forth. Finally, Nikšić (2016) inferred that Montenegrin speakers used various expressions of congratulations due to the ability of their cultural code in enabling them to be more direct and less formal in communication.

To sum up, the previous studies investigated congratulations with different and various purposes, event/occasion of congratulation, examination of social factors, and the instrument of data collection. Therefore, they have come up with similarities and differences across the languages.

Studies of Speech Acts on Facebook

This section includes the earlier studies on speech acts on Facebook. In the first section, the general studies on exploring speech acts on CMC and Facebook are discussed. The second section is more focused and discusses the studies of expressive speech acts on Facebook.

General Studies of Speech Acts on CMC and Facebook

Many studies have been conducted on exploring speech acts on Facebook. The findings showed that expressive speech acts were the most frequently used ones on Facebook (Appling, Briscoe, Hayes, & Mappus, 2013; Carr, Schrock & Dauterman, 2009; Carr, Schrok, & Dauterman, 2012; Ilyas & Khushi, 2012) except one study in which it was found that directives (35%) were the most frequently used one followed by assertives (23%; Nartey, 2013). The frequent use of expressivity is not only on Facebook but also on computer mediated communication (CMC) more than face-to-face communication (FTF). For example, Derks, Fischer, and Bos (2008) examined the differences of emotion communication between FTF and CMC. Although they found there are no differences between FTF and CMC in the possibility of expressing emotions either explicitly or implicitly, it was more frequent and explicit in CMC than in FTF. One of the reasons is that the absence of nonverbal cues enforces the clarity and directness of expressing emotions and strengthens emotional style and content. CMC does not include nonverbal cues, but it has emoticons which can explain the meaning of text that includes emotions.

According to Danesi (2017), people express their feelings directly or indirectly by using interjections, intonation, and prosodic strategies with phrases in face-to-face communication. These are replaced by emoji forms in informal digital messages. However, emoticons are multifunctional, and emoji² has more effect on reader's perceptions than emoticons (Herring & Dainas, 2017). As a result, people do not usually agree on the sentiment and meaning of the use of the same emoji. Regardless of

² It was added on Facebook in late February 2016 (Herring & Dainas, 2017).

disagreement about the meaning of the use, using emoji also has a phatic function, which is to keep the informal interactions friendly and cheerful in the text exchange (Danesi, 2017).

Derks et al., (2008) mentioned two factors that can indicate the differences between FTF and CMC communication: the physical and social dimension. It is obvious that CMC lacks the physical dimension, which can convey some emotions such as hugging and touching. Nevertheless, it still has the social dimension, which is based on interactions in unlimited online activities. Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, and Espinoza (2008) also stressed the strong connection between the online and offline world. They examined the use of emerging adults on social networking sites (e.g., MySpace and Facebook) and the relation between their online and offline social networks. They found that there is an overlap between online and offline networks, and the participants often use online networks to communicate with their offline friends and family members. The goal of adults' communication is seeking to establish intimacy with friends, romantic partners, relatives, and family members via interconnection. With friends, adults tend to disclose emotional support, trust and loyalty, and sharing activities. In addition, the most popular online activities were reading and responding to comments/posts on one's Facebook page/wall, which are considered as the most frequent online activities for the participants, followed by browsing friends' profiles/walls and sending/responding to messages.

Ilyas and Khushi (2012) conducted a study on speech act on Facebook status updates in order to explore the communicative functions of status updates on Facebook

and how identity was established and represented through language use. In this study, 171 status updates were collected that included 60 males and females between the ages of 18-24 in Pakistan. The results showed that expressive speech acts were the most frequent acts (33.33%) used in the data, followed by assertives (28.07%) and directives (18.12%). Identity was the second goal for this study, which revealed more than one identity in the data analysis: Muslim identity (e.g., sharing religious experience about Quran) and national identity (e.g., supporting the army).

Carr, Schrok, and Dauterman's (2012) aim was to understand how language is constructed on Facebook by examining the use of speech acts in the status messages. The data were collected from 46 participants from a public university in the Midwest United States who had created 204 status messages. These participants were 28 males and 18 females ranging from 18 to 22 years of age. The results showed that expressive speech acts were the most frequent speech act, followed by assertive speech acts. Assertives were produced more frequently than commissives or directives. Coders also identified 37 humorous speech acts, which were used as an attempt to be witty, funny, ironic, or mirthful. The study indicated that Facebook users use Facebook as an interpersonal medium, "constructing messages with rich socioemotional information" (Carr et al., 2012, p. 188).

In addition, Carr, Schrok, and Dauterman (2009) examined the construction of status messages of social network sites (Facebook and MySpace) and compared the results with a study on Instant Messenger away messages (conducted by Nastri, Pena, & Hancock, 2006) to see if there were any similarities or differences between synchronous

and asynchronous communication. The study was focused only on analyzing Facebook messages because they had received only three messages from MySpace, which was insufficient for the purpose of that paper. Speech act theory was the framework for analyzing 204 status messages which were posted by 46 participants between 18 and 22 years old from a large public university in the Midwestern United States. This study found that the participants were using Facebook more than MySpace, and they updated their Facebook status more frequently than any other asynchronous services due to the different roles of medium. Also, expressive speech acts (60%) were the most frequent status messages, followed by assertives (39%), directives (6%) and commissives (3%). In addition, the participants produced humor in almost 20% of their status messages. This means that social network sites are not used only for information and communication but also to entertain others by using humor.

The results found in this study (Carr, Schrok, and Dauterman, 2009) were different from the study of Instant Messenger away messages. In instant messenger away messages, the results showed that assertive speech acts were the most common, followed by expressives, commissives, and directives. The use of humor was approximately one-fifth of the messages produced by each participant. This meant that different groups with different contexts communicating via different online medium applications will lead to different results. The importance of this study was the comparison of results with the results of the study that was conducted on Instant Messenger away messages. The researchers stressed that their findings “support previous claims that social networking sites (SNS) are inherently social and emotive in nature, demonstrating the preponderance

of expressive acts of communication, displaying and sharing emotion amongst other SNS users” (p. 25).

Another study was conducted by Appling, Briscoe, Hayes, and Mappus (2013) to identify personality traits through the use of speech acts on Facebook. They collected 5,849 Facebook status updates from 250 users. The results showed that the expressive speech act (76%) was used more frequently than any other speech act, followed by assertives (19%), directives (3%), commissives (1.3%), and declaratives (0.007%).

Although the previous studies showed that expressive speech acts were dominant on Facebook, they have not been investigated to understand the patterns and the ways of using them. However, some studies done in which some expressive speech acts on Facebook have been examined. The next section contains a discussion of the investigated types of expressive speech acts on Facebook.

Studies on Expressive Speech Acts on Facebook

Some expressive speech acts have been examined on Facebook, such as compliment (Eslami, Jabbari, & Kuo, 2015; Maíz-Arévalo, 2013; Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez, 2013; Placencia & Lower, 2013) salutations/opening and closing (Pérez-Sabater, 2012), Condolence (Al-Shboul & Maros, 2013), and wishing (Theodoropoulou, 2015). The findings showed these speech acts have similarities and differences that overlap with the expressions that are used in face-to-face communication.

For instance, Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez (2013) investigated the grammatical and lexical choices of compliments of Facebook users in terms of how compliments are used to evaluate others and strengthen social rapport in English and

Spanish. Their goal was not only to examine the pragma-linguistic differences between British and Spanish Facebook users in using compliments but also to explore whether using compliments will change in this new means of communication. Fifty examples in English and the same number in Spanish were gathered for over a year from approximately 200 participants ranging in age from 25 to 45 years old. Maiz-Arevalo, (2013) relied on the system of face-to-face compliments, which include implicit-compliments and formulaic-compliments.

Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez (2013) found that the results showed that the Spanish users preferred expressing their positive evaluation towards others' appearance and possession rather than personality and skills by using full and abbreviated exclamative structures (e.g., emotional expressions). In contrast, British users produced less emotional expression of the addressee's evaluation and tended to be indirect, evaluating others' possessions, but not the person him/herself. Spanish users also used the full and abbreviated exclamative structures more than English users did. In declarative sentences, which are used as an affective fact, the subject pronoun is dropped in English compliments. On the other hand, the direct object is left implicit in the case of Spanish compliments. The findings showed that the affective fact type was rare in online exchanges in comparison with face-to-face exchanges in both languages. In terms of using declarative sentences as facts, English users expressed their compliments as facts; however, Spanish users tended to express their evaluation as personal emotion. Finally, ellipsis that is phrasal but not sentential is another pattern that was found in this study, such as a noun or an adjective phrase. It is based on avoiding unnecessary repetitions by

only stating the new information that is necessary. In addition, Spanish users preferred using elliptical forms when evaluating appearance while English users used elliptical forms when evaluating possession. The findings showed significant differences between the two languages in the lexico-grammatical structure and the type of evaluation. Moreover, the users reproduced the cultural patterns of compliments in online communication.

Placencia and Lower (2013) examined complimenting behavior between members of family and friends in American English in the United States in terms of frequency, the form of compliments, the complimented objects, and the function they have on Facebook. The corpus consisted of 1,057 compliments and 1,346 “likes” that were offered by 366 friends. The results showed similarities and differences with compliments in face-to-face (FTF) interaction because of the medium of interaction and the affordances of the technology that affect variation in written language communication. For example, “likes” were used more frequently than compliments, which is unique in complimenting on Facebook as an abbreviated language, and simplified and direct compliments as well. Also, “likes” “offer a swifter way of communicating with friends online while, at the same time, conveying positive feelings even if it is in a sort of vague way” (p. 641). In addition, large amounts of online exchanges and the use of abbreviated forms showed the informality and friendly style of this type of communication. With regard to the comparison with FTF interaction, Placencia and Lower found that the form of topics (e.g., direct forms, which were used more frequently), topics (e.g., appearance, ability, possessions, and so forth), and differences between males and females (e.g., females

complimented more than males) are similar to the findings of complimenting behavior in FTF that were found by Manes and Wolfson (1981). Finally, the researchers mentioned that the function of complimenting indicates your presence with your friends and assures your concern and relationship towards/with them.

Maíz-Arévalo (2013) also conducted another study to examine responses to compliments in Spanish to identify the differences with face-to-face interaction. The corpus included 177 compliments for friends of friends, which comprises 16,291 words, 137 conversational exchanges, and 1,004 conversational turns. Maíz-Arévalo found that disembodiment, asynchronicity, or lack of privacy affected the ways users respond to compliments that can be observed on the simplification of some strategies that are used in face-to-face interaction and the amplification of others.

Compliment was also examined by Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo (2015) to identify the linguistic and non-linguistic strategies of Iranian Persian speakers when responding to compliments on Facebook. In addition, the researchers examined gender differences and the differences with face-to-face interaction on complementing behavior. The corpus comprised 497 compliments from 27 males and 18 females who are friends of one of the researchers. The results showed that Facebook allowed users creativity in using the strategies of compliment responses that are not available or appropriate in face-to face communication. For example, the researchers found that there was a preference for using nonlinguistic responses, such as using emoticons, clicking “like,” and avoiding responding more than using the other strategies of compliment responses. In addition, accepting compliments occurred more often than rejecting them, which is different from

face-to-face interaction that includes more rejecting compliments than accepting them. Finally, findings on gender were one of the most important results, which found that both males and females compliment and respond to each other with a high frequency of acceptance. This complimenting behavior is very restricted in Iranian culture and tradition in face-to-face communication, which means that cyber space allowed females to reshape their real identity.

Unlike compliment, Pérez-Sabater (2013) examined the degree of formality and informality of salutations, opening, pre-closing, and closing of Facebook comments in the English language. They were posted on official Facebook sites of some universities by native and nonnative speakers. The data, which comprised 300 comments, were gathered from official Facebook sites of universities in Europe and the United States by the researcher during 2009 and 2010.

The results showed that native speakers used very informal greetings or no greeting formula (20%) which is the most frequent strategy used. Sometimes they begin with exclamations or exclamation words followed by one or more exclamation marks. Also, they extensively used addressivity with the name or nickname of the intended addressee to specify him/her in the comments. In contrast, nonnative speakers were more formal than native speakers in openings (e.g., the use of dear). In some comments, there was a mixture between formal and informal styles, for example the structure is formal but the greeting is informal and followed by a repetition of punctuation. This reflects a type of stylistic variation.

In closings, Pérez-Sabater (2013) found that the native speakers used an informal closing formula of the type “Go Bucks!” (A short name for sport teams at Ohio State University) or ‘Hookem Horns’ (the slogan and hand signal of the University of Texas. Nonnative speakers, in contrast, used a formal closing structure (e.g., best regards) with informal features such as no capitalization, punctuation, and with spelling mistakes. In addition, native speakers used the informal genre because it is already conventionalized. However, nonnative speakers are taught the discursive strategies, and they want to show their proficiency of language use. Pérez-Sabater (2013) stated that it is not possible to claim the tendency towards informality on Facebook because users use the traditional letter writing conventions.

Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) investigated the speech act of condolences as responses to an obituary status update in Jordanian Arabic on Facebook. The researchers gathered 678 posted comments on a deceased contemporary Jordanian actor in 2011. The data were analyzed and categorized to arrive at a taxonomy for the condolences strategies of Jordanian Arabic.

Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) identified seven major strategies in condolence: (a) praying for God’s mercy and forgiveness for the deceased, (b) reciting Quranic verses, (c) enumerating the virtues of the deceased, (d) expressing shock and grief, (e) offering condolences, (f) realizing death is a natural part of life, and (g) using proverbs and sayings. The three most frequently used strategies were praying for God’s mercy and forgiveness for the deceased, reciting Quranic verses, and enumerating the virtues of the deceased. The researchers explained the main reason beyond the high frequency of these

strategies is that the cultural norms and religious beliefs of the respondents constituted the religious or linguistic choices.

Finally, Theodoropoulou (2015) examined the ways native Greek users of Facebook responded to birthday wishes posted on their walls in order to understand the construction of politeness and the reception of birthday wishes by using interactional sociolinguistics, discourse-centered online ethnography, and offline ethnographic interviews. The researcher collected data from 2007 to 2010 from the walls of 400 friends of hers, aged between 25-35 years old, who received 10,746 birthday wishes. She found that participants employed some contextualization cues, such as shifts in spelling, emoticons, and punctuation markers to construct the basis of politeness by reciprocating the received wishes from their friends. Also, the verb “thank” was found the most preferable form used by the participants (69%) followed by the form “may you be well” (31%). The researcher suggested that the illocutionary force of the latter form means thanking someone in a more targeted-towards-your interlocutor way than “thank you.” In addition, Theodoropoulou found that there was a strong preference for addressing the wisher by his/her first name or by the diminutive, which is escorted by the particle “my” to index intimacy.

The previous studies examined some expressive speech acts in different languages, such as compliment, salutation, condolence, and wish, as mentioned above. Although the results found similarities and differences with the ways of using these expressive speech acts in face-to-face interaction, they also revealed unique behavior in using some strategies, for instance “using emoticons,” clicking “like,” “using punctuation

markers,” and so forth. However, congratulation, which is an expressive speech act, has not yet been studied according to this researcher’s knowledge. Congratulation is one of the speech acts that is dominant by its various events and the interaction of people with these events on the new social media.

Li, Ritter, Cardie, and Hovy (2014) identified the major life events and personal news based on messages expressing the speech acts of congratulation and condolence on Twitter. The data of this study comprised 72,000 tweets from 42 different categories of life events. The findings showed that there are 30 different congratulations and condolences patterns and 42 coherent event types which refer to significant life events. Although the results showed many numbers of events with different frequency, the most frequent life events were birthday (9.78%), job (8.39%), wedding/engagement (7.24%), award (6.20%), sports (6.08%), anniversary (5.44%), give birth (4.28%), graduate (3.86%), death (3.80%), and admission (3.54%). Moreover, Li et al. identified the frequent words that are associated with these types of life events, but not the ways of expressing congratulation. Therefore, this current study contributes to the understanding of the construction of congratulation and the ways of expressing congratulation on Facebook along with the other studies of expressive speech acts and congratulations in face-to-face communication.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The aim in this study was to explore verbal and nonverbal strategies of Saudi Facebook users when offering congratulations in Arabic on status updates on Facebook about good news events. This chapter has five sections in which the methodology of the study will be discussed: data source, corpus, procedure, commenters, and data analysis. The first section shows the source of the data collection and its importance for the current topic and goal. In the second section, the corpus is explained in detail regarding the types of events, number of comments, emoji reactions to posts, and background information about my friends who posted the events. The third section includes the way the data were collected and verification that the commenters were Saudis. In the fourth section sociolinguistic information, such as origin, residence, education, and jobs, is provided about the commenters based on available information sharing with the public in their profiles. In the fifth section, an explanation is provided about how the congratulations strategies were coded and analyzed.

Data Source

Facebook is the source of data collection for this study because it is one of the most dominant new social media in Saudi Arabia (SA) and is considered a multimodal communication platform. According to the Social Clinic³ (2015), 93% of the Internet users in SA use Facebook, and the total number of Facebook users is 8.4 million: 76% males and 24% females. The users range from 18 to 34 years old; however, the majority (50%) of the users range from 25 to 34 years old, followed by users whose ages range

³Asocial business consultancy and social media agency in Saudi Arabia.
<https://www.thesocialclinic.com/>

from 18 to 25 years old (33%). In addition, according to the Social Clinic, most of the users (90%) live in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam.

As a Facebook user, I have observed that users usually post happy or good news on their walls about such things as graduation, arrival of a baby, receiving an award, and so forth. Their friends interact with this type of status update or news more than they do with other types of posts. They do so, for instance, by offering congratulations. Facebook supports this type of post by boosting the news to the top of the news feed as an important post or news. According to Slate⁴ (2014), comments with congratulations in their content are given higher ranking in Facebook's ranking algorithm in Facebook News Feed.

Facebook is considered a repertoire of naturalistic data for congratulations and happy news because it reflects language use in its social and linguistic context. In other words, the comments of congratulations on the events are authentic data offered by language users. This enforces the importance of studying congratulations on Facebook as one of the dominant types of expressive speech acts that have received much attention in face-to-face communication, not on the new social media (as discussed in the literature review). Moreover, on Facebook, verbal strategies are no longer the only way to offer congratulations. There are now the non-verbal strategies, such as sharing the news and using emoji reactions to posts, for example Thumbs up, love (Beating heart), and wow (Surprised face).

⁴http://www.slate.com/blogs/business_insider/2014/04/congratulations_will_boost_your_post_in_facebook_s_newsfeed.html

Corpus

The corpus of this study consists of 1,721 comments and 2,568 emoji reactions to posts done by 2,213 Saudi Facebook users, who are usually friends, family members, colleagues, classmates, and so forth. The comments received 349 responses and 1201 likes from 36 posters. Posts were found on my friends' Facebook walls about 61 events, such as graduation, birth of a baby, passing a PhD/MA thesis defense, and so forth. Table 2 shows a concise description of the number of events and the number of comments, sharings, and types of emoji reactions received for each event that was used in the analysis. The corpus also comprised 42 types of emojis that were used 257 times in congratulations comments.

Table 2

The Total Number of Events and Types of Interactions

The Name of Events	Events	Comments	Sharings	Likes	Love	Wow
Graduation	14	281	5	490	4	0
Birth of a Baby	13	431	1	487	9	0
Passing a Ph.D./M.A.						
Thesis Defense	7	366	4	521	7	0
Receiving an Award	6	155	5	350	5	1
Publishing a Book/a Study	5	25	9	92	0	0
Getting Married	5	60	0	110	0	0
Getting a New Position	4	298	7	336	0	0
Passing Exams	4	73	0	106	1	0
Getting Engaged	2	30	0	46	0	0
Getting a Ph.D. Admission	1	2	0	3	0	0
Total	61	1,721	31	2,541	26	1

These events were chosen for use in this study because they were available and accessible to me for collecting data, and the friends were also known to me. The data were collected manually in November and December of 2016 from the archives of my

friends' Facebook pages and are based on my primary observation as a Facebook user. The observation started in 2012 due to Facebook's dominance in communication. IRB approval was given to conduct this study that is based on existing data in the archives and public observation (see Appendix A).

Table 2 shows the types of events and the total number of each event with comments received, sharings, and emoji reactions to posts such as like (Thumbs up), love (Beating heart), and wow (Surprised face). All of them are used in the analysis of verbal and nonverbal types of responses in this study. However, some comments, which were not a part of the current total number of comments that are explained in the procedure section, were removed from the data

According to Table 2, the 13 events that were about the birth of a baby received 431 comments, 1 sharing, 487 likes, and 9 love emoji signs. This type of event received the largest number of comments in the corpus, followed by the event of passing a PhD/MA thesis defense, which included 7 events. Passing a defense received 366 comments, 4 sharings, 521 likes, and 7 love emojis. All the passed defenses were dissertation defenses except for one, which was a Master's thesis.

The defense passing event type was followed by the event of getting a new position, which included 4 events that received 298 comments, 7 sharings, and 336 likes. The first position was a Vice Dean for the college of languages and translation at a university in SA. The second position was also a Vice Dean of an engineering college at a university in SA also. The third position was that of President of the Saudi Athletics

Federation Council in SA as well. The fourth position was a Vice Principal of a school in SA.

The new position type of event was followed by the events of graduation, as indicated by the number of comments. As shown in Table2, graduation had the most number of events (14). They received 281 comments, 5 sharings, 490 likes, and 4 love emoji images. In the graduation events, the majority of students (6) graduated with a doctoral degree, followed by a master's degree (5), and a bachelor's degree (30). The graduates had different majors, and all had been studying in the United States except one student, who studied and graduated in Australia.

For the event of graduation and the birth of a baby, there were still 10 events for graduation and 6 events for the birth of a baby that were not discussed here because no comments were collected from them. There were two reasons for not discussing them. First, the event of the birth of a baby amassed the most frequent comments in comparison with the number of comments in the other events and those numbers were considered sufficient to examine the strategies of congratulations. Second, a graduation event is similar to the event of passing a Ph.D./M.A. thesis defense, which included 7 events, in terms of finishing the requirement of a degree to graduate, and received 366 comments, as mentioned above. Therefore, the additional events did not seem to be needed for establishing the nature of the forms.

The event of receiving an award consisted of 6 events. They received 155 comments, 5 sharings, 350 likes, and 5 love emoji signs, and 1wow emoji image. In the first event, the award was QAR 30,000, granted by Qatar University for best papers in

education. This is equal to \$8,238.93 USD. In the second event, the award was for the best thesis at a university in Malaysia. In the third event, the award was for the best presentation of a research paper at a university in the UK. In the fourth event, the award was \$7,500 in a bodybuilding competition. In the fifth event, the award was offered to a team of architects at an urban development and real estate investment event in SA. The last event was a nomination for a robot project to be in the final competition which was held in the United States.

The event of passing exams included 4 events which received 73 comments, 106 likes, and 1 love emoji image. All the exams were Ph.D. comprehensive exams except one, which was a license exam in nursing. The occasion of getting married had five events that received 60 comments and 110 likes. The getting engaged event had only two events that received 30 comments and 46 likes.

Publication comprised 5 events that received 25 comments, 9 sharings, and 92 likes. They include 3 books and 2 studies. The first book was written in computer assisted language learning and published by Lambert. The second book was about life and studying in the United States for Saudi students. The third book was about how to write a CV and answer questions at interviews. The second and third book had not been published at the time of this study, but they are available online and their copyrights have been officially registered at the Ministry of Culture and Information in SA. Regarding the two studies, the first one was accepted at the AAAL conference, whereas the second one was published in the Arab World English Journal.

Finally, the event of getting a Ph.D. admission had only one event. It received only two comments in Arabic and three likes.

One of the events that was removed from the corpus was birthday events. This was done for two reasons. First, a birthday event is not homogeneous with the current events that are based on achievements. Second, people usually say congratulations at birthdays for elders who are celebrating 100 years, for example, whereas my friends are in their 20s and 30s. Therefore, it was not expected to find the expression of birthday congratulations because it is more related to the speech act of wishing than written congratulations. A future research topic might undertake the investigation of birthday wishing on Facebook.

Twenty-seven events (44.26%) were posted in 2016, followed by 21 events (34.43%) posted in 2015. Also, 9.84% of the events (6 events), were posted in 2014, followed by 4 events (6.56%) posted in 2013. Finally, only 2 events (3.28%) were posted in 2011 and only 1 event (1.64%) was posted in 2010.

Fifty-four of these events (88.52%) were posted by the owners of Facebook pages except 7 events (11.48%), which were posted by their friends. Also, 36 events (59.02%), were shared with friends only, followed by 22 (36.07%) events shared with the public. However, only 3 events (4.92%) were shared with the friends of friends.

In addition, 29 (47.54%) events were posted in Arabic, followed by 17 (27.87%) events posted in Arabic and English and 11 (18.03%) events posted in English only. Finally, only 4 (6.56%) events were announced by posting pictures with no text. Most of

the events were posted with pictures and some of them with emojis. However, a few of them were posted with video, links, and location.

These events were posted by 36 Facebook friends, and all of them male. They were in their 20s and 30s, but the majority of them were in their 30s, based on my estimates of their ages because my friendship with them is not only online, but also offline. Fifteen of them (42%) live in the Riyadh region in the middle of SA, followed by 9 (25%) friends living in the United States who are Ph.D. students. Four (11%) friends live in Makkah Region located in the West of SA, followed by two (6%) living in the Assir region, which is located in the South of SA. The other six friends live in different regions in SA such as Eastern Region, Jazan Region in the South, Al-Medinah Region in the West, Qasim Region in the Middle of SA, and Northern Border Region except one friend who is living in the UK while working on his Ph.D. Twenty-three of my friends (88.46%), were studying abroad, and the majority of them were in the United States, but the others were in Australia, the UK, and Malaysia in 2013 and 2014.

With regard to the educational and major backgrounds, the majority of my friends (41.67%) have a Master's degree, and most of them are now Ph.D. students, followed by 36.11% with a doctoral degree. Four friends (11.11%) have a bachelor's degree, followed by two friends with a diploma (5.56%) and two friends with educational degrees and majors unknown to me. My friends' degrees are in different majors; however, the majority of them (27.78%) are in linguistics/applied Linguistics, followed by special education (13.89%) and computer science (13.89%). Also, 11.11% of them specialized in engineering, followed by 5.56% in business and 5.56% in urban planning. Other

friends are in different fields, such as dentistry, sports and recreation management, nursing, statistics, mass communication, and science. Regarding their employment background, the majority of them (33.33%) are assistant professors at universities in SA, followed by Ph.D. students who are also lecturers at Saudi universities (27%). Two friends (5.56%) are architects, followed by the others in different jobs such as engineer (2.78%), dentist (2.78%), network administrator (2.78%), supervisor (2.78%), systems analyst (2.78%), lecturer (2.78%), and teacher (2.78%). The jobs of four of my friends are unknown to me. One friend has just graduated and is looking for a job.

Procedure

As mentioned above, the data were collected manually in November and December of 2016. The comments were copied to Excel sheets and categorized based on the types of events before the analysis. As a Facebook user, I started the observation in 2012 and wrote down general information about the posts, such as the type of event, friend's name, month, and year, and saved the link to the post before collecting the data.

The events received 2,103 comments, 35 sharings, and 3,456 emoji reactions to posts, such as 3,409 likes, 40 love emoji images, and 7 wow emoji signs before removing the non-Saudi Facebook users' comments and their posts of emoji reaction and sharings were removed. In addition, 67 comments posted by Saudis were removed because they were in English, and that was beyond the scope of this study which is about Arabic. Most of these 67 comments were used on the posts that were posted in English. Seven comments that were posted in Arabic with English expressions as a code switching were

kept and worked on because of Arabic expressions. However, the English expressions in those comments were not coded.

Recognizing Saudis was verified by personal information shared with the public in their profiles, such as where they were from in SA, where they lived in SA, and their last names. In general, the last names of Saudis refer to common tribes and family names based on the tribe system they belong to in SA. Therefore, I mainly relied on the last names when the other personal information was not provided in the profile. In addition, I sent 153 names to 26 friends by the Facebook messenger to check whether or not they are Saudis because they used nicknames or only first and second name with no information provided in their profiles. Based on my friends' response, 72 names were removed from the data for different reasons. The first reason was that they were not Saudis, which was the majority of them. The second reason was that they were not known to my friends. The third reason was that my friends mentioned that they could not remember the background of commenter and whether or not he was Saudi. Only two friends did not respond about 7 names, and Facebook was only the one way to communicate with them. Therefore, the comments in question were removed from the corpus. One friend was contacted by WhatsApp when he did not respond on Facebook messenger. In the end, 81 names were verified as Saudis.

As shown in Table 2, the final number of Saudi Facebook users' interactions were 1,721 comments, 31 sharings, 2,541 likes, 26 love emoji signs, and 1 wow emoji image. They were posted by 2,213 Saudi Facebook users: 2,120 males and 93 females. Some of them provided personal information shared with the public that were collected by visiting

their profiles to determine their background of sociolinguistic information, as shown in the following section.

Commenters

Some commenters mentioned personal information that was shared with the public, such as their origin, residence, educational background, major, and job. This section provides this information in tables and charts to identify the commenters' sociolinguistic background, which will not be used as social variables in the study. Some Facebook users mentioned either their origin or residence or both in the profile (see Table 3).

According to Table 3, only 1,102 (49.79%) commenters mentioned their origin whereas 1,111 (50.20%) did not mention it in the profile as they may have shared it with friends only, not with the public. Of the majority of my friends' friends or commenters, 328 (14.82%) are from the Riyadh Region, followed by 312 (14.10%) from the Makkah Region located in the West of SA, 121 (5.47%) are from the Eastern Region, followed by 92 (4.16%) from the Jizan Region located in the South of SA, 57 (2.58%) are from the Assir Region located also in the South of SA, followed by 55 (2.49%) from the Al-Medinah Region located in the West of SA. The other commenters (less than 1%) mentioned different regions in SA, such as the Qasim Region and the Hail Region in the middle of SA, the Tabuk Region, the Northern Border Region, and the Al-Jouf Region in the North, and the Al-Baha Region and the Najran Region in the South. Some commenters labeled themselves from foreign countries. The majority of them, 51 users (2.30%), were from the United States, followed by 15 (0.68%) from Australia and 8

(0.36%) from the UK. Only 0.09% of the commenters were from Canada and other countries.

Table 3

The Origin and Residence of Saudi Facebook Commenters

Regions	From	%	Live	%
Riyadh Region	328	14.82	242	10.94
Makkah Region	312	14.10	166	7.50
Eastern Region	121	5.47	73	3.30
Jazan Region	92	4.16	67	3.03
Assir Region	57	2.58	28	1.27
Al-Medinah Region	55	2.49	29	1.31
Qassim Region	22	0.99	14	0.63
Tabuk Region	9	0.41	5	0.23
Al-Baha Region	7	0.32	1	0.05
Northern Border Region	6	0.27	1	0.05
Najran Region	6	0.27	1	0.05
Hail Region	5	0.23	2	0.09
Al-Jouf Region	4	0.18	0	0.00
USA	51	2.30	549	24.81
Australia	15	0.68	67	3.03
UK	8	0.36	39	1.76
Canada	2	0.09	8	0.36
Different countries	2	0.09	33	1.49
Not Mentioned	111	50.20	888	40.13
Total	2,213	100.00	2,213	100.00

With regard to commenters' residence, 1,325 (59.87%) mentioned their residence in the profile. In contrast, only 888 (40.13%) users did not mention it. The majority of the commenters, (696/31.45%) were students and lived abroad, while 629 (28.42%) lived in different regions in SA. As shown in Table 3, of the majority of users who lived in SA, 242 (10.94%), lived-in Riyadh Region, followed by 166 (7.50%) who lived in Makkah Region. Also, 73 (3.30%) users lived in Eastern Region, followed by 67

(3.03%) who lived in Jizan Region. In addition, 29 (1.31%) users lived in Al-Medinah Region, followed by 28 (1.27%) who lived in Assir Region. The other commenters lived in different regions in SA. Of the commenters who lived abroad, the majority of them (549/24.81%), lived in the United States and, based on the information in their profiles, they were students because they were studying at universities. According to the CNN report (2016), approximately 60,000 Saudi Arabian students are enrolled at U.S. universities. Sixty-seven (3.03%) users in the data lived in Australia, followed by 39 (1.76%) living in the UK and 33 (1.49%) living in different countries. Finally, only 8 (0.36%) of the users lived in Canada. The total numbers of commenters' origin and residence, as was shown in Table 3, can also be seen in Figure 1.

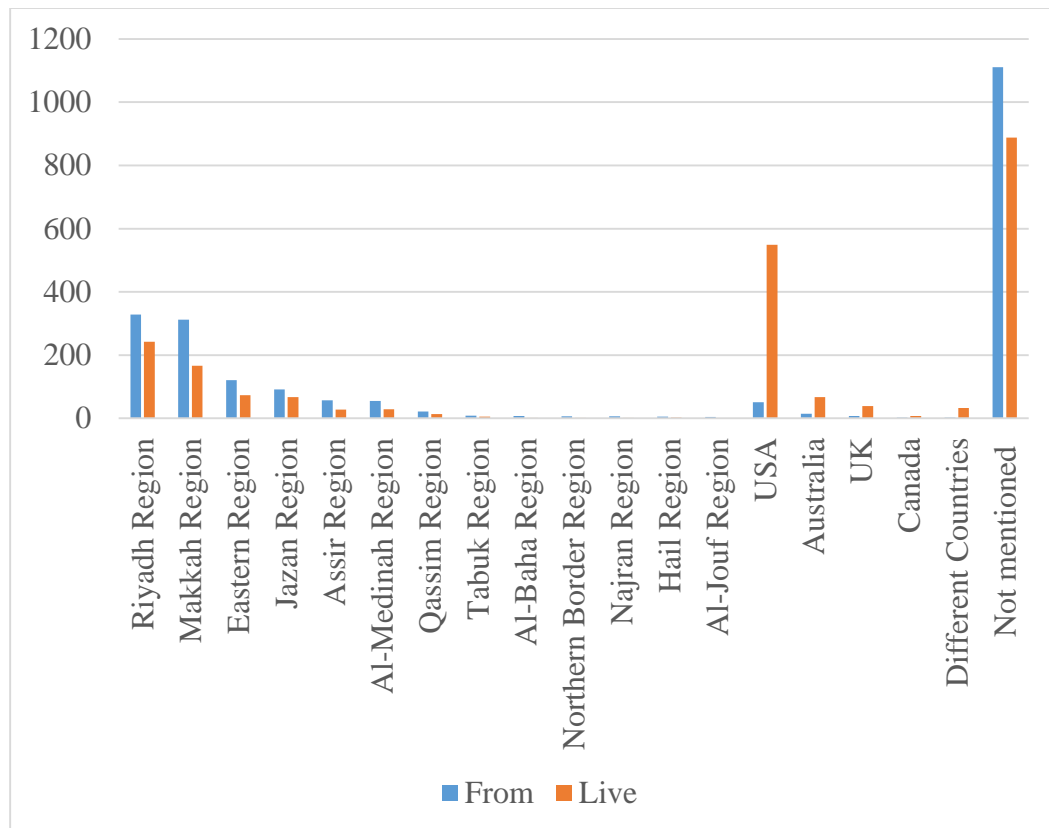


Figure 1. The Origin and Residence of Saudi Facebook Commenters

As shown in Figure 1, the commenters who neither mentioned nor shared their origin and residence with the public are more than the users who shared that information. Also, it is obvious that more users lived in the United States than lived in other countries. In SA, most of the commenters are from Riyadh Region and Makkah Region, which means that the majority of users are from those two regions. All the previous regions represent the main Saudi dialects, which are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Saudi main dialects (from www.mghamdi.com).

In Saudi Arabia, there are five main dialects: Najdi, Hijazi, Gulf, Northern, and Southern. The first main dialect, which is the Najdi dialect, is spoken in Riyadh region and in Qassim that comprises Buraydah and the small cities around it. The Hijazi dialect is the second one and comprises Makkah and the Al-Medinah Region. The third dialect is the Gulf dialect, which is spoken in the Eastern Region. The Southern dialect includes Jazan, Assir that has Abha and Khameesmushayt, Al-Baha Region, and Najran Region. Finally, the Northern dialect is used in Tabuk, the Northern Border Region, that includes Arar, Hail, Al-Jouf Region, which includes Sakaka. These five main dialects also have sub-dialects that are related to the names of common tribes in Saudi Arabia. However, the variety used in the comments of congratulations represent the Saudi variety, which is the most negotiated and the intelligible one among Saudis when they communicate with each other.

Table 4 shows the educational background of 1,457 (65.83%) commenters who shared their educational information with the public.

Table 4

The Educational Background of Saudi Facebook Commenters

Educational Level	N	%
University	1,255	56.71
High School		
Diploma	72	3.25
Master Degree	68	3.07
Doctoral Degree	43	1.94
Academy/institute	14	0.63
Bachelor Degree	5	0.23
Not mentioned	756	34.16
Total	2,213	100.00

As shown in Table 4, 1,255 (56.71%) users mentioned that they studied or are studying at universities. However, they did not mention their specific degrees. Seventy-two commenters (3.25%) have a high school diploma, followed by 68 users (3.07%) with a Master's degree and 43 users (1.94%) with a doctoral degree. Only 14 users (0.63%) mentioned that they studied at an academy/institute for nursing, aviation, and so forth. Finally, only 5 commenters (0.23%) mentioned that they had a Bachelor's degree. Finally, 756 users (34.16%) neither mentioned nor shared this information with the public. The commenters were from different backgrounds in terms of majors (see Table 4).

Table 4 shows the commenters' majors shared with the public, and it is only 770 users (34.79%) who mentioned their majors in the profile. One hundred and twelve (5.06%) commenters specialized in various majors in engineering, followed by 99 (4.47%) users in dentistry. Also, 88 users (3.98%) mentioned different fields in business, and 76 commenters (3.43%) mentioned different fields in language studies, such as language, literature, translation, and linguistics, followed by 57 commenters (2.58%) are in computer studies, and 48 commenters (2.17%) are in education. In addition, 30 commenters (1.36%) specialized in nursing, followed by 25 users (1.13%) in management and 23 users (1.04%) in architecture. Fifty-two commenters (2.35%) specialized in various majors that are less than 1%, which are similar to the other majors in percentages in the table. Figure 3 shows the majors of the commenters.

Table 4

The Majors of Saudi Facebook Commenters

Majors	Number	%
Engineering	112	5.06
Dentistry	99	4.47
Business	88	3.98
Language/literature/translation/linguistics	76	3.43
Computer Studies	57	2.58
Education	48	2.17
Nursing	30	1.36
Management	25	1.13
Architecture	23	1.04
Communication/public relations	22	0.99
Biology	20	0.90
Mathematics	20	0.90
Medicine	18	0.81
Pharmacy	17	0.77
Media and Journalism	17	0.77
Islamic Studies	10	0.45
Curricula/teaching methods	9	0.41
Physics	8	0.36
Arts	7	0.32
Law	6	0.27
Health	6	0.27
Various majors	52	2.35
Not mentioned	1,443	65.21
Total	2,213	100.00

As shown in Figure 3, it is obvious that the majority of commenters (1,443/65.21%) did not mention or share their majors with the public. However, the majority of users who shared their majors (34.79%) are specialized in engineering, followed by dentistry and business. Table 5 shows the background of commenter's jobs as mentioned in their public profiles.

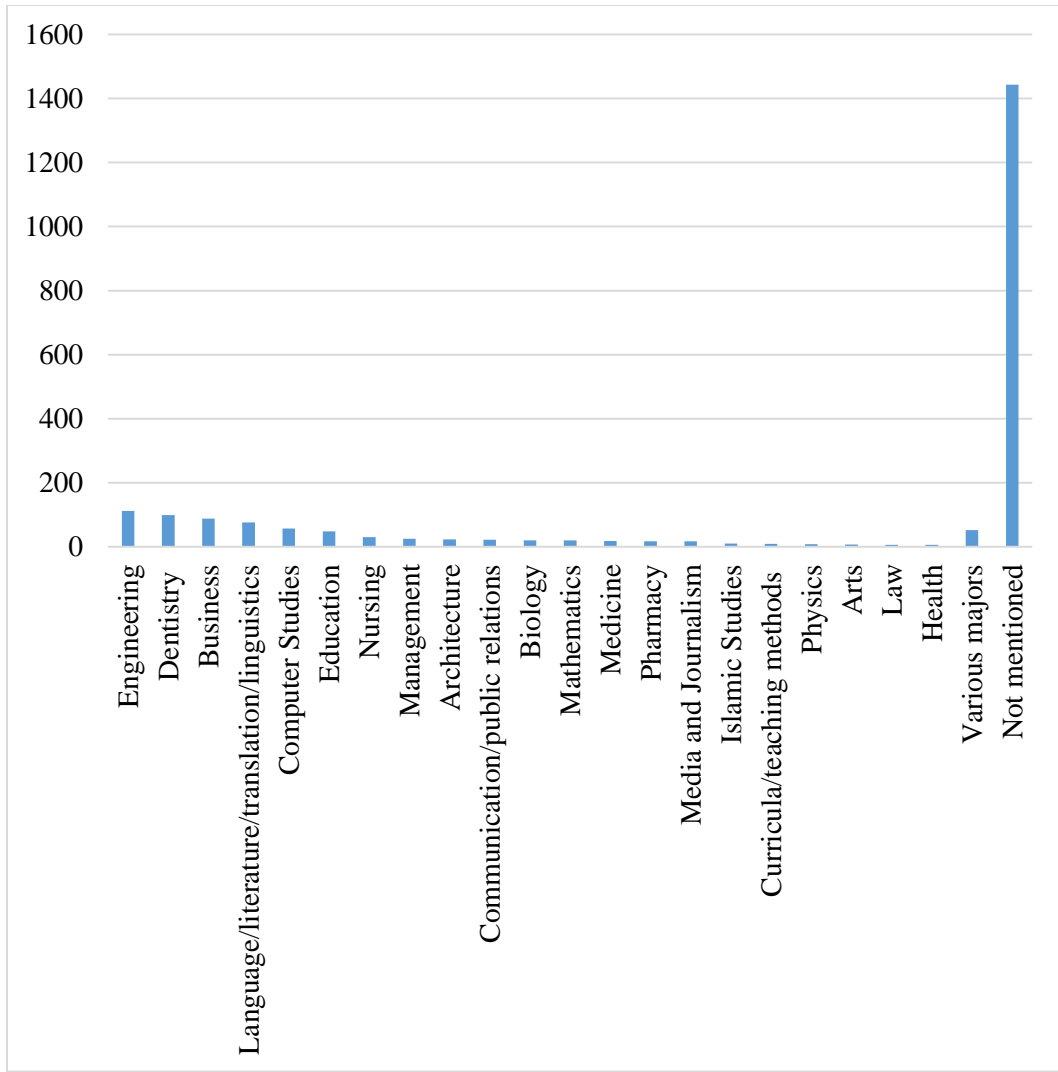


Figure 3. The majors of Saudi Facebook commenters

Table 5

The Jobs of Saudi Facebook Commenters

Jobs	Number	%
Faculty Members	229	10.35
Managers	65	2.94
Teachers/instructors	61	2.76
Engineers	30	1.36
Advisors/supervisors	25	1.13
Dentists	24	1.08
Nurses	22	0.99
Students	17	0.77
Technicians	15	0.68
Architects	14	0.63
Doctors	13	0.59
Demonstrators	11	0.50
Consultants	9	0.41
Administrative	8	0.36
Assistant Managers	7	0.32
Researchers	6	0.27
Developers	6	0.27
Pharmacists	6	0.27
Businessmen	6	0.27
Various jobs	45	2.03
Not specific	257	11.61
Not mentioned	1,337	60.42
Total	2,213	100.00

Table 5 displayed the jobs of 876 commenters (40%) sharing this information in their profiles. First, 257 commenters (11.61%) mentioned the name of organization they worked for, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, university, and so forth, without mentioning the specific name of a job. Two hundred twenty-nine users (10.35%) were faculty members, and the majority of them (155/67.68%), were lecturers and teaching assistants. Also, 65 commenters (2.94%) were managers in different

departments of organizations, followed by 61 users (2.76%) who were teachers/instructors. Thirty commenters (1.36%) were engineers, followed by 25 advisors/supervisors (1.13%) and 24 dentists (1.08%). The other commenters' jobs were various and less than 1%. Finally, 45 commenters (2.03%) had various jobs that were also less than 1%. Figure 4 displays the jobs of commenters.

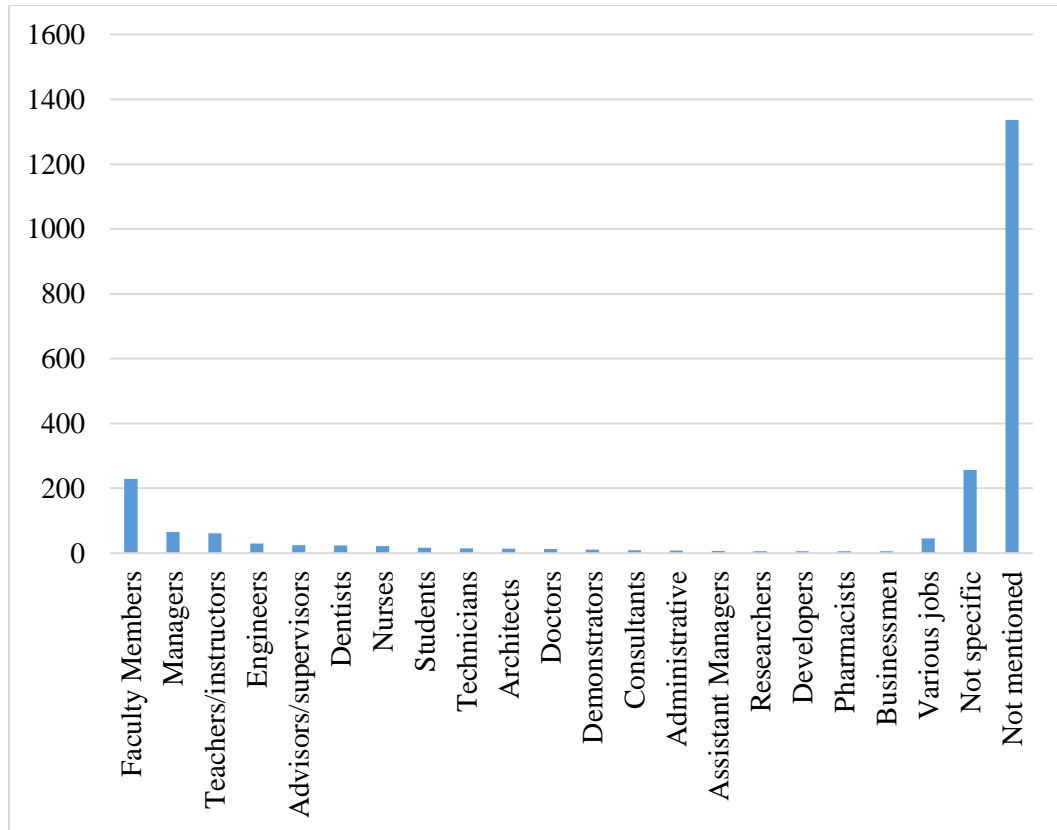


Figure 4. The jobs of Saudi Facebook commenters

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of commenters, 1337/60.42%) did not mention their jobs. However, the majority of commenters who mentioned their jobs mentioned only the names of the organizations for which they worked. Out of 876 users, the majority of commenters were faculty members.

Finally, removed from the examples that were used in the analysis were all the names of friends, friends' friends and their photos in the comments and in the events.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to gain deeper understanding of the verbal and nonverbal types of responses or strategies used by Saudi Facebook users in both the congratulations comments and on the posts of happy/good news. The verbal strategies or types of responses in the comments of congratulations were coded based on the taxonomy of response types of congratulations proposed by Elwood (2004) and modified by Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011) as a guideline to identify what types of strategies were used by commenters, and how they were used in the events (see Table 6). Although Elwood found various patterns of responses across the situations, her taxonomy consisted of only the first four groups of responses without mentioning the other types of strategies in her taxonomy (see Table 6). However, most of them were included in Allami and Nekouzadeh's taxonomy with a minor modification to be able to code strategies in their study. This taxonomy is also considered as an extensive taxonomy for the strategies of congratulations which, consist of 14 strategies. Using coding is important because it can be compatible with Terkourafi's (2005a) frame-based approach that aims to identify expressions and frequency of particular types of speech acts in authentic situations.

The same necessity of modification or adding new strategies was faced in the data of the current study in order to be able to code the types of responses in the comments of congratulations such as "greeting," "an expression of pride," "expressing sorrow," "using

a proverb,” “expressing apology,” and “thanking the interlocutor.” Also, some strategies were not used in the data, such as “general request for information,” “statements of prior certainty,” and “an expression of envy.” Other strategies were found, but they were used in different ways, such as “an expression of longing” and “a prediction of one’s own future success.” In Allami and Nekouzadeh’s (2011) study, the first one, for example, was used to indicate longing to have a specific job, such as “I also longed to be a doctor, but I couldn’t.” However, it was used in the data to express longing to see the person, for instance “...we are longing for your coming back”. The second strategy, in Allami and Nekouzadeh’s study, which is “a prediction of one’s own future success” was used in referring to the future of the speaker, such as “God willing. I would be a successful person like you”. However, in the current study, it was used to refer to the future of the poster/addressee, for example: “you will reach the highest positions if Allah wills.” The modification and new codes were discussed and revised with two native speakers of Saudi Arabic who are Ph.D. candidates in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics.

The strategies were coded and identified in each event. In the qualitative section in the analysis, examples were translated into English and revised with one of the Ph.D. candidates to be used for each type of response. The first line shows the Arabic text⁵ while the second and third one show glosses word for word, not morpheme to morpheme, with the English translation. Also, the number of types of responses used in each comment were identified in order to know the compound strategies used when offering congratulations. In addition, the emoji images which are called nonverbal types of

⁵ Arabic is written from right to left.

responses were coded according to their meanings on the emojiopedia of Facebook⁶. Their functions were also identified according to the context of use in the data. The functions of emojis were also discussed and revised with one of the mentioned Ph.D. candidates above. Also, they were categorized based on their functions in the section of quantitative analysis. Other types of nonverbal strategies were sharing and emoji reactions to the posts, such as like (Thumbs up), love (Beating heart), and wow (Surprised face) were identified, and how they were used was noted. Table 6 shows the strategies and sub-strategies of congratulations that were modified by Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011).

⁶ The website is <http://emojiopedia.org/facebook/>

Table 6

Congratulation Strategies and Sub-strategies Coding

Strategies	Example
1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)	Congratulations
2. Expression of happiness	
a. Expression of personal happiness	I'm so glad.
b. Statement assessing the situation positively	That's great.
3. Request for information	
a. Specific question	Who's that guy/girl?
b. General request for information	Now are you satisfied with your marriage?
4. Expression of validation	
a. Statements indicating the situation was warranted	You deserve it.
b. Praise	Great Job
c. Statements of prior certainty	I knew you would succeed.
5. Self-related comments	
a. An expression of longing	I also longed to be a doctor, but I couldn't
b. An expression of envy	You've got this by chance.
c. A prediction of one's own future success	God willing. I would be a successful person like you.
6. Exclamation/Expression of surprise	Wow, are you Kidding?
7. Offer of good wishes	I wish you a happy New Year.
8. Encouragement	You should do your best for higher achievements.
9. Joking	(It is based on culture)
10. Affection expression	I love you.
11. A suggestion to celebrate	Let's go out for dinner.
12. Thanking God	Thanks God
13. Offer of help	I hope I can help you.
14. Statement assessing the situation negatively	Why did you get married?

Note: From Allami, H. and Nekouzadeh, M. (2011). Congratulation and positive politeness strategies in Iranian context. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(1), 1607-1613

The quantitative analysis was employed to determine the frequency and percentages of strategies and compound strategies to identify the dominant types of verbal and nonverbal responses used by the commenter which indicate preferences in use. It was also used to identify the similarities and differences of the use of verbal strategies

and the compound of these strategies across the events. The descriptive statistics were employed by using Excel. However, inferential statistics were also used, such as a Chi-square test and the test of proportion to interpret the results of descriptive statistics.

For example the Chi-square test was used by using SPSS to determine whether the association between the verbal strategies and the different types of events were statistically significant or not. In other words, to what extent can the type of event affect the choice of congratulations strategies that are considered as linguistic variables. The test of proportion was used to compare between two strategies to identify whether the differences between them were or were not significant. This test was performed by using the Medcalc⁷ website that offers an easy online statistical software. In both the Chi-square test and the test of proportion, the result of the p -value is important to understand whether or not the result is statistically significant. For instance if the p -value is less than 0.05 then the result is statistically significant. However, if it is larger than that number, then the result is not statistically significant.

⁷https://www.medcalc.org/calc/comparison_of_proportions.php

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is comprised of two main sections, qualitative and quantitative, in which an analysis is presented of the verbal and nonverbal types of congratulation response comments—called strategies of congratulations—of Saudi Facebook users. In the qualitative section, the analysis shows the expressions or types of verbal strategies and how they were used in examples taken from the congratulatory comments. Also included in the analysis, are the different types of emojis that were employed in these comments and how the emojis function in each comment. In the quantitative section, the analysis shows the frequency of use of the verbal and nonverbal strategies of congratulations and identifies whether or not the differences are statistically significant in frequency. In addition, in the analysis a comparison is made between the verbal strategies and the compound strategies, not only in each event but also across the events, to identify the similarities and differences. The compound strategies refer to the number of strategies employed in each comment.

Qualitative Analysis

In this section, the types of verbal responses in the congratulations comments are shown and how they were used in each comment. Also shown are the types of emojis used in the comments and how they function. It was found that there are 23 types of responses in the congratulations comments: (a) the illocutionary force indication device (congratulations), (b) offer of good wishes, (c) praise, (d) statements indicating the situation was warranted, (e) thanking God, (f) greeting, (g) expression of personal happiness, (h) encouragement, (i) an expression of pride, (j) joking, (k) expressing

sorrow, (l) statement assessing the situation positively, (m) a suggestion to celebrate, (n) a statement assessing the situation negatively, (o) using a proverb, (p) expressing apology, (q) an expression of longing, (r) request for information, (s) exclamation/expression of surprise, (t) thanking the interlocutor, (u) offering help, (v) a prediction regarding the person's future, and (w) affection expression. Some of the previous responses are not strictly congratulations speech acts; however, they can be possible responses to good news. The congratulations comments also received various types of responses from the posters which are beyond the scope of this study. For instance, the use of "prayers/offer of good wishes" were the most frequent type of response (304 times) followed by "thanking" (53 times) and "compliment/praise" (39 times).

In addition, it was found that there were 38 emojis used in the comments:(a) red rose, (b) slightly happy emoji, (c) red heart, (d) bouquet of flowers, (e) thumbs up, (f) party popper, (g) smiling face with heart-eyes, (h) graduation cap, (i) face blowing a kiss, (j) face with tears of joy, (k) smiling face with smiling eyes, (l) applause, (m) tulip, (n) confetti ball, (o) cherry blossom, (p) sparkles/stars, (q) winking face, (r) hibiscus, (s) perfect, (t) victory hand, (u) flexed biceps, (v) grinning face/happy face, (w) broken heart, (x) red balloon, (y) oncoming fist, (z) hundred points, (aa) raising hands, (bb) a gold crown with jewels on the sides/king/queen emoji, (cc) high five/stop emoji, (dd) collision, (ee) circle and star, (ff) praying hands, (gg) string quartet, (hh) blossoming flower, (ii) man running, (jj) salsa dancer, (kk) cheeky monkey, and (ll) open hands. The

majority of these will be discussed in this section while the others will be discussed in the quantitative analysis section.

Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)

The first strategy is using the illocutionary force indication device that is “congratulations.” The illocutionary force device (IFID) is a code for the expression *mabruuk* (congratulations) that was used in almost all the comments of congratulations. Also, it was found that *mabruuk* has more than one form, such as *mubarak*, *attahani*, and *attabrikat*. However, it was observed that the form of *mabruuk* was used more frequently than the other forms. In addition, *Mubarak* was observed more often than *attahani* and *attabrikat*. These forms, especially *mabruuk* and *Mubarak*, were intensified by using more than one verbal way for intensification, such as using numbers (e.g., a thousand, a million, a billion, etc.), repeating the vowel /u/ in *mabruuk* (e.g., *mabruuuuuuk*), repeating the form itself (e.g., “*mabruuk*,” “*mabruuk*,” “*mabruuk*”), using an adjective, and so forth. Moreover, some nonverbal intensifiers, which use emojis, were employed to intensify the congratulations comment, such as the emoji of “thumbs up,” “perfect,” “applause” and so forth.

Comment 1:

👉 مبروك اخ (اسم الشخص)

mabruuk akh (ism ashshakhS)

congratulations brother (name of the person)

“Congratulations brother (name of the person).”

تستاهل كل خير

tistahil kul khair

you-deserve all blessings

ونتمنى لك التوفيق في الدارين

wa nittmanna lak attawfeeq fi addarayn

and we-wish for-you success in here and hereafter

“A thousand thousand congratulations. You deserve all blessings. We wish you all the best here and hereafter.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense. *Mabruuk* was intensified by repeating the number of “a thousand” two times and by repeating the vowel /u/. This number can also be used repetitively more than this (see Comment 4). In this comment, the commenter used the emoji of “bouquet of flowers” which was given as a gift for the occasion of passing a thesis defense. Also, repeating the emoji was used to intensify the giving of the gift.

Comment 4:

الف الف الف الف مبروك يابطل



alf alf alf alf mabruuk ya baTal

thousand thousand thousand thousand congratulations you hero

“A thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand congratulations (you) hero.”

Comment 4 is a comment on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense.

The number “thousand” was repeated four times here to intensify *mabruuk*. Also, the

comment was intensified by using the emoji of “applause emoji” to imply “praise” or “congratulations.” *Mabruuk* is also intensified by a higher number than “a thousand” (see Comment 5).

Comment 5:

مليوون مبرووك د. (اسم الشخص) تستاهل كل خير



malyuun mabruuk d. (ism ashshakhS) tistahil kul khair
million congratulations Dr. (name of the person) you-deserve all blessings
“A million congratulations Dr. (name of the person). You deserve all blessings.”

This congratulations comment was made on the occasion of passing a Ph.D. comprehensive exam. The expression *mabruuk* was intensified by using the number “a million” in this comment. The commenter used the emoji of “red rose,” possibly to express endearment and show a high appreciation to the poster. Also, it can be used as a gift similar to the emoji of “bouquet of flowers” along with endearment and high appreciation. The number of million is also intensified by another number such as a thousand (see Comment 6).

Comment 6:

الف مليون مبروك وتستاهل كل خير..



alf malyuun mabruuk wa tistahil kul khair
thousand million congratulations and you-deserve all blessings
“A thousand million congratulations. You deserve all blessings.”

This comment was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense. The number of “a thousand million” was used here to intensify *Mabruuk*. This expression is also intensified by a higher number than “a thousand million” (see Example 7).

Comment 7:

الف مليار ميروك يا ابو (اسم ابن الشخص) التخرج تستأهل الخير



alf millyar mabruuk ya abu (ism ibn ashshakhS) attakharruj
thousand billion congratulations you father-of (name of the son) the-graduation
tistahil al-khair
you-deserve the-blessings

“A thousand billion congratulations (you) father of (name of the son) on graduation. You deserve the blessings.”

This congratulations comment was used on a graduation occasion. The expression *mabruuk* was intensified by the number of “a thousand billion.” The commenter used the emoji of “graduation cap” to mark the event and celebrate the accomplishment. Similarly, *mabruuk* can be intensified by a higher number than “a thousand billion” (see Comment 8).

Comment 8:

مششاء الله الف ترليون ميروك يعيال والله يوفتكم و يبارك لكم فيها يارب



mashaallah **alf trillyawn mabruuk ya siyal wallah**

as-allah-will **thousand trillion congratulations** you guys Allah
yuaffiqqum wa ybarik lukum feeha ya rab
help-you and bless for-you in-it oh-Allah

“As Allah wills. A thousand trillion congratulations (you) guys. May Allah help you and show you blessings in it.”

This congratulations comment was used on a graduation picture of friends. The intensifier used in this comment is “a thousand trillion” for *mabruuk*. The commenter employed three different emojis: the emoji of “sparkles,” “party popper,” and “string quartet,” to celebrate the occasion of graduation, especially by using the violin and the party popper. The expression *mabruuk* is also intensified by a higher number than “a thousand trillion” (see Comment 9).

Comment 9:

الف ترليون بليون مبروك



alf trillyawn billyawn mabruuk

thousand trillion billion congratulations

“A thousand trillion billion congratulations.”

Comment 9 was used on the occasion of getting a new position. *Mabruuk* was intensified by “a thousand trillion billion.” The emoji of “two hearts” was used here to express endearment to the poster. Finally, “mabruuk” can be intensified by repeating the expression itself (see Comment 10).

Comment 10:

ميررووووك

mabruuuuuk

congratulations

ميررووووك

mabruuuuuk

congratulations

ميررووووك

mabruuuuuk

congratulations

تستاهل كل خير دكتور (اسم الشخص) و ليس بمستغرب عليك هذا التميز فمنذ ان عرفتك و انت تحاول

tistahil kul khair doctur (ism ashshakhS) wa laysa bimustaghrab

you-deserve all blessings doctor (name of the person) and not unexpected

ʕalayk hatha attamayyuz famunthu an ʕaraftuk wa anta tuhawil

on-you this the-excellence since that know-you and you try

جاهدا ان يخرج عملك على افضل صورته وكم شاهدتك و انت تكثف البحث و تضاعف الجهد في كثير من

jahidan an yakhruj ʕamaluk ʕala affDal Suurah wa anta

with-effort to achieve your-work on best picture and you

tukaththif al-bahath wa tuDaʕif al-juhd fi katheer min

intensify the-research and doubling the-effort in many from

اعمالك و ها انت اليوم تقطف ثمرة ذلك تحياتي لك انت مثال يحتذى به اتمنى من الله العلي القدير ان اراك

aʕmaluk wa ha-anta alyawm taqqTif thamarat thalik tahyyati lak

your-works and there-you today pick fruit that my-greetings for-you

anta mithal yuhtatha bih atamanna min allah alʕalyi-alqadeer an arak
you example to-be followed by-him i-wish from Allah almighty to see-you

في احد مناصب الدوله العليا لكي تخدم فيها وطنك وانت اهل لذلك

fi ahad manaSib addawlah al-ʕulya likay takhdum waTank
in one-of positions the-country the-higher to serve your-home-country
wa anta ahl lithalik
and you qualified for-it

“Congratulations, congratulations, congratulations. You deserve all blessings, doctor (name of the person), and this success is not unexpected because, since I have known you, you work hard to complete your work in the perfect way and I have seen you many times intensifying your research and double the effort in many of your works, and there you are today, getting the fruit of your efforts. My greetings to you. You are an example. I wish from Allah to see you in one of the higher positions in the state to serve your country, and you are qualified for it.”

This congratulations comment was made on the event of receiving an award. The example shows that the expression *mabruuk* was intensified by repeating the expression three times. Also, it is obvious that another intensifier was used in the form, that is, by repeating the vowel /u/ in all the three forms. Comment 11 shows the use of the other form of *mabruuk*.

Comment 11:

ما شاء الله تبارك الله

mashaallah tabarakaallah

as-Allah-will Allah-bless

مبارك دكتور (اسم الشخص) والعقبى لجوائز أكبر مستقبلاً 🎉

mubarak doctur (ism ashshakhS) walſuggba lijawaeiz

congratulations doctor (name of the person) wish-you for-awards

akbar mustaggbalan

bigger future

“As Allah wills. Allah blesses. Congratulations doctor (name of the person), and I wish you bigger awards in the near future.”

This comment was used on the occasion of receiving an award. It shows the use of the other form of “mabruuk” which is *mubarak*. It was found that it is not used more frequently as *mabruuk*, and a few or limited number of intensifiers were used with this form (see Comments 12 and 13). The emoji used here “party popper” is to celebrate the occasion, as explained in Comment 8.

Comment 12:

الف مبارك

alf **mubarak**

thousand **congratulations**

بارك الله لك بالموهوب وشكرت الواهب وبلغ رشده

baraka allah laka bilmawhuub wa shakarta alwahib wa

bless Allah for-you with-the-gift and you-thank the-giver and

balagha rushdah

he-reach his-maturity

“A thousand congratulations. May Allah bless you with His gift to you, and may you thank the giver, and may the child reach the maturity.”

The example was used on the occasion of birth of a baby. The expression *mubarak* was intensified by “a thousand” in this comment. Also, it is intensified by repeating the number, as shown in Comment 13.

Comment 13:

بارك لك في الموهوب و شكرت الواهب وبلغت اشدها و رزقت برها, الف الف مبارك ..

baraka laka fi almawhuub wa shakarta alwahib wa
bless for-you in the-gift and you-thank the-giver and
balaghat rushdah wa ruziqta birraha
she-reach her-maturity and you-be-granted her-good-deeds
alf alf mubarak

thousand thousand congratulations

“May Allah bless you with His gift to you, and may you thank the giver, and may the child reach the maturity, and may you be granted her good deeds. A thousand thousand congratulations.”

This congratulations comment was also used on the occasion of birth of a baby. *Mubarak* was intensified by repeating the number of “a thousand” two times. Comments 14 and 15 show the other forms of *mabruuk*.

Comment 14:

غزير التهاني و التبريكات يا سمي



ghazir attahani wa attabrikat ya simi
plentiful congratulations and congratulations you namesake

“Plentiful congratulations and congratulations (you) namesake.”

This comment was used on the occasion of passing an exam. The commenter used the two forms of *mabruuk* that are *attahani* and *attabrikat* in his comment. All of them mean “congratulations” but with different forms. Also, he employed two types of intensifiers: using the adjective “plentiful” and the two different forms of *mabruuk*. These two forms were intensified by using a number (see Comment 15). The emoji of “red rose” was used to express endearment and high appreciation to the poster, as explained in Comment 5. However, it was repeated here probably to intensify endearment and appreciation.

Comment 15:

ملايين التبريكات والتهاني، نفع الله بك ونفعك

malayyn attabrikat wa attahani nafaṣ allah bik wa nafaṣak
millions congratulations and congratulations help Allah by-you and help-you

“Millions of blessings and congratulations. May Allah use you for helping others and help you.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA defense. The expression *attabrikat* and *attahani* were intensified by using the number of “millions” and also by using the two different forms again. Finally, Comment16 shows an interesting example by offering “congratulations” for the second time.

Comment 16:

أبارك لك مرة أخرى وحياك الله في صفحتك وفي أبها



ubarik lak marrah ukhra wa hayyak allah fi Safhatik
i-congratulate to-you once again and welcome Allah in your-page
wa fi abha
and in Abha

“I congratulate you again and may Allah welcome you on your Facebook page and Abha (name of a city in the South of Saudi Arabia).”

The congratulation was used on the occasion of graduation. The commenter used the verb of *mabruuk* that is *ubarik* and mentioned “again” in his congratulation, which means that he had also congratulated the poster somewhere else. Offering congratulations for the second time can be considered as a type of intensification. The commenter also used the emoji of “slightly smiling face” in the comment to welcome with a smile. The next strategy is “offer of good wishes.”

Offer of Good Wishes

Almost all the commenters used the strategy of “offer of good wishes” in their congratulation comments. Some comments include one wishing expression while others consist of more than one wishing expression that indicate the nature of the relationship between the commenter and the poster. Also, most of them used prayers. In addition, some wishing expressions are general while others are specific in relation to the type of occasion.

Comment 17

الف مبروك وعقبال الفرح الكبير بالشهادة♥

alf mabruuk wa fugal al-farah al-kibiir bishshadah
thousand congratulations and wish the-happiness the-big with-the-degree

“A thousand congratulations. I wish you get the big happiness with the degree in the near future.”

This comment was used on the occasion of passing an exam. The wishing expression used is “receiving the degree in the near future.” The commenter used the emoji of “red heart” to show endearment for the poster. Some comments included more than one wishing expression (see Comment 18).

Comment 18

ما شاء الله تبارك الله .. الف مبروك يا ابو (اسم الابنة) .. والله يزيدك علم و محبة في قلوب الناس .. و

mashaallah tabarakaallah alf mabruuk ya abu
as-allah-will allah-bless thousand congratulations you father-of
(ism alebnaH) **wallah yizeedak film wa mahabbah**
(name of the daughteH) Allah increase-you knowledge and love
fi guluub annas wa
in hearts the-people and

أسأل الله انه يوفقك في حياتك العلمية و العملية .. دمت في حفظ الرحمن



assal allah inah yuaffiqk fi hayatak al-filmiyyah
i-ask Allah that-he help-you in your-life the-academic
wa alSamaliyyah dumt fi hifD arrahman

and the-practical you-always in protection Allah

“As Allah wills. Allah blesses. A thousand congratulations (you) father of (name of the daughter). May Allah increase your knowledge and your love in others’ hearts. And I ask Allah to help you in your academic and working life. May Allah protect you forever.”

This congratulation was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA defense. The comment consists of various types of wishing expressions, such as about increasing his knowledge and love and also asking Allah to help him in his academic and working life, and to protect the poster forever. Comment 19 shows an example of wishing the poster will get higher positions.

Comment 19

مبروك ابو(اسم الابن) وعقبال اعلى المناصب ان شاءالله وولهان على معاندك



mabruuk abu (ism alibn) wa ūugqal aſla almanaSib

congratulations father-of (name of the son) **and wish higher positions**

inshaallah wa walhan ſla mſanadk

if-Allah-will and I-miss on stubbornness-you

“Congratulations (you) father of (name of the son), and I wish you get higher positions if Allah wills. I miss the stubbornness with you.”

Comment 19 is a comment on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense. The type of wishing is by wishing the poster get higher positions. Also, the commenter used two types of emojis in his comment: the emoji of “face with tears of joy” and

“broken heart.” However, they are related to the statement “I miss stubbornness with you,” which describes his reaction to the action of stubbornness. The emoji of “broken heart” was used to express the commenter’s feelings of sadness about missing the stubbornness with the poster. However, it was preceded by using the emoji of “face with tears of joy” to convey laughter and commenting on his “missing of stubbornness” as a joke or something funny.

Comment 20

 الله يوفقك وتعود الى ارض الوطن وتكمل نجاحك العلمي

allah yuaffiqk wa tafuud ila arDh al-watan

Allah help-you and you-come-back to earth the-home-country

wa tukmil najahak al-filmi

and you-continue your-success the-academic

“May Allah help you, and you come back home and continue your academic success.”

This congratulation commented on the occasion of receiving an award. The wishing expression is related to the academic achievement by using a prayer “may Allah help you [...] to continue your academic success. The emoji of “raising hands” was employed here to emphasize the prayer or wishing that was offered by prayer.

Comment 21

الف الف مبروك يا (اسم الشخص) والله يتمم لكم ويجمع بينكم بخير



alf alf mabruuk ya (ism ashshakhS)

thousand thousand congratulations you (name of the person)

wallah yitammim lukum wiyijmaf baynkum bikhair

Allah make for-you group between-you well

“A thousand thousand congratulations (you) (name of the person). May Allah make you together and group you well.”

This comment of congratulation was used on the occasion of engagement. The type of wishing expression here is also a prayer for the future groom and bride. The commenter used two emojis: “woman dancing” and “man running,” possibly to visualize the happiness of the future groom and bride on this engagement. Also, the emoji of “woman dancing” can imply celebrating the occasion and expressing happiness.

Comment 22

الف مبروك جعلها الله من مواليد السعاده



alf mabruuk **jaʕalaha allah min mawaliid assaʕadah**
thousand congratulations **make-her Allah from newborns the-happiness**

“A thousand congratulations. May Allah make her among the newborns of happiness.”

This example was used on the occasion of birth of a baby. The wishing expression was addressed to the baby by asking Allah to cheer her by “make her among the newborns of happiness. Two emojis were used in this comment: “thumbs up” and the emoji of “grinning face/happy/smiley face.” The first emoji is to express admiration and liking the news, while the second emoji was used to express happiness by showing a

happy or smiley face. The “thumbs up” also can be an intensifier for this congratulations comment. The next strategy is using “praise.”

Praise

Praising is one of the response types that were employed in congratulation comments. It was used by offering different ways and various expressions to make the compliment. Also, commenters sometimes employed a number of expressions for praising the poster in the comment. However, it was observed that the religious expression *mashallah* “As Allah wills” or *mashallah tabarakallah* “As Allah wills, Allah blesses,” which is used to express praise, joy, and appreciation when hearing good news, was used more frequently. Culturally, it is believed that it protects the good news, which certainly comes from Allah, from jealousy and the evil eye. It is usually uttered at the beginning of hearing the good news.

Comment 23:

ما شاء الله الف مبروك (اسم الشخص) ان شاء الله دائما منها للاعلى



mashaallah alf mabruuk (ism ashshakhS)

as-Allah-will thousand congratulations (name of the person)

inshaallah daiman minha lilafla

if-Allah-will always from-it to-higher

“As Allah wills. A thousand congratulations (name of the person). If Allah wills, I wish you always higher achievements.”

This congratulation was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense. The praise is by using the religious expression “as Allah wills.” The commenter used two types of emojis: “applause” to praise the poster for the achievement of passing the defense and “graduation cap” to mark and celebrate the event. This form has another form that is longer than the previous one (see Comment 24).

Comment 24:

ما شاء الله تبارك الله

mashaallah tabarakaallah

as-Allah-will Allah-bless

الف مبروك حصولك على درجه الماجستير

alf mabruuk huSuulak ʕala al-majistair

thousand congratulations your-getting on the-master

وعقبال الدكتوراه

🎓🎓🎓

wa ʕugbal adduktawrah

and wish the-doctorate

“As Allah wills, Allah blesses. A thousand congratulations for receiving the Master’s degree, and I wish you get the Ph.D. in the near future.”

Comment 24 was also used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense. The expression of praise used is “as Allah wills, Allah blesses.” This praise and the short one in the previous comment were used more frequently as praise. The emoji of “graduation cap” was used repetitively to intensify marking and celebrating the occasion

of passing the defense. Another religious form of praise was used, but only one time, which means that it is rarely used (see Comment 25).

Comment 25:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ (تشبه خالها)



bismillah **mashaallah** tishbah khalaha
in-the-name-of-Allah **as-Allah-will** she-look-like her-uncle

“In the name of Allah. As Allah wills. She looks like her uncle.”

This congratulation was commented on the occasion of the birth of a baby where the post of news showed a picture of the newborn. The praise used is “in the name of Allah. As Allah wills.” It was followed by a statement commenting on the newborn “she looks like her uncle” that was interpreted by the use of the "winking face" emoji. It was used to imply a flirtation intent.

Comment 26:

مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَفَّقَكُمُ اللَّهُ



mashaallah waffaqkum allah
as-Allah-will help-you Allah

“As Allah wills. May Allah help you.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of graduation. The expression of praise used here is similar to Comment 23. However, the commenter used the emoji of “praying hands” to emphasize his prayer and mean “amen.”

Comment 27:

وربي انك بطل بن خالتي تستاهل كل الخير ياغالي



wrabbi innak **baTal** bin khalti tistahil kul khair ya al-ghali
i-swear that-you hero son my-aunt you-deserve all blessings you the-dear
“I swear you are a hero (you) my aunt. You deserve all blessings (you) my dear.”

This comment was used on the occasion of receiving an award in bodybuilding. The commenter used the word “hero” to praise the poster. Also, he employed two types of emojis: “oncoming fist” and “flexed biceps” to praise the poster because they mean “you are strong.” In addition, they were used to mark the power and strength of the accomplishment in the competition of bodybuilding.

Comment 28:

ميرووووك تستاهل و تعبت و هذا حصاد تعبك

mabruuuuk tistahil **wa tafabt wa hatha haSad tafabk**
congratulations you-deserve and you-tired and this harvest your-effort

عسى ربي يرزقك على قد نيتك وعملك 100%

ʕasa rabbi yirziqk ʕala gad niyyatk wa ʕamalak
hopefully my-god reward-you on as your-intention and your-work

“Congratulations. You deserve it and you worked hard, and this is the harvest of your hard work. May Allah reward you as per your intention and 100% work.”

This example was also used on the occasion of receiving an award in bodybuilding. The praise of this comment focused on the effort of achievement, for

instance, “you worked hard, and this is the harvest of your hard work.” Two types of emojis were used to praise and assess the accomplishment: the emoji of “perfect” and “hundred points.” The first one means “that’s perfect,” while the second one means a perfect score of 100 out of 100.

Comment 29:

الف الف مبروك ابو (اسم ابن الشخص) محظوظين بوجودك بيننا ❤️❤️❤️

alf alf mabruuk abu (ism ibn ashshakhS) **mahDhuDhiin**

thousand thousand congratulations father-of (name of the son) **we-lucky**

biwujuudak baynina

by-your-existence between-us

“A thousand thousand congratulations (you) father of (name of the son). We are lucky for having you among us.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of getting a new position. The praise was used indirectly by mentioning that they (work mates/ friends) are lucky because the poster will be with them. The commenter also used the emoji of “red hearts” to express endearment. In addition, repeating the emoji could mean that the commenter’s congratulations comment or endearment is from the bottom of his heart.

Comment 30:

وففك الله أينما كنت. لقد كنت المعلم الأول هناك. وسوف تكون الوكيل الأول هنا. فأنت انت أينما كنت

waffaqk allah ainama kunt **laqad kunt al-muFallim**

help-you Allah wherever were **already you-were the-teacher**

al-awwal hunak wa sawfa takuun al-wakeel al-awwal huna

the-first there and will you-be the-vice principal the-first here

faanta ant ainama kunt

you you wherever were.

بتميزك في كل الأمور

bitamaiuuzika fi kul al-umuur

By-your excellence in all the-matters

طالبك المخلص: (اسم الطالب)



Talibuk al-mukhliS: (ism aTTalib)

you-student the-sincere: (name of the student)

“May Allah help you wherever you are. You were the No.1 teacher there, and you will be the No.1 vice principal here. Because you are “you” wherever you be with your excellence in all matters. Your sincere student, (name of the student).”

This comment was used on the event of getting a new position, vice principal at a school. The praise was used by evaluating the person in his job such as “you were teacher No.1 there and you will be the vice principal No.1 here.” Two types of emojis were used: “sparkling heart” and “red rose” to express endearment and high appreciation of the poster who is his teacher. Also, the use of the red rose could be a gift, as explained previously. Comments 31 and 32 are examples of exaggeration in using praise.

Comment 31:

فرحتنا بهالخبر الله يجعل ايامك كلها افراح .. الف مليون مبروك

farrahtna bhalkhabar allah yijʕal ayyamak kullaha affrah..

you-made-us-happy by-the-news Allah make your-days all-of-them happiness

alf malyuun mabruuk

thousand million congratulations

وهنيئا لدكتوراه فيك يا ابو (اسم ابن الشخص)

wa haniian liddawktawrah feek ya abu (ism ibn ashshakhS)

and congratulations to-the-doctorate in-you you father-of (name of the son)

“You made us happy with this news. May Allah make all your days full of happiness. A thousand million congratulations. Congratulations to the Ph.D. for belonging to you (you) father of (name of the son).”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D. comprehensive exam. The praise is an exaggeration by offering congratulations on the degree because it belongs to the poster. Another type of exaggeration was also used in another comment (see Comment 32).

Comment 32:

لقب دكتور لم يصف لك شى بل انت من اضاف الى الدكتوراة جمالا ويحق لنا ان نفتخر بك , الف الف

laqab doctor lam yaDhif lak shi bal anta man aDhaf jamalan

term doctor not add for-you thing but you who add beauty

ila addawktawrah wa yahiqa lana an naftakhir bik,

to the-doctorate and we-deserve for-us to taking-pride by-you

alf alf

thousand thousand

مبروك ياأبو (اسم الابن)

mabruuk ya abu (ism alibn)

congratulations you father-of (name of the son)

“The term doctor does not add anything to you; however, you add beauty to the Ph.D. We are rightfully taking pride in you. A thousand thousand congratulations (you) father of (name of the son).”

This example was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D. dissertation defense. The commenter praised the person by using the exaggerated praise that “the term doctor does not add anything to you; however, you add beauty to the Ph.D.” The next strategy is using a statement indicating the situation was warranted.

Statements Indicating the Situation Was Warranted

Most of the commenters used this type of response that is a statement indicating the situation was warranted. There are two common forms used more frequently, such as “*tistahil*” and “*tastahiq*,” which mean “you deserve.” Comments 33 and 34 show the use of the two different forms that mean “deserve.”

Comment 33:

الف الف مبروك يا د/ (اسم الشخص) ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ تستأهل كل خير. ومن أعلى الى أعلى ان شاء الله

alf alf mabruuk ya d/ (ism ashshakhS) ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾

thousand thousand congratulations you Dr. (name of the person)

tistahil kul khair wmin aʿla ila aʿla inshaallah

you-deserve all blessings And-from higher to higher if-Allah-will

“A thousand thousand congratulations (you) Dr. (name of the person). You deserve all blessings. I wish you always higher achievements if Allah wills.”

This comment was used on the event of passing a Ph.D. dissertation defense. The commenter used the expression “*tistahil*” when he said “you deserve all blessings,” which means that you deserve this achievement. It is considered as a type of blessing. Also, he used three different emojis, the red rose and bouquet of flowers, the functions of which were explained in previous examples. The emoji of “red balloon” was also used here to celebrate the occasion.

Comment 34:

تستأهل دكتور (اسم الشخص) فأنت تستحق التميز لكونك رجل متميز فعلا

tistahil	doctur (ism ashshakhS)	faant	tastahiq	attamayuuz
you-deserve	doctor (name of the person)	you	you-deserve	the-distinction
likawnika	rajul	mutamaiyyiz	fiṣlan	
because-you	man	distinct	indead	
مبروك يا غالي والله فرحت جدا بهذا الخبر يا غالي				
mabruuk	ya	ghali	wallah	faraht jiddan bihatha alkhavar
congratulations	you	dear	i-swear	i-felt-happy very with-this news
ya	ghali			
you	dear			

“You deserve it doctor (name of the person). You deserve it because you are an indeed distinct man. Congratulations my dear. I swear I felt very happy (you) my dear.”

This example was used in the event of receiving an award. The commenter used both forms of deserving in this comment: “*tistahil*” and “*tastahiq*” to intensify the meaning of this type of response. The next strategy is “thanking God.”

Thanking God

Thanking Allah was used on many occasions. However, it was observed in the event of the birth of a baby more than for the other events. The following comments show the use of this type of response in the event of the birth of a baby and graduation.

Comment 35:

ماشاءالله تبارك الله الف الف الف مبرووووك والحمد لله على سلامتهم وبارك الله لك في الموهوب وشكرت
mashaallah tabarakaallah alf alf alf mabruuuuk **wa**
as-Allah-will Allah-bless thousand thousand thousand congratulations **and**
alhamdulillah Sala salamathum wa baraka allah fi al-mawhuub wa shakart
thank-Allah on their-safety and bless Allah in the-gift and you-thank
الواهب وبلغت أشدها ورزقت برها يارب وتتربى في عزكم يارب



al-wahib wa balaghat ashuddaha wa ruziqata birraha
the-giver and she-mature her-maturity and you-be-granted her-good-deeds
ya rab wa titrabba fi Sizzukum ya rab
oh-Allah and she-brought-up in your-glory oh-Allah

“As Allah wills. Allah blesses. A thousand thousand thousand congratulations and thanks to Allah for their safety. May Allah bless you with His gift to you, and may you thank the giver, and may the child reach the maturity, and may you be granted her good deeds, and may she be brought up in your high lifestyle.”

The comment of congratulations was used in the event of the birth of a baby. The commenter thanked Allah for the safety of mother and baby girl. Also, he used the emoji of “red heart” to express endearment.

Comment 36:

الحمد لله، الف مبروك (اسم الشخص)



alhamdulillah alf mabruuk (ism ashshakhS)

thank-Allah thousand congratulations (name of the person)

“Thanks to Allah, a thousand congratulations (name of the person).”

This comment was used in the event of graduation. The commenter thanked Allah for the poster’s achievement. That is, graduation. Also, she used the emoji of “graduation cap” to mark and celebrate the occasion. The next strategy is using greeting.

Greeting

Greeting was used by offering different ways of greetings. The first way is by welcoming the poster at the beginning of the comment. The second way is by responding to the greeting that the poster started within his post of news. The third way is similar to the opening of formal letters such as “dear, name of the person.” The fourth way is similar to the closing of formal letters, such as “my greetings.”

Comment 37:

أهلا وسهلا بك في مدرستك وبين إخوة لك في الله

ahlan-wa-sahlan bik fi madrasatik wa bayn ikhwah lak fillah

welcome **with-you** in your-school and between brothers for-you in-Allah

نجم جديد في سماء (اسم البلدة)

najm jadeed fi samaa (ism albaldah)

star new in sky (name of the town)

“Welcome at your school and among your brothers in Allah. (You) a new star in the sky of (name of the town in the South of Saudi Arabia).”

Comment 37 is a comment on the occasion of receiving a new position, which is a vice principal at a school. The greeting welcomes the poster by saying something such as “welcome at your school and among your brothers.” Based on the comments on this news, it seems that the poster studied at this school when he was a student and now he is a vice principal there. Comment 38 is similar to Comment 37 in terms of welcoming the poster; however, the commenter used emojis in his comment.

Comment 38:

و هلا والله بعربيينا انا الله يسعدكم ويتمم لكم على خبيير (كنية الشخص)



wa hala wallah bʿareesna 😍😍 allah yisʿidkum wiyitammin

and welcome swear our-groom Allah make-you-happy complete

lukum ʿala khair (kunyat ashshakhS)

for-you on well (nickname)

“Welcome our groom. May Allah make you happy and carry out for you well (you) (nickname).”

This comment was used on the occasion of getting married. The commenter used two types of emojis: “smiling face with heart-eyes” and “red hearts.” The first one was

used to express happiness and endearment while the red hearts were used to express endearment. Moreover, both of them were used to intensify endearment. Another way of greeting is a greeting response (see Comment 39).

Comment 39:

و عليكم السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته.. 1000 مبروك

wa salaykum assalam wa rahmatu allah wa barakatuh 1000 mabruuk
and upon-you peace and marcy Allah and his-blessings 1000 congratulations
“and upon you peace, mercy, and blessings. A thousand congratulations.”

Comment 39 is a comment on the occasion of getting a new position. The post of this event started with the greeting, “peace be upon you and Allah’s mercy and blessings.” Therefore, the commenter started his congratulations with a greeting response “and upon you peace, mercy, and blessings.” Another way of greeting is similar to the opening in formal letters (see Comment 40).

Comment 40:

أخي العزيز (اسم الشخص) ألف مبروك، ماشاء الله تبارك الله، وفقك الله ونفع بعلمك دعواتي وأمنياتي

akhi al-aziz (ism ashshakhS) alf mabruuk,

my-brother the-dear (name of the person) thousand congratulations

mashaallah tabarakaallah waffaqk allah wa nafaṣ biṣlmik daṣawati
as-Allah-will Allah-bless help-you Allah and benefit by-you my-prayers
wa umniati
and my-wishes

“Dear brother (name of the person), a thousand congratulations. As Allah wills. Allah blesses. May Allah help you and use your knowledge to benefit others. My prayers and wishes.”

This congratulations comment was made on the occasion of graduation. It started with “dear” and name of the person, which is similar to writing formal letters. Then it was followed by “congratulations,” praise, and wishing. Comment 40 also shows the formal form, but in closing.

Comment 41:

مبروك يا دكتور و ربي يحفظها لكم

mabruuk ya doctur wa rabbi yihfaDha lukum
congratulations you doctor and my-god protect-her for-you

تحياتي

tahiyyati

my-greetings

“Congratulations (you) doctor and may Allah protect her for you. My greetings.”

This comment was used on the event of the birth of a baby. It was ended by a greeting that is “my greetings.” Also, another form of closing was also used to close the comment such as “your brother.” (See Comment 42).

Comment 42:

الف الف مبروك يا ابو (اسم ابن الشخص) وتستاهل كل خير اخوك ابو (كنية الشخص)

alf alf mabruuk ya abu (ism ibn ashshakhS)
thousand thousand congratulations you father-of (name of the son)

wa tistahil

and you-deserve

kul khair **akhuuk** **abu (kunyat ashshakhS)**

all blessings **your-brother father-of (nickname)**

“A thousand thousand congratulations (you) father of (name of the son). You deserve all blessings. Your brother, father of (his nickname).”

This example was used on the occasion of graduation. It shows the other form of closing, for instance, “your brother, the nickname of the person” at the end of the comment. The next strategy is “expressing personal happiness.”

Expression of Personal Happiness

Some commenters preferred to show empathy by expressing happiness about the news. This was expressed by using more than one verbal way to show happiness. The following comments show the different types of responses when expressing happiness.

Comment 43:

الف الف مليون مبروك د. (اسم الشخص). يعلم الله اني فرحت لك من كل قلبي. جعل الله التوفيق حليفك

alf alf alf malyuun mabruuk d. (ism ashshakhS).

thousand thousand thousand million congratulations Dr. (name of the person)

yaflam allah inni **faraht** **lak** min kul galbi jaʕal allah

know Allah I **felt-happy for-you** from all my-heart make Allah

attawfeeq haleefak

success accompany

“A thousand, thousand, thousand million congratulations Dr. (name of the person). Allah knows that I felt happy from all my heart for you. May Allah help you. Best is on your side.”

This congratulation comment was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D. defense. The expression of happiness is “I felt happy for you.” Also, it was used in a different way of expressing happiness (see Comment 44).

Comment 44:

مبارككم عليكم واسأل الله تعالى ان يرزقكم بره وان يجعله من عباده الصالحين. خبيرك رسم ابتسامه ع

mubarak ŧalaykum wa assal allah taŧala

congratulations on-you and I-ask Allah almighty

an yarzuŧkum birrah

to provide-you good-deeds

wa an yajŧalah min ŧibadh aSSalheen **Khabarak rasam**

and to make-her from his-worshippers virtuous. **Your-news drew**

ibtisamah ŧala

smile on

وجهي تستاهل كل خير

wajhi tistahil kul khair

my-face you-deserve all blessings

“Congratulations. I ask Allah the almighty to provide his performance of good deeds to you and make the baby boy one of his virtuous worshippers. Your news drew a smile on my face. You deserve all blessings.”

Comment 44 is a comment on the occasion of the birth of a baby. The commenter expressed his happiness and described it by saying “Your news drew a smile on my face.” Another form of expressing happiness was by using the expression of happiness as a verb (see Comment 45).

Comment 45:

الف مبروك اخي (اسم الشخص)

alf mabruuk akhi (ism ashshakhS)

thousand congratulations my-brother (name of the person)

يسعدنا في الادارة تواجد رجل بقامتك

yusfiduna fi al-edarah tawajud rajul biqamatik

make-us-happy in the-department presence man like-you

خلق حسن و تعامل رائع وفقكم الله و اعانكم

khuluq hasan wa taʿamul raeʿ waffaqkum allah wa aʿanakum

moral good and dealing wonderful help-you Allah and assist-you

“A thousand congratulations brother (name of the person). It makes us happy to have someone like you with a moral character and a wonderful communication in our department. May Allah help you and assist you.”

This comment was made on the occasion of getting a new position. Expressing happiness was used in the statement of “It makes us happy to have someone like you...” Another form of expressing happiness was also used by using cheering (see Comment 46).

Comment 46:

i-know achieved in

هذا الموضوع. كثير حاولوا بس ما حالفهم الحظ أو الجهد

hatha al-mawDhuuſ khatheer hawaluu bas ma halafhūm al-haDh

this the-topic a lot tried but not had-the-chance the-luck

aw aljuhd

and effort

“A thousand, thousand, thousand congratulations (you) father of (name of the daughter). It is a big achievement. As Allah wills. Allah blesses. You are the first person I know who could pass this exam. A lot have tried to pass this exam, but they were not lucky or able to do so.”

This example was used on the occasion of passing an exam that is a license in nursing from the United States. It was assessed positively by using the adjective “big,” for instance, “a big achievement.” Another adjective was also used in another comment (see Comment 48).

Comment 48:

تستحق الأفضل يا (اسم الشخص).. ألف مبروك لتحقيق هذا الإنجاز الرائع

tastahiq alaffDhal ya (ism ashshakhS) alf mabruuk

you-deserve the-best you (name of the person) thousand congratulations

litahqeeq hatha **al-enjaz** **arraeſ**

to-achieve this **the-achievement wonderful**

“You deserve the best (you) (name of the person). A thousand congratulations on scoring this wonderful achievement.”

This comment was used on the occasion of receiving an award in bodybuilding. The accomplishment was assessed positively by using the adjective “wonderful” in the statement “this wonderful achievement.” The next example shows using two adjectives in the comment.

Comment 49:

الف ميروك يادكتور موضوع جميل وأفكار واعده



alf mabruuk ya doctur **mawDhuuf jameel**
thousand congratulations you doctor **topic beautiful**
wa affkar wa fidah
and ideas promising

“A thousand congratulations (you) doctor. It is a beautiful topic and promising ideas.”

Comment 49 is a comment on the occasion of publishing a research paper. The positive assessment used was about the topic of paper and the ideas such as “a beautiful topic” and “promising ideas.” The next strategy is about “encouragement.”

Encouragement

Some commenters preferred using expressions of encouragement in their congratulations comments. Also, more than one expression was used for encouraging the poster. However, the expression “go ahead” was the most frequent one. See Comments 50-52 for the various expressions of encouraging others in congratulation.

Comment 50:

الف الف مبروك، واسال الله لك التوفيق 🌸❤️ والى الامام د/ (اسم الشخص)

alf alf mabruuk, wa assal allah lak attawfeeq 🌸❤️

thousand thousand congratulations and i-ask Allah for-you success

wa ela al-amam d/ (ism ashshakhS)

and to the-front Dr. (name of the person)

“A thousand thousand congratulations. I ask Allah to help you. Go ahead Dr. (name of the person).”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of passing a Ph.D. defense. The expression of encouragement used is “go ahead.” Another expression of encouragement is shown in Comment 51.

Comment 51:

الف مبروك ابو (الكنية) و هالمستوى الخطير يبين ما جا الا من تعب ... واصل و بالتوفيق

alf mabruuk abu (alkuniah) wa halmusstawa al-khaTeer

thousand congratulations father-of (nickname) and this-level the-dangerous

yibayyin ma ja ella min tafab **waSil** wa bittawfeeq.

show did-not come but from hard-work **continue** and good-luck

“A thousand congratulations, father of (nickname). This dangerously-advanced level is clearly a result of a hard work. Carry on and good luck.”

This comment was used on the occasion of receiving an award in bodybuilding. The commenter used the expression of “carry on.” Comment 52 shows the last example of encouraging expression.

Comment 52:

ماشاء الله تبارك الله أستاذي (اسم الشخص) وهذا أول الغيث وبانتظار تزكيتك للعلم بمزيد من الكتب



mashaallah tabarakaallah ustathi (ism ashshakhS) wa hatha

as-Allah-will Allah-bless my-teacher (name of the person) and this

awwal alghaith wa **bintiDhar tazkiatak lilfilm**

first of-rain and **i-wait enriching for-the-knowledge**

bimazeed min al-kutub

by-more from the-books

“As Allah wills. Allah blesses. (You) my professor (name of the person). And this is just the first drop of the rain, and I am awaiting for your enriching the knowledge by writing more books.”

This example was used on the event of publishing a book. The commenter encouraged the poster by mentioning that he is awaiting his enriching the knowledge by writing more books. The next strategy is expressing pride.

An Expression of Pride

Expressing pride was used in some events, and it is similar to praise in terms of using exaggeration in expressing pride. For instance, commenters not only mentioned that they are proud of (the posters) but also mentioned that the awards and degrees are proud of them.

Comment 53:

فخورين فيك الف الف مبروك

fakhureen feek alf alf mabruuk

we-proud in-you thousand thousand congratulations

“We are proud of you. A thousand thousand congratulations.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of receiving an award.

The commenter expressed his pride in the statement “we are proud of you.” However, another way of expressing pride is by exaggerating (see Comment 54).

Comment 54:

مليووون مبروووك حبيب قلبي ابو(اسم الابنة) وتستاهل كل خير.. بك نفخر وبك تفتخر الشهادة

malyuuuun mabruuk habeeb qalbi abu (ism alebnah)

million congratulations sweetheart my-heart father-of (name of the daughter)

wa tistahil kul khair **bik nafkhar**

and you-deserve all blessings **by-you we-pride and**

wa bik taftakher ashshahadah

by-you it-pride the-degree

لاقتراانها بك

liqtiraniha bik

for-its-joining- in-you

“Million congratulations my sweetheart, father of (name of the daughter). You deserve all blessings. We take pride in you. Also, the degree takes pride in you because it belonged to you.”

Comment 54 is a comment on the occasion of receiving an award. The commenter expressed his pride and mentioned that the degree takes pride in the poster as

a type of exaggeration. Another example of exaggeration in expressing pride was also used, as shown in Comment 55.

Comment 55:

مبارك دكتورنا الفخر أبا (اسم الابن)... بك تفخر المحافل والجوائز

mubarak doktawrna alfakhar aba (ism alebn)

congratulations our-doctor pride father (name of the son)

bika tafkhar al-mahafil wa al-jawaez

by-you it-pride the-gatherings and the-awards

نسأل الله أن يبارك لك وينفعك بعلمك وينفع بك



nasal allah an yuubarik lak wa yanfaʿak

we-ask Allah to bless for-you and benefit-you

biʿilmik wa yanfaʿ bik

by-your-knowledge and benefit by-you

“Congratulations our honored doctor father of (name of the son). Gatherings and awards take pride in you. We ask Allah to bless you and help you to benefit from your knowledge and use you to benefit others.”

This comment was made on the occasion of receiving an award. In this example, the commenter expressed his pride and mentioned that also gatherings and awards take pride in the poster. It is similar to the previous example in expressing pride by exaggeration but with different words, such as “gatherings” and “awards.” Using joking is the next strategy.

Joking

Joking as a type of response was used when offering congratulations in some occasions. Comments 56-59 show the use of joking in the different types of events, such as the birth of a baby and passing a Master's thesis defense. Comment 56 is on the occasion of the birth of a baby.

Comment 56:

الف الف مبرووووك وصول (اسم المولود) يابو (اسم الابن)، الله يصلحه ويهديه ويصير هلالي
alf alf mabruuuuk wuSuul (ism almawluud)
thousand thousand congratulations arrival (name of the newborn)
ya abu (ism alebn) **allah yiSlehah wa yahdeeh**
you father-of (name of the son) **Allah guide-him and direct-him**
wa yiSeer helali
and become fan-of-Hilal

“A thousand thousand congratulations for arrival of (name of the son) (you) father of (name of the son). May Allah guide and direct him to be a fan of Al-Hilal (name of a soccer team).

The post of his congratulations comment included a picture of the newborn boy covered by the flag of the Annaser (name of the soccer team), a soccer team in Saudi Arabia. The commenter used a prayer asking Allah to make the new baby a fan of another soccer team that is Al-Hilal.

Comment 57:

مبروك الف الف مبروك يبو (اسم الابن) احجزها لي من اللحين.... الله يطرح فيها البركه والصلاح



mabruuk alf alf mabruuk
 congratulations thousand thousand congratulations

ya abu (ism alebn)
 you father-of (name of the son)

ehjizha li min alheen allah yiTdrah feeha
reserve-her for-me from now Allah put in-her

al-barakah wa aSSalah
 the-blessing and righteousness

“Congratulations, a thousand thousand congratulations (you) father of (name of the son). Reserve her for me now. May Allah bless and guide her.”

This example was also used on the occasion of the birth of a baby girl. The commenter used joking in his comment, which is a request to reserve the baby girl for him to marry her in the future. In addition, the commenter used six different emojis: “party popper,” “confetti ball,” “royal emoji,” “collision/fireworks,” “circle and star,” and “sparkles” to celebrate the occasion.

Comment 58:

الف الف الف مبروك ... الله يحفظها و تتربي بعزك

alf alf alf mabruuk allah yihfaDha
 thousand thousand thousand congratulations Allah protect-her

wa titrabba bSizzak
 and brought-up glory

لزوم نذبح لك استيكوزا



luzuum nithbah lak estikawza

must sacrifice for-you crawfish

“A thousand, thousand, thousand congratulations. May Allah protect her and to be brought up in your high lifestyle. We have to sacrifice crawfish for you.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of birth of a baby. The commenter mentioned that he should sacrifice a crawfish for the poster for this occasion. It is a joke because the crawfish is hunted, not sacrificed. Therefore, the commenter used the emoji of “face with tears of joy” to mean that when he said “we have to sacrifice crawfish for you,” it is a joke. Also, he used the emoji of “stop/high five” possibly to imply “good bye” (greeting).

Comment 59:

الف مبروك يادكتور (اسم الشخص) مع اني ماتعودت اقول لك دكتور ههههههه الله يوفقك ويسعدك في

alf mabruuk ya doctur (ism ashshakhS) maʕ inni ma
thousand congratulations you doctor (name of the person) with I not
taʕawwadit aquul lak doctur **hhhhhhh** allah yiwaffiqk wa
used-to say to-you doctor **hhh** Allah guide-you and
yisʕidk fi
make-you happy in

حياتك

hayatak

your-life

“A thousand congratulations doctor (name of the person) although I am not used to saying doctor to you hhhhhh. May Allah help you and cheer you in your life.”

Comment 59 is a comment on the event of passing a Master’s defense in dentistry. The commenter mentioned that he is not used to saying doctor to the poster. Then he followed his expression with laughing “hhhhhh.”The next strategy is “expressing sorrow.”

Expressing Sorrow

Some commenters expressed sadness when they offered “congratulations.” However, this was used in specific events, such as passing the defense of a thesis/dissertation and graduation for students who were studying abroad, because they will leave their friends to go back home. Also, it was used in the event of getting a new position because the person (the poster) will leave the office.

Comment 60:

بالتوفيق ابو (اسم الابن) وسوف نفتقدك في ملبورن

bittawfeeq abu (ism alebn) wa sawfa naftaqiduka fi milbourn

good-luck father-of (name of the son) and will we-miss-you in Melbourne

“Good luck (May Allah help you) father of (name of the son) and we will miss you in Melbourne.”

This congratulations comment was made on the occasion of graduation in Australia. Expressing sorrow was used here by stating that “we will miss you in

Melbourne” because the poster will leave the city. Some commenters mentioned that the place also will miss you (see Comment 61).

Comment 61:

ألف ألف مبروووووووك يبو (اسم الابن) و عقبال الدكتوراة!!! سعدنا بمعرفتك في منسي و سنفتقدك و

alf alf mabruuuuuuuuk yabu (ism alebn)
thousand thousand congratulations you-father-of (name of the son)
wa fuqbal addawktawrah safidna bimaʕrifatik fi mansi
and wish the doctorate we-felt-happy by-knowing-you in Muncie
wa sanaftaqiduk wa

and will-miss-you and

ستفتقدك منسي و لكن لنا لقاء انشاءالله في الديار المقدسة

sataftaqiduk manci wa lakin lana leqa inshaallah
will-miss-you Muncie and but for-us meeting if-Allah-will
fi addiar al-mugaddasah
in the-cities the-holy

“A thousand thousand congratulations father of (name of the son) and I wish you get the Ph.D. in the near future. We are happy to know you in Muncie, and we will miss you and so will Muncie. However, we will meet if Allah wills in the holy cities.”

This comment was used on the event of graduation in the USA. The commenter expressed his sorrow by stating that he will miss the poster and also that the city of Muncie will miss him. It is a type of exaggeration by stating that the city will miss him.

Comment 62:

بالتوفيق أخي العزيز رغم حزن ابنك وابني (اسم الابن) الذي خسرك كأب ومعلم فاضل مزيدا من النجاحات

bittawfeeg akhi al-ʕaziz rughm huzun ebnak wa ebni
good-luck my-brother the-dear although sadness your-son and my-son
(ism alebn) allathi khasirak kaab wa muʕallim faDhil
(name of the son) which lost-you as-a-father and teacher virtuous

mazidan min annajahat

more from success

المستقبليه يارب

al-mustaqqbaliah ya rab

in-the-future oh-Allah

“Good luck my dear brother despite the sadness of your son and my son (name of the son) who missed you as a father and a virtuous teacher. I wish you more success in the future.”

This comment was used on the occasion of getting a new position, vice principal at a school. The commenter expressed his sorrow when he explained the sad feelings of the poster’s son toward his father who was nominated to be a vice principal. This means that his job will be administrative and he no longer will teach his son in class. In this situation, it seems that the son was a student at the same school where his father worked as a teacher. The next strategy is a suggestion to celebrate.

A Suggestion to Celebrate

On some occasions, commenters suggested plans to celebrate or suggested celebrating the good news. Comments 63 and 64 show the use of this type of response, which is limited in its use.

Comment 63:

مبروك يابو (اسم الابنة) والله يبارك فيك يارب .. سير علينا وابشر بالعشاء



mabruuk	ya	abu	(ism alebnah)	
congratulations	you	father-of	(name of the daughter)	
wallah	yibarik	feek	ya rab	
may-Allah	blees	in-you	oh-Allah	
sayyir	ʃalayna	wa	ebshir	bilʃasha
visit	on-us	and	you-will-have	by-the dinner

“Congratulations (you) father of (name of the daughter). May Allah bless you.

Visit us, and we will make a dinner.”

This congratulations comment was used on the occasion of passing an exam. The commenter asked the poster to visit his family to make a dinner to celebrate the occasion. In this comment, the emoji of “victory hand” was used to emphasize the accomplishment and praise the victory. Another way (see Comment 64) was used to suggest that the poster celebrate the occasion by himself.

Comment 64:

مبروووووك يا صديقي العزيز - بالتوفيق لك و عقبال الفايفا --- لاتنسى تحتفل بهالمناسبة السعيدة



mabruuuuuuk ya Sadeeqi al-fazeez bittawfeeq lak
congratulations you my-friend the-dear good-luck for-you
wa fugal alfifa
and wish the-viva
la tinsa tihtifel bihalmunasabah assafeedah
don't forget celebrate by-the-occasion happy

“Congratulations (you) my dear friend. Good luck, and I wish you pass the Viva in the near future. Don't forget to celebrate this happy occasion.”

Comment 64 is a comment on the event of passing a Ph.D. comprehensive exam. The commenter suggested that the poster celebrate this accomplishment when he said, “Don't forget to celebrate this happy occasion.” Also, he used the “slightly happy” emoji to express happiness. This can also mean a closure with happiness. The next strategy is assessing the situation negatively.

A Statement Assessing the Situation Negatively

Unlike assessing the situation positively, the use of assessing the situation negatively is used as a type of response in the congratulations comments. However, it was used only in one of the occasions of getting a new position of becoming a vice principal at a compound of schools. The situation was assessed negatively in different ways (see Comments 65 and 66).

Comment 65:

فعليك إذا أن تستعد للضيوف الذين سوف يزورنك وهم الاستاذ الدكتور السكري الاستاذ الدكتور الضغط

faʿalayka ithan an tastaʿid liDhDhiyuuf allatheena sawfa
 and-on-you then to you-prepare for-the-guests who will
 yazuruunak wahum **al-austath addoktawr assukkari**
 visit-you they **the-professor the-doctor the-diabetes**
al-austath adduktawr aDhDhaghT
the-professor the-doctor pressure

الإستاذ الدكتور القلب أعانك الله على حسن استضافتك لهم

al-austath adduktawr al-qalb aʿanak allah
the-professor the-doctor the-heart help-you Allah
 ʿala husun istiDhafatika lahum
 on well your-hosting for-them

“Then you should be ready to host the guests who will visit you. They are professor diabetes, professor blood pressure, and professor heart disease. May Allah help you to host them well.”

This comment assessed the situation negatively in a sarcastic way by mentioning the types of diseases that may attack the poster in the future (i.e., professors diabetes, blood pressure, and heart disease) because of his new position. The reason for this is that the poster is now responsible for the teachers and students’ disciplines at school whereas, before, he was only responsible for the students in his class.

Comment 66:

مبارك ألف يا صديقي وأعانك الله على هذه المهمة الشاقة وأنت كفوّ لها بإذن الله



mubarak alf ya Sadeeqi wa aṣanak allah ṣala
congratulations thousand you my-friend and help-you Allah on
hathihi al-muhimmah ashshaqqah wa anta kaffuun laha biethnillah
this the-mission laborious and you able for-it if-Allah-will
“A thousand congratulations (you) my friend. May Allah help you on this
laborious mission, and you are qualified for it if Allah wills.”

In this comment, the position was assessed negatively by using the adjective
“laborious.” It describes the mission as something laborious, and that is also preceded by
the prayer for the poster, “may Allah help you for this.” At the end, the commenter used
the emoji of “slightly smiley face” to express happiness and close with a smile. The next
strategy is about the strategy of using a proverb.

Using a Proverb

Some commenters used a proverb as a type of response when they offered
congratulations. Also, it was found that there are more than one proverb employed in the
congratulations comments. The examples in Comments 67, 68, and 69 show the forms of
proverbs used in the responses.

Comment 67:

اللهم لك الحمد ، من سار على الدرب وصلى ، الله يوفقك و يسعد أين ما كنت يا صديقي
allahumma-lak-alhamd **man sara ṣala addarb waSal**
Thanks-to-you-Allah **who continue on the-way arrive**
allah yuaffiqk wa yisṣidk
Allah guide-you and make-you-happy

ainama kunt ya Sadeeqi
wherever you-were you my-friend

“Thanks to Allah. Where there's a will, there's a way. May Allah help you and cheer you wherever you be my friend.”

This congratulations comment was made on the occasion of graduation. The commenter used the proverb “where there’s a will, there’s a way” in his response. In addition, another form of proverb was used (see Comment68).

Comment 68:

مبارك

mubarak

congratulations

لكل مجتهد نصيب



likulli mujtahidin naSeeb

for-every hard-worker portion

“Congratulations. Hard work pays off.”

This comment of congratulation was used on the occasion of getting a new position. She used the proverb “hard work pays off.” The emoji of “cherry blossom” was used as a gift for the poster for getting a new position. Comment 69 is the last example for another proverb.

Comment 69:

تستاهل من جد وجد الله يوفقك

tistahil **man jadda** **wajad** allah yuaffiqk
You-deserve **who worked-hard** **found** Allah help-you

“You deserve it. Who works hard, finds the result. May Allah help you.”

This example was used on the occasion of receiving an award. The commenter used a proverb that means if anyone works hard, he will find the result. The next strategy is expressing apology.

Expressing Apology

Some commenters, for different reasons, needed to express an apology in their congratulations. Therefore, they were used rarely in the comments. Comments 70-73 show the reasons for an apology.

Comment 70:

ماشاء الله تبارك الرحمن

mashaallah tabaraka arrahman

as-Allah-will bless Allah

الله يجعلها من الصالحات المصلحات

allah yijʕalha min aSSalihah al-muslihat

Allah make-her from virtuous-women the- guider of virtuous-women

ورزقك الله برها وشكرت الواهب على ما رزقك

wa razaqak allah birraha wa shakart

and give Allah good-deeds and you-thank

al-wahib ʕala ma razaqak

the-giver on what he-gave

ويجعلها من مواليد السعادة والهناء عليكم

wa yijʕalha min mawalid assaʕadah wa al-hanaa ʕalaykum

and make-her from newborns happiness and the-happiness on-you

والعذر يا ابو (اسم الابنة) من زمان مادخلت الفيس ولا دريت عن هالخبر

walʕuthur ya abu (ism alebnah) min zaman ma

and-the apology you father-of (name of the daughter) from along-time not

dakhalt al-face wala darayt ʕan halakhbar

entered the-Facebook and-not knew about this-news

“As Allah wills. Allah blesses. May Allah make her one of the virtuous women who guide. May you be granted her good deeds, and may you thank the giver. May Allah make her among the newborns of happiness and cheer you. I apologize to (you) father of (name of the daughter). I have not entered Facebook for a long time, and I did not know about this news.”

This congratulation was used on the occasion of the birth of a baby. The commenter expressed an apology because he had not entered Facebook for a long time. He also mentioned that he did not know about the news.

Comment 71:

الف الف مليون مبروك اخي (اسم الشخص) وعقبال الدكتوراه

alf alf malyuun mabruuk akhi (ism ashshakhS)

thousand thousand million congratulations my-brother (name of the person)

wa ʕugbal adduktawrah

and wish the-doctorate

واللع نفخر بشخص مثلك ربي يوففك في دنياك وأخرتك

wallah nafkhar bishakhS mithlak rabbi yuaffiqk fi dunyak
swear we-pride by-someone like-you my-god help-you in your-life
wa akhirtak
and hereafter

واعذر عن تاخري في التهنية

wa aṣtathir ṣan taakhhuri fi attahniah
and i-apologize about my-lateness in congratulation

“A thousand, thousand, million congratulations brother (name of the person), and I wish you get the Ph.D. in the near future. I swear we take pride in a person like you. May Allah help you here and hereafter. I apologize for being late in offering congratulations.”

Comment 71 is a comment on the occasion of graduation. The commenter apologized for being late in offering his congratulations. Comments 72 and 73 were used on the event of getting married.

Comment 72:

الف مبروك يا شباب ونرجو منكم العذر لظرفي الخاص

alf mabruuk ya shabab wa narju minkum al-ṣuthur
thousand congratulations you guys and hope from-you the-apology
liDarfi al-khaS
for-my-condition the-special

“A thousand congratulations (you) guys. Please, I hope you excuse me for my personal circumstances.”

This comment was on a picture where the groom and his brother, who was also a groom, were tagged by a friend at their wedding. The commenter offered his congratulations and apologized because he could not attend the wedding for personal circumstances.

Comment 73:

الف مبروك،، الله يجمع بينكم على خير ،، انا اعتذر لأنى منى فى السعودية

alf mabruuk allah yijma᠙ baynkum ᠙ala khair

thousand congratulations Allah group between-you on well

ana a᠙tathir lanni mani fi assu᠙uudiyyah

i apologize because not in Saudi Arabia

“A thousand congratulations. May Allah group you well. I apologize because I am not in Saudi Arabia.”

This congratulation comment was on an invitation to attend a wedding. The commenter apologized because he is not in the country to attend the wedding. The next strategy is expressing longing.

An Expression of Longing

Another type of response is expressing longing in offering congratulations. It was used for events such as graduation by commenters who are waiting for the person in the home country or the place of work, especially for people who are sent by their

organizations to study abroad. Comments 74 and 75 show the use of an expression of longing.

Comment 74:

ألف مبروووك د. (اسم الشخص) وتستاهل كل خير ونحن في شوق لعودة وتشريف كليتك

alf mabruuuuk d. (ism ashshakhS) wa tistahil kul khair
thousand congratulations Dr. (name of the person) and you-deserve all blessings
wa nahnu fi shawq liƿawdatik wa tashreef kulliyatik
and we in longing for-your-coming back and honoring your-college

“A thousand congratulations Dr. (name of the person), and you deserve all blessings. Also, we are longing for your coming back and honoring your college.”

This congratulation was made on the occasion of someone passing a Ph.D. thesis defense. The commenter expressed longing by mentioning that he is “longing for his (the poster’s) coming back and honoring his college.”

Comment 75:

الف الف مبروك دكتور (اسم الشخص).. و جامعة (اسم الجامعة) و منسوبوها بالاشواق لانظامك

alf alf mabruuk doctur (ism ashshakhS) wa **jamiƿat**
thousand thousand congratulations doctor (name of the person) and **university**
(ism aljamiƿah) wa mansuubuha bilashshwaqi linDhimank
(name of the university) and its-staff with-longing for-your-joining

لهم تستاهل حبيينا

lahum tistahil habeebna
to-them you-deserve our-beloved

“A thousand thousand congratulations doctor (name of the person) and the University of (name of the university) and its staff are longing to see you join them. You deserve it (you) our beloved.”

This congratulations comment was used on the event of someone passing the Ph.D. defense. The commenter expressed longing by mentioning that the university and faculty members are longing to see him join them. The next strategy is requesting information.

Requesting Information

A few commenters requested specific information related to the events. It was used only in the event of the birth of a baby or passing a Ph.D. defense, which means that the use is very rare (see Comments 76 and 77).

Comment 76:

بالمبارك إن شاء الله

bilimbarak inshaallah

congratulations if-Allah-will

نبي نعرف عاد معنى الاسم



nabi niʕrif ʕad maʕna al-ism

we-want we-know also meaning the-name

“Congratulations if Allah wills, and we would like to know the meaning of the name.”

This example was used on the occasion of birth of a baby. The poster mentioned the name of his newborn in the post. Therefore, the commenter asked about the meaning of the name. He also used the emoji of “slightly smiling face” to soften the request.

Comment 77:

الف مبروك ابو (اسم الابنة) و جعلها الله لك عوناً على الطاعة. هل هذه تعتبر اخر مرحلة فى الدكتوراه

alf	mabruuk	abu (ism alebnah)
thousand	congratulations	father-of (name of the daughter)
wa	jaʕalah	allah lak
and	make-it	Allah for-you
ʕawnan	ʕala	Taʕateh
helpful	on	his-worship
fi	adduktawrah	is this considered last step
in	the-doctorate	

عندكم و الا يتبقى تسليم البحث لمحكمين خارجيين؟

ʕundukum	wa-illa	yatabaqq	tasleem	al-bahth
at-you	or	remain	submit	the-paper
limuhakkimeen	kharijyeen			
for- referees	external			

“A thousand congratulations father of (name of the daughter). May Allah help you to use it for his worship. Is this considered as the last step in the Ph.D. program there or do you still need to submit your research to referee members outside of the department?”

This congratulation was used on the occasion of someone passing the Ph.D. defense. The commenter asked the poster if this step was the last one to get the degree or if he still needs to send the dissertation to referee members outside the department. The next strategy is using exclamation or expressing surprise.

Exclamation/Expression of Surprise

A few commenters also expressed surprise regarding the good news. The following example shows the use of an expression of surprise by using the punctuation of exclamation mark and the word “surprise” (see Comment 78).

Comment 78:

ما شاء الله تخرجت!!.. مفاجأة والله. الف الف مبروك

mashaallah **takharrajt** **mufajaah** **wallah** alf alf

as-Allah-will **you-graduated** **surprise** **swear** thousand thousand

mabruuk

congratulations

“As Allah wills. You graduated!! I swear it is a surprise. A thousand thousand congratulations.”

Comment 78 is a comment on the occasion of graduation. The commenter expressed her surprise by using the exclamation mark and the word “surprise.” The next strategy is thanking the interlocutor.

Thanking the Interlocutor

A few commenters also expressed thanking the poster in their congratulations. Comments 79 and 80 show how and why commenters used this type of strategy in the congratulations comments.

Comment 79:

الله يوفقك يارب وتستاهل كل خير

allah yuaffiqk ya rab wa tistahil kul khair

Allah help-you oh-Allah and you-deserve all blessings

الامانه وليست مجامله يا (اسم الشخص) انت مكانك الادارة تعليم بمنطقة جيزان النضوج فكري والبحث

al-amanah wa laysat mujamalah ya (ism ashshakhS) ant

the-honesty and not courtesy you (name of the person) you

makanak al-edarah tafleem jaizan annuDuuJ fikrak

your-place administration education jaizan maturity your-thinking

wa al-bahth

and the-research

عن اساليب جديده التحفيز المنطقه والنهوض بها الى العالى المستويات ف شكراً لك على تقدمه الابناء

ʕan asaleeb jadeedah attahfeez allmanTiqah wa annuhuDh

about methods new motivation the-region and standing

biha ela al-ʕali al-mustawayat **fashukran lak**

by-it to the-high the-levels **then-thank for-you**

ʕala tqaddimhu al-abnaa

on you-offer the-sons

قبيلتاك

qabeelatK

your-tribe

“May Allah help you, and you deserve all blessings. Honestly and without a compliment (you) (name of the person), your position should be in the educational administration of Jazan region (a region in Saudi Arabia). You are fully mature, thinking and searching for new methods to encourage and develop the region for higher rankings. Thank you for what you offer to the sons of your tribe.”

This congratulation was made on the occasion of getting a new position, vice principal. The commenter thanked the poster for what he offers to the sons of his (the poster’s) tribe. Another example of thanking is by using a religious expression (see Comment 80).

Comment 80:

بططل ماشاءالله وموفق دوم.. وجزاك الله خير على ماتقدمه للمبتعثين

baTTTAl mashaallah wa muaffaq dawm

hero as-Allah-will and good-luck always

wa jazak allah khair

and reward-you Allah welfare

ʃala matugaddimh lilmubtaʃatheen

on what-you-offer for-students-with-scholarship

“(You) a hero. As Allah wills. Good luck. May Allah reward you for what you offer to students studying abroad.”

This comment of congratulation was used on the occasion of publishing a book. This book is a guidelines for Saudi international students in the United States. The commenter thanked the poster for what he offers to students studying abroad by saying “may Allah reward you” which means “thank you.” An offer of help is the next strategy.

Offer of Help

An offer of help was used in congratulations comments as one of the types of responses. However, it was used only one time, on the occasion of the poster getting a new position as vice principal, and the commenter mentioned that he is ready to offer any administrative consultation to the poster (see Comment 81).

Comment 81:

موفق أخ (اسم الشخص) وأظنه أختيار موفق وتحت أمرك في أي استشارة إدارية

muaffaq akh (ism ashshakhS) wa aDhunnuh ikhtyar muaffaq

good-luck brother (name of the person) and i-think-it choice correct

wa taht amrak fi ay istisharah idaryyah

and under your-order in any consultation administrative

“Good luck brother (name of the person). I think it is a good choice. I am ready for any administrative consultation.”

A Prediction Regarding the Person’s Future

A prediction regarding the person’s future was used only one time. It was used on the occasion of passing a Master’s thesis defense. The commenter expected that the person will reach higher positions in the future (see Comment 82).

Comment 82:

(اسم الشخص)، ارى فيك الرجل الطموح، ويأذن الله ستصل اعلى المناصب العليا. ألف مبروك لك

(ism ashshakhS) ara feek arrajul aTTamuuh

(name of the person) see in-you the-man ambitious

wa biethnillah

and if-Allah-will

sataSil

afla

al-manaSib

al-ʿulya

you-will-reach

higher

the-positions

the-higher

alf

mabruuk

lak

thousand

congratulations

to-you

ولعائلتك هذا النجاح، واتمنى لك المزيد من التفوق

Wa liʿaelatik

hatha annajah

wa atamanna

lak

and for-your-family

this success

and i-wish

for-you

al-mazeed

min

attafawwuq

the- more

from

excellence

“(name of the person), I see in you are an ambitious man. You will reach the highest positions if Allah wills. A thousand congratulations to you and your family members for this success. I wish you more success.”

Expression of Affection

Expressing affection verbally was used only one time in one comment. In Comment 84, it seems that the commenter had been a student of the poster. At the end of the comment, the commenter mentioned that he wrote this comment because he loves the poster (see Comment 83).

Comment 83:

الف الف الف مبروك استاذي العزيز بصراحه مدرسة (اسم المدرسة) فقد ركن من اركانها وفقدت المرابي

alf alf alf mabruuk austathi alfazeez biSarahah
thousand thousand thousand congratulations my-teacher the-dear frankly
madrasat (ism almadrasah) faqadat rukun min
school (name of the school) it-lost pillar from
arkaniha wa faqadat al-murabbi
its-pillars and it-lost the-teacher

الفاضل وهو كل من درسه تحت يده وهو كل من عرفه وهو كل من جلس معه لا ينصرف من عنده إلا

al-faDil wa huwa kul man darrasah
al-virtuous and he all who taught-him
tahat yadeh wa huwa kul
under his-hand and he all
man farafah wa huwa kul man jalasa mafah
who knew-him and he all who sat with-him
la yanSarif min indh illa
not leave from at-him but

متبسما اعانك الله يا شيخ يا من نسل الشيوخ كم انا فخور بانى درست تحت يدك في الابتدائية كم انا فخور

mubtasiman afanaka allah ya shaykh ya
smiling help-you Allah you sheikh you
min nasl ashshiyuukh
from descendant the-sheikhs

kam ana fakhuur bianni darast tahat yadik
 how i proud because-i i-studied under your-hand
 fi al-ebtidaeyyah kam ana fakhuur
 in the-elementary how i proud

بمعرفةك ابا (اسم الابن) تقبل مروري استاذي الغالي (اسم الشخص) تقبل ماكتبته لك بما اني مهما كتبت لن

bimaʕrifatik aba (ism alebn) taqabbal muruury ustathi
 by-knowing-you father (name of the son) accept my-passing my-teacher
 al-ghali (ism ashshakhS) taqabbal ma katabtuh
 the-dear (name of the person) accept what i-wrote-it

lak bima anni mahma katabt lan
 for-you but i whatever i-wrot will-not

او فيك حقاك لني بصراحه احببتك جدا كبير في الله وشكراً

awfeek haqqak **lianni biSarahah ahbabtuka**
 i-meet your-position **because-i frankly i-love-you**

hubban kabeer fillah wa shukran
love big in-Allah and thank-you

“A thousand, thousand, thousand, congratulations my dear teacher. Frankly,
 (name of the school) school missed one of its basic pillars and the virtuous teacher.
 Everyone you taught, knew you, or sat with you, did not depart from you but smiling.
 May Allah help you (sheikh) son of sheikh’s descendants. I am very much proud that you
 taught me at the elementary school. I am very much proud of knowing you father of
 (name of the son). Accept my comment on your Facebook page my dear teacher (name of

the person). Accept what I wrote for you since whatever I write I will not fulfill your right because I frankly loved you too much in Allah. Thank you.”

Despite finding various types of responses in the congratulations comments, these types of responses differed in frequency, not only among the types of responses in general but also across the different types of occasions. Therefore, the next section will quantitatively discuss the results in terms of similarities and differences in using these responses.

Quantitative Analysis

In this section, the frequency of using the verbal and nonverbal types of responses, which are called strategies, in the comments of congratulations are shown in six sections. In the first section, the types of interactions on the posts of good news, such as comment, sharing, and types of emoji reactions to the posts, are shown. The second section illustrates the frequency of verbal strategies in general, regardless of the occasion, and then the frequency of these strategies in each event. In the third section, a comparison is made between the use of verbal strategies and frequency across the 10 events: (a) birth of a baby, (b) graduation, (c) passing a Ph.D. thesis defense, (d) receiving an award, (e) publishing a book/a study, (f) getting married, (g) getting a new position, (h) passing exams, (i) getting engaged, and (j) getting a Ph.D. admission. In the fourth section, the frequency of using the verbal compound strategies in general, regardless of the event is shown, along with the frequency of the patterns of the verbal compound strategies in each event. The fifth section contains a comparison between the use and frequency of the verbal compound strategies across the 10 events. In the sixth

section, the frequency of the types of emojis used in the comments of congratulations is shown as well as a categorization of their functions that were found in the qualitative analysis. In addition, the test of proportion was used to go beyond the descriptive analysis (e.g., inferential analysis) to identify whether or not the differences are statistically significant in terms of the frequency of use. In addition, the chi-square test was applied to identify whether or not the association between the use of strategies and events are statistically significant.

The Types of Interactions on Posts of Good News on Facebook

This section shows the types of interactions that were offered on the posts of good news, such as comment, sharing, and types of emoji reactions to the posts. Also, it shows the frequency of these types in order to identify the preferences of the types of interactions in this type of speech act.

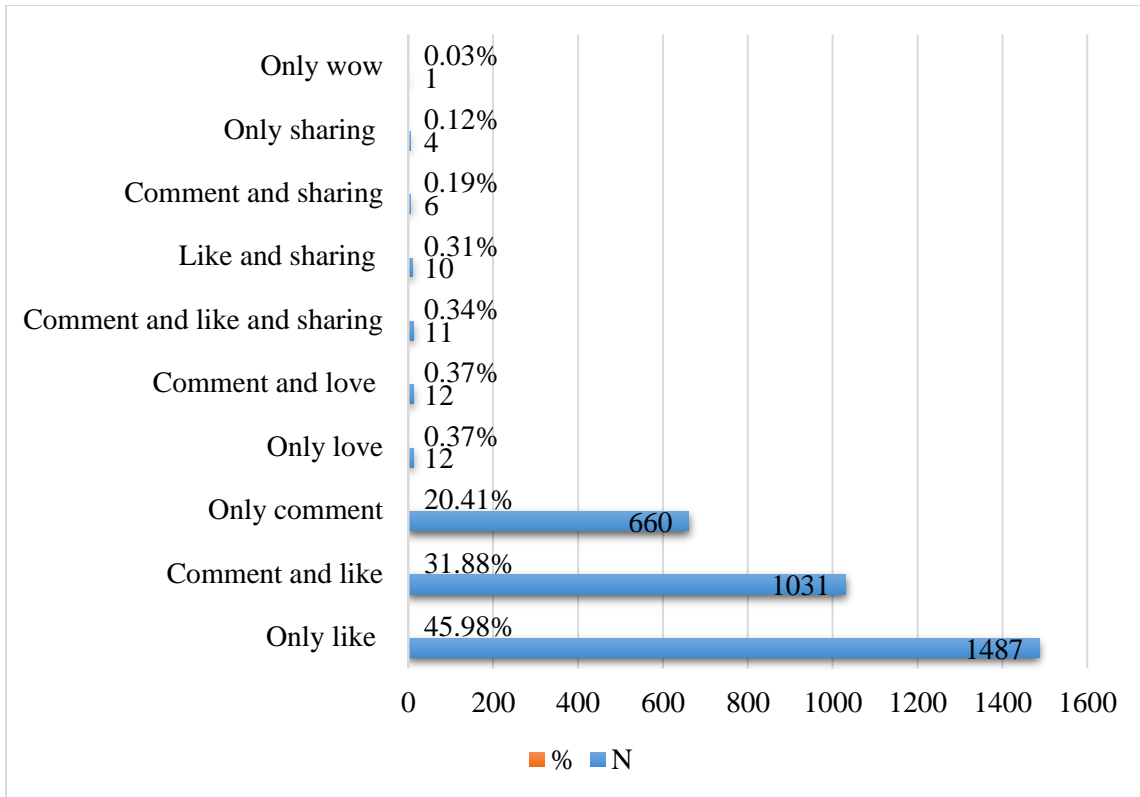


Figure 5: The frequency of types of interactions on posts of good news on Facebook

Figure 5 shows the types of interactions of Saudi Facebook users on the good news status update. Ten types of interactions on the news were found; however, they differed in frequency. Using comments are considered verbal strategies/types of responses on congratulations. Sharing and using the emoji reactions to the posts, such as like, love, and wow are nonverbal strategies/types of responses on congratulations.

According to Figure 5, using only like as an emoji reaction to the posts was the most frequent interaction (45.98%). The second largest number of frequency use was in the interaction of using “comment and like” (31.88%). The difference between the two types of interactions was 14.01%, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 50.330$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0001$). However, using “only comment” was the third frequent type of interaction

(20.41%). This type of interaction differs from the interaction of “comment and like” (11.47%), which is also statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 26.596$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0001$). Finally, seven types of interactions were employed; however, the frequency of use is very small (less than 1%). For instance, the use of the “love” emoji alone or using “comment with the emoji of love” were equal in frequency (0.37%). Comment with like and sharing was used 0.34%, followed by 0.31% for using like with sharing. Also, using comment with sharing was used 0.19%, followed by using sharing only (0.12%). Finally, the “wow” emoji was used only one time (0.03%).

The Frequency of Verbal Strategies of Congratulations

This section shows the frequency of verbal strategies. Figure 6 shows the frequency of the 23 strategies that were used in all the events and identifies whether or not the differences in frequency are significant, based on the test of proportion. Figures 7-16 show the use of strategies and frequency in each event.

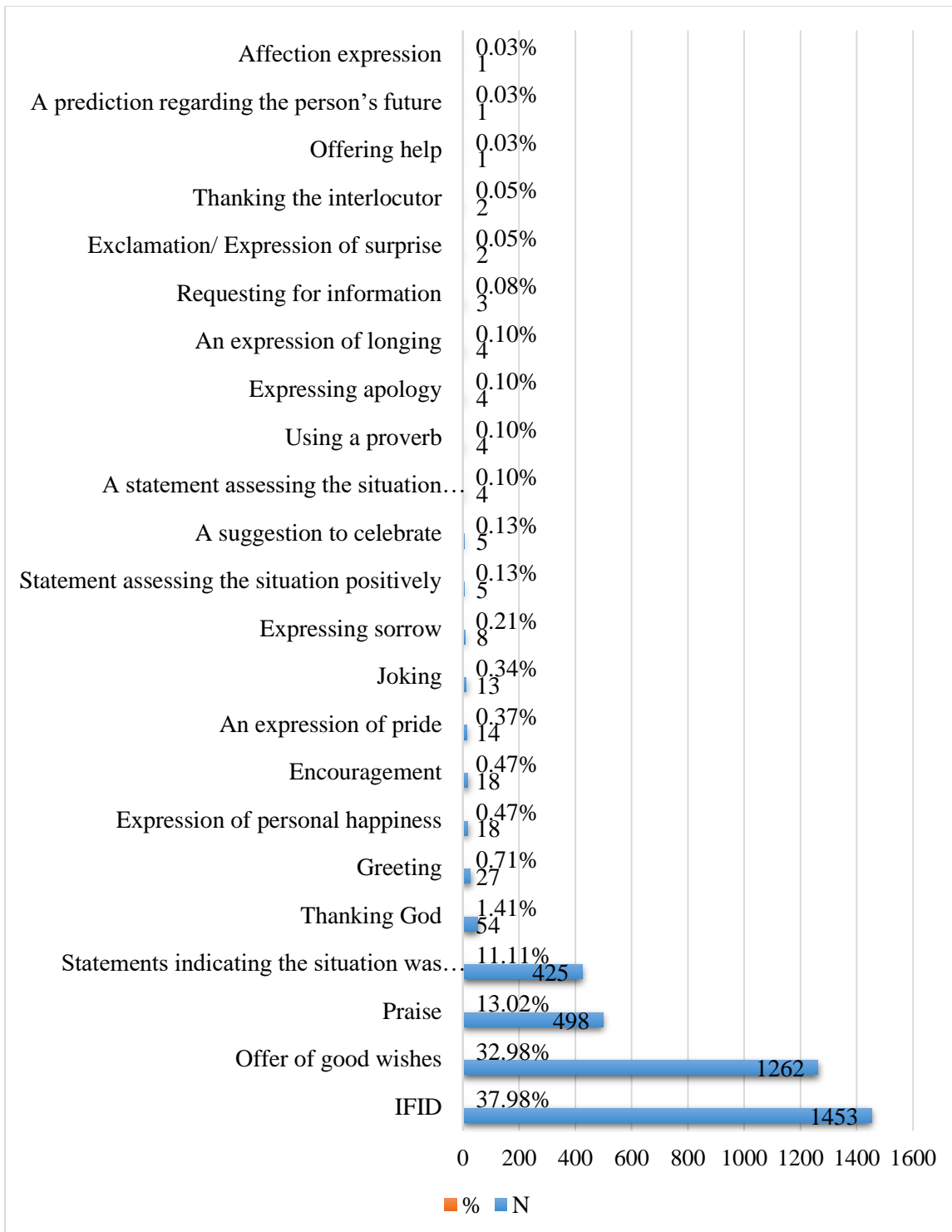


Figure 6: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations of Saudi Facebook users.

Figure 6 shows the frequency and percentages of 23 types of verbal responses found in the congratulations comments of Saudi Facebook users that were used 3,826 times. It is obvious that the “IFID” (congratulations) was the most frequent strategy used (37.98%) followed by the strategy of “offer of good wishes” (32.98%). The difference between these two strategies is only (5%). However, it is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.357$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0067$). The third frequent strategy, “praise,” (13.02%) was followed by the strategy of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (11.11%), with a very slight difference (1.91%) between them, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.783$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.3761$). The strategy of “Thanking God” was used in the congratulations comments, (1.41%). For the other types of responses, 18 strategies were found to be used in less than 1% of the comments. The differences of frequency in the use of these types of responses were not only on the level of expressions in general but also on the level of the event itself in particular. Therefore, Figures 7-16 show the type of strategy and frequency in each event.

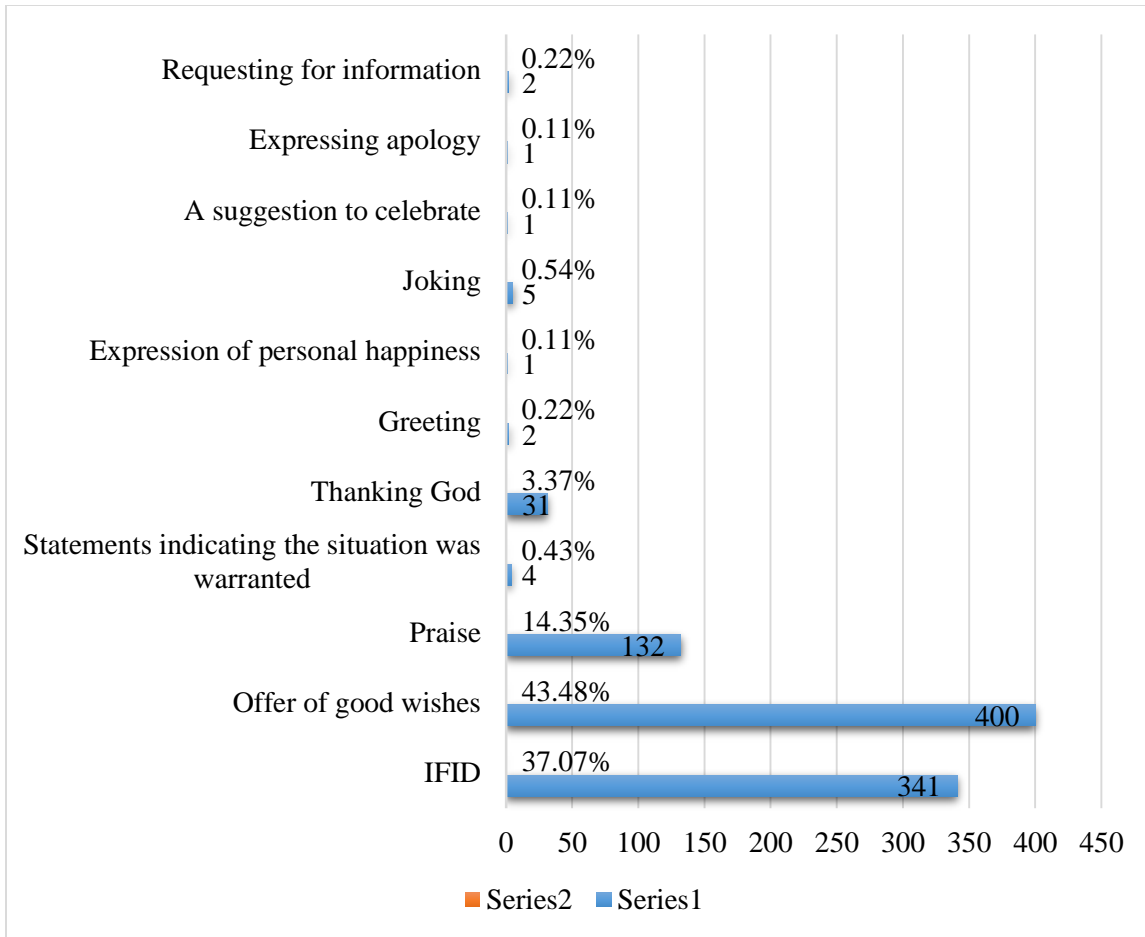


Figure 7: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of the birth of a baby.

Figure 7 shows the types of responses that were used in the event of the birth of a baby and the frequency of use number for each strategy. Eleven strategies were found for this occasion. According to Figure 7, the strategy of “offer of good wishes” was the most frequent (43.48%), followed by the “IFID” strategy (37.07%) in this event. There is only a difference of 6.41% between the frequencies of the two strategies. However, the difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.134$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0767$). The “praise” strategy was used 14.35% of the time followed by “thanking God” (3.37%). There was a 10.98% difference between these two strategies, which is also not significant ($\chi^2 =$

2.796, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0945$). The remaining seven strategies had a very low frequency of use that was less than 1%. Figure 8 shows the frequency of verbal strategies in the event of graduation.

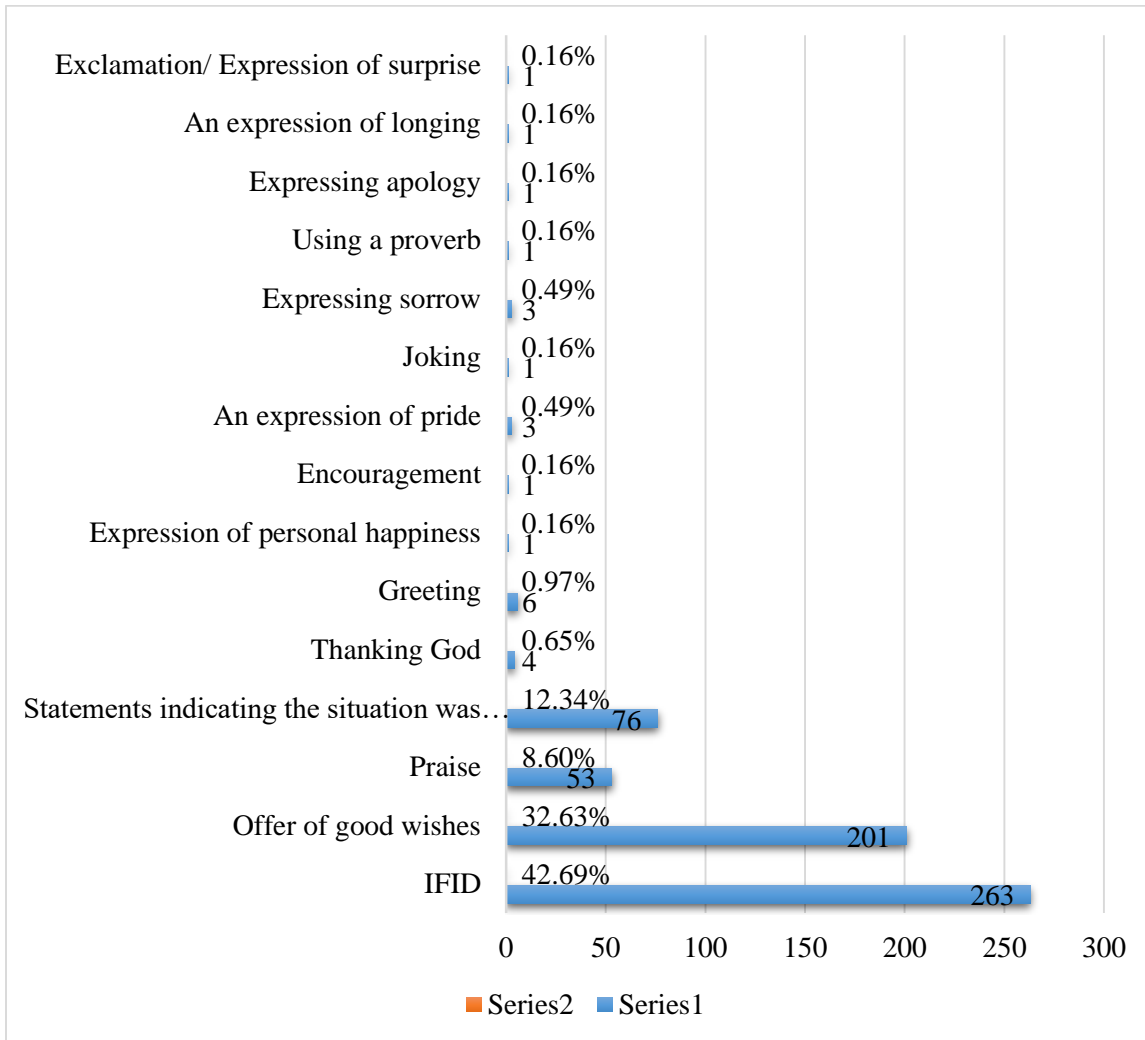


Figure 8: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of graduation

As shown in Figure 8, there were 15 strategies used in the event of graduation; however, the “IFID” (congratulations) was the most frequently used strategy (42.69%). The second most frequently used strategy was “offer of good wishes” (32.63%). The difference in frequency of use between the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes”

was 10.06% and it is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.867$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0274$). The strategy of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” was used 12.34%, followed by the “praise” response of 8.60%, which indicates only a 3.74% difference between them. This difference is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.450$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.5025$). The 11 strategies were used less than 1% of the time. Figure 9 shows the frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of passing a Ph.D. or MA thesis defense.

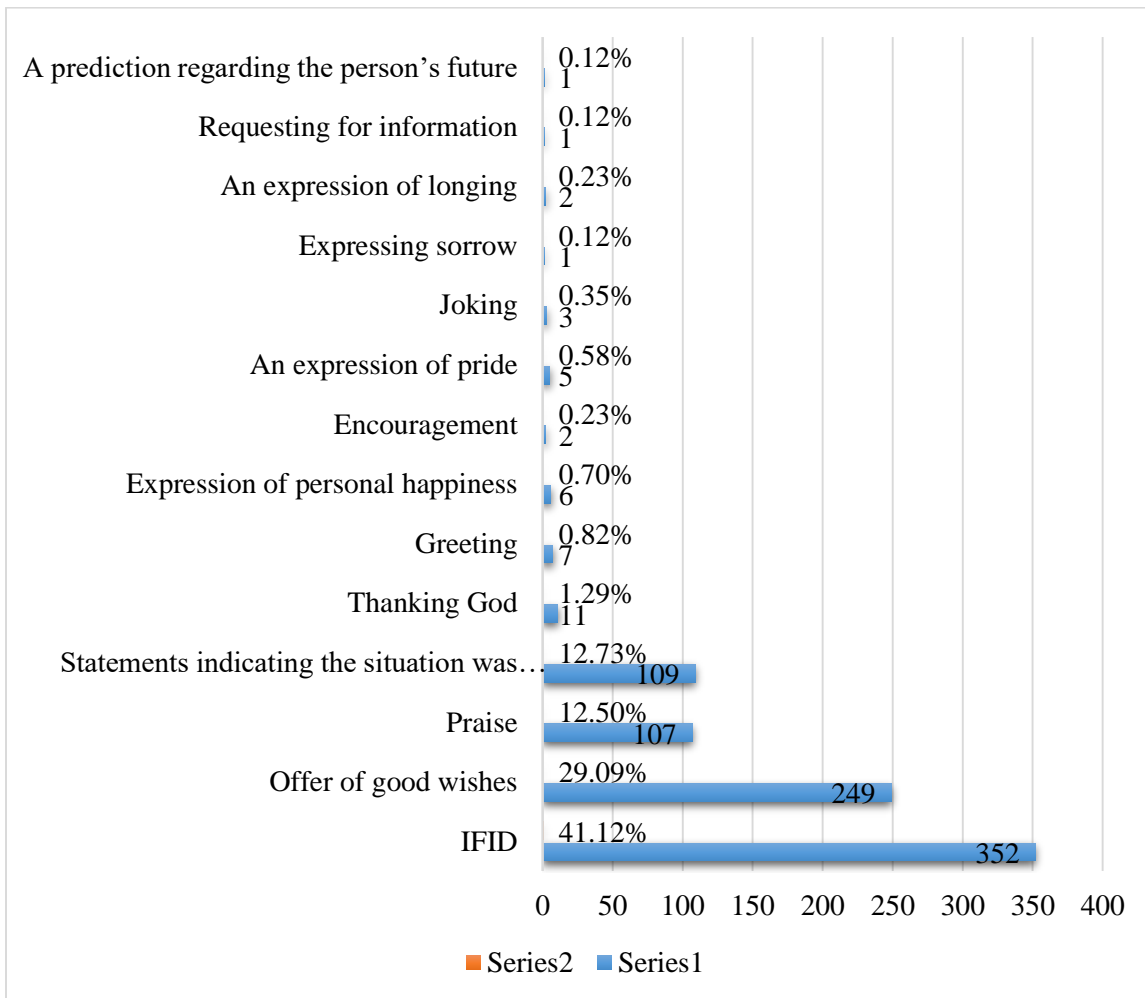


Figure 9: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of passing a Ph.D. or MA defense.

Figure 9 shows 14 types of responses that were used in the event of passing the doctorate or Master's thesis defense. The "IFID" (congratulations) was also used most frequently (41.12%) in this event. It is followed by the strategy of "offer of good wishes" (29.09%). The difference between these two highly used strategies is 12.03%, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 9.130$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0025$). There was no large difference between the usage of the third and fourth most frequently used strategies. And they are almost the same in frequency. For instance, "statements indicating the situation was warranted" was used 12.73% of the time, and "praise" was used 12.50%. Therefore, the difference between the two was only 0.23%, and it is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.003$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9595$). The "thanking God" strategy was used 1.29% of the time. The other nine strategies showed no observable use of frequency. Figure 10 represents the frequency of verbal strategies of congratulation in the event of receiving an award.

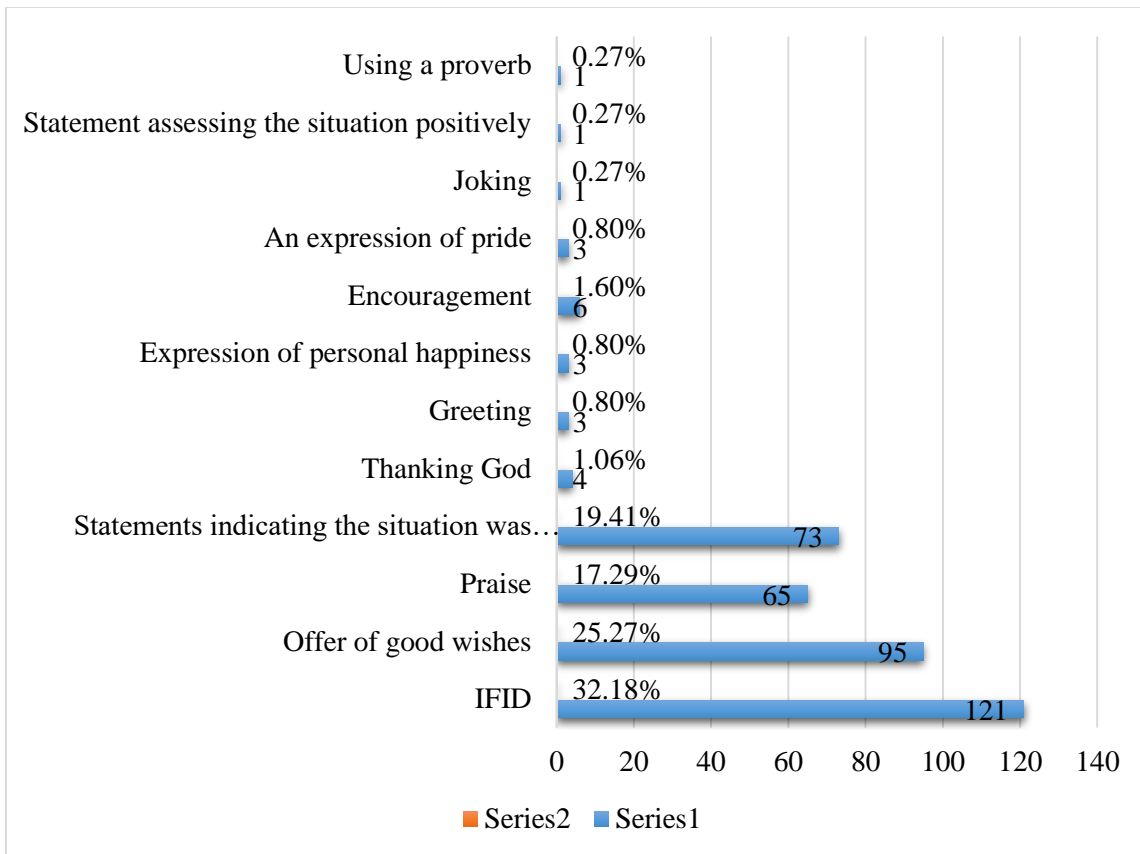


Figure 10: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of receiving an award.

According to Figure 10, Saudi Facebook users used 12 types of strategies. The following strategies are the most frequent strategies used in the event of receiving an award such as “statements assessing the situation was warranted,” “praise,” “offer of good wishes,” and “IFID” (congratulations). However, they differed in frequency as shown in Figure 10. For example, the “IFID” was the most frequent response type (32.18%) and the strategy of “offer of good wishes” was used 25.27% of the time, with a difference between them of 6.91%, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.225, df = 1, p = 0.2684$). “Statements assessing the situation was warranted” (19.41%) was followed by “praise” (17.29%). However, the difference between them was only 2.12%, and that is

not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.102$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7493$). The strategy of “thanking God” was used only 1.06% of the time). In contrast, the other seven strategies were used infrequently, less than 1% of the time. Figure 11 describes the frequency of verbal strategies in the event of publishing.

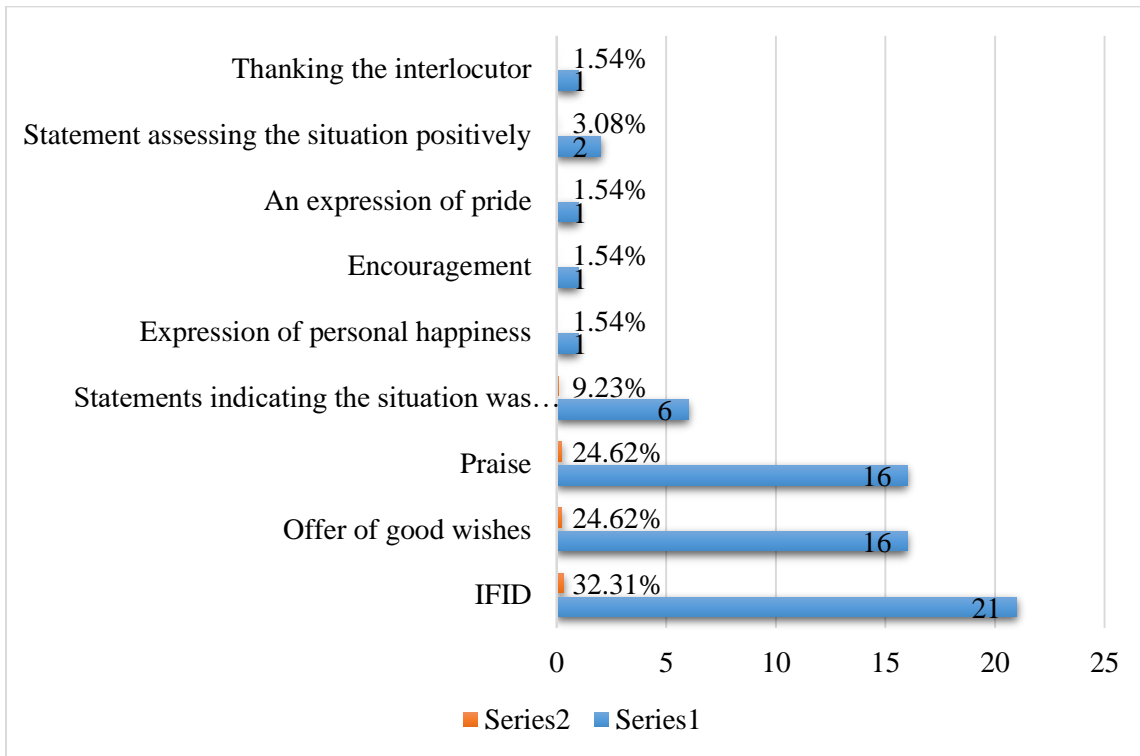


Figure 11: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of publishing

This figure shows nine types of responses used in this event. The “IFID” (congratulations) is the most frequent strategy that was used (32.31%). “Praise” and “offer of good wishes” were used equally in terms of frequency (24.62%). The difference between “offer of good wishes” and the “IFID” is 7.69%, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.254$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.6144$). “Praise” and “offer of good wishes” were followed by the use of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (9.23%) and

“statement assessing the situation positively” (3.08%). The difference between the percentages for the latter two statements was 6.15%, and this difference was not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.070$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7915$). The other four had the lowest percentage of use (1.54%). Figure 12 displays the frequency of verbal strategies in the event of getting married.

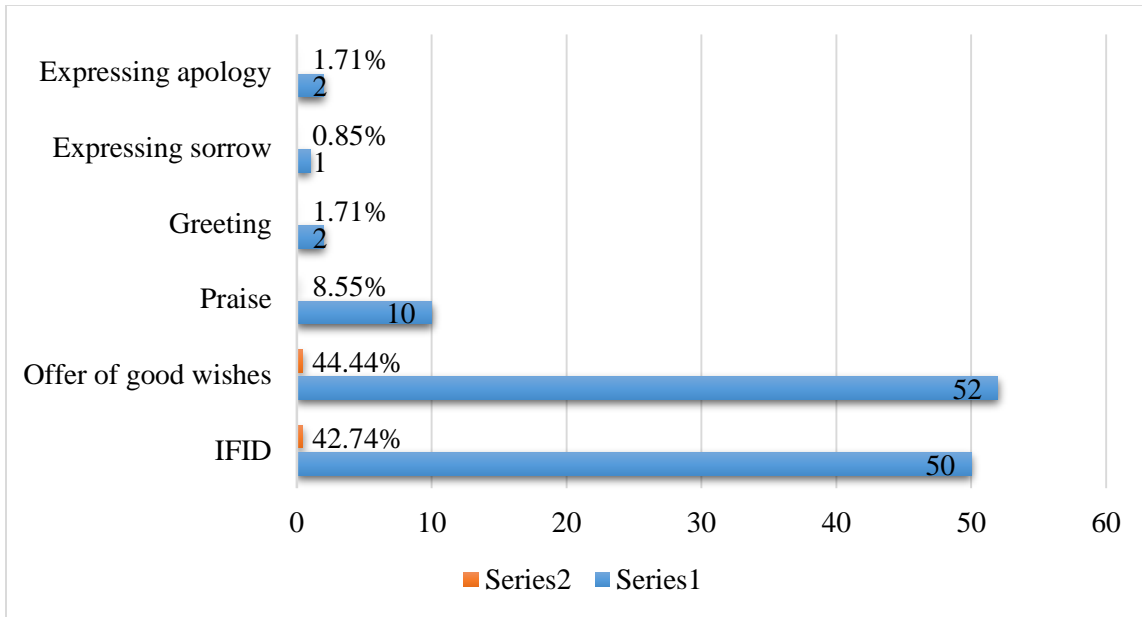


Figure 12: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of getting married.

As shown in Figure 12, six types of responses were found in this event. It is obvious that the two types of responses: the “offer of good wishes” and “IFID” (congratulations) were used more frequently than the other types of responses. Also, the difference between the “offer of good wishes” and “IFID” is (1.7%), which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.030$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.8633$). Moreover, “Offer of good wishes” was used (44.44%) while the “IFID” was used (42.74%). The third frequent strategy was the use of “praise” (8.55%). The other strategies, such as “expressing apology” and “greeting,”

were used equally (1.71%). Finally, the strategy of “expressing sorrow” was used only 0.85%. Figure 13 demonstrates the frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a new position.

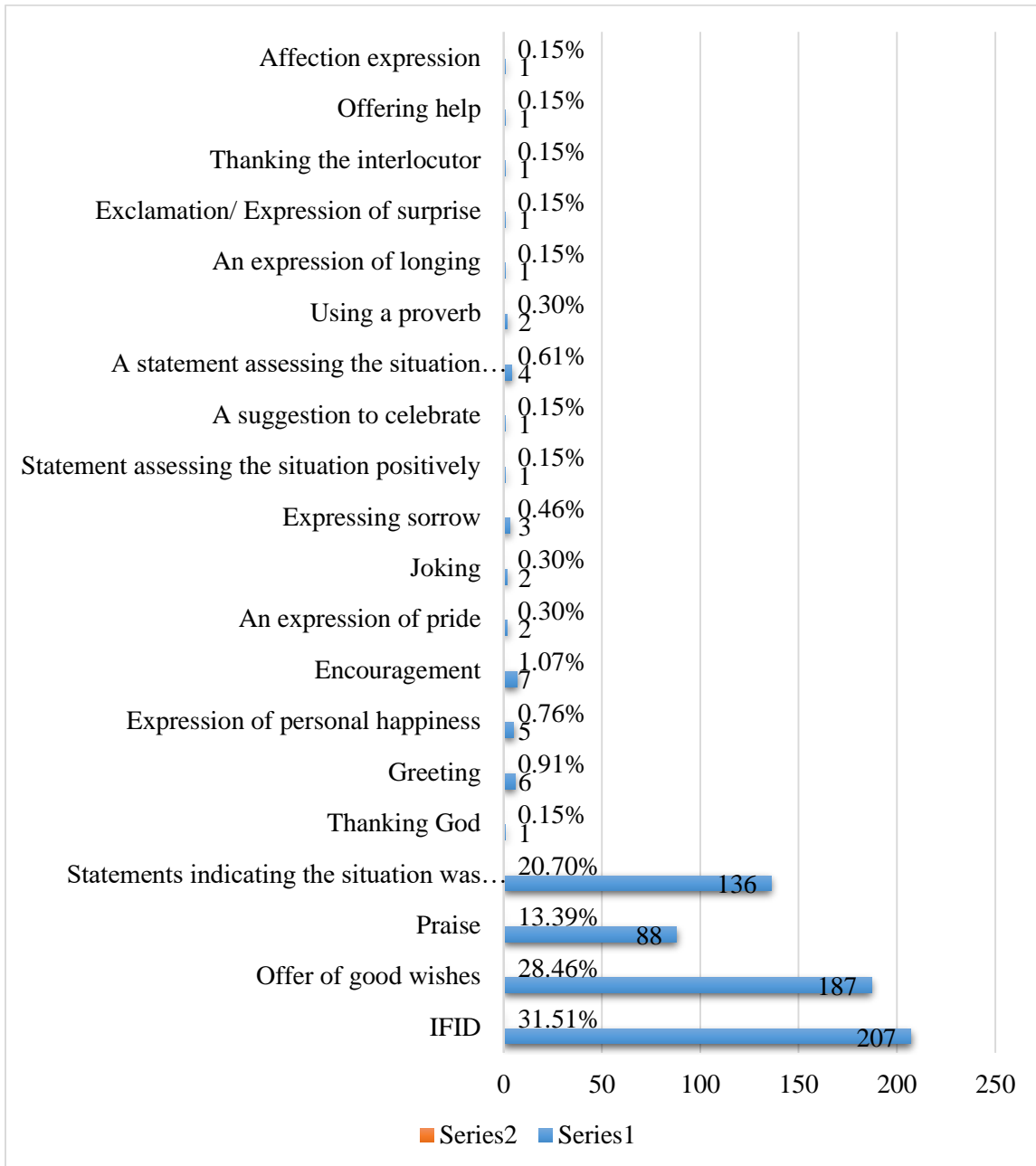


Figure 13: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a new position

Most of the types of responses were employed in this event. The figure shows that the “IFID” (congratulations) was the most frequent strategy (31.51%), followed by the “offer of good wishes” (28.46%). However, the difference between the two strategies was only (3.05%), which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.434$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.5102$). The strategy of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” was used 20.70% of the time. This strategy was followed by the strategy of “praise” (13.39%), and the difference between them was 7.31%. This difference is also not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.940$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.1637$). The strategy of encouragement was used (1.07%). The remaining 15 strategies were used but with less than (1%). Figure 14 shows the frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of passing exams.

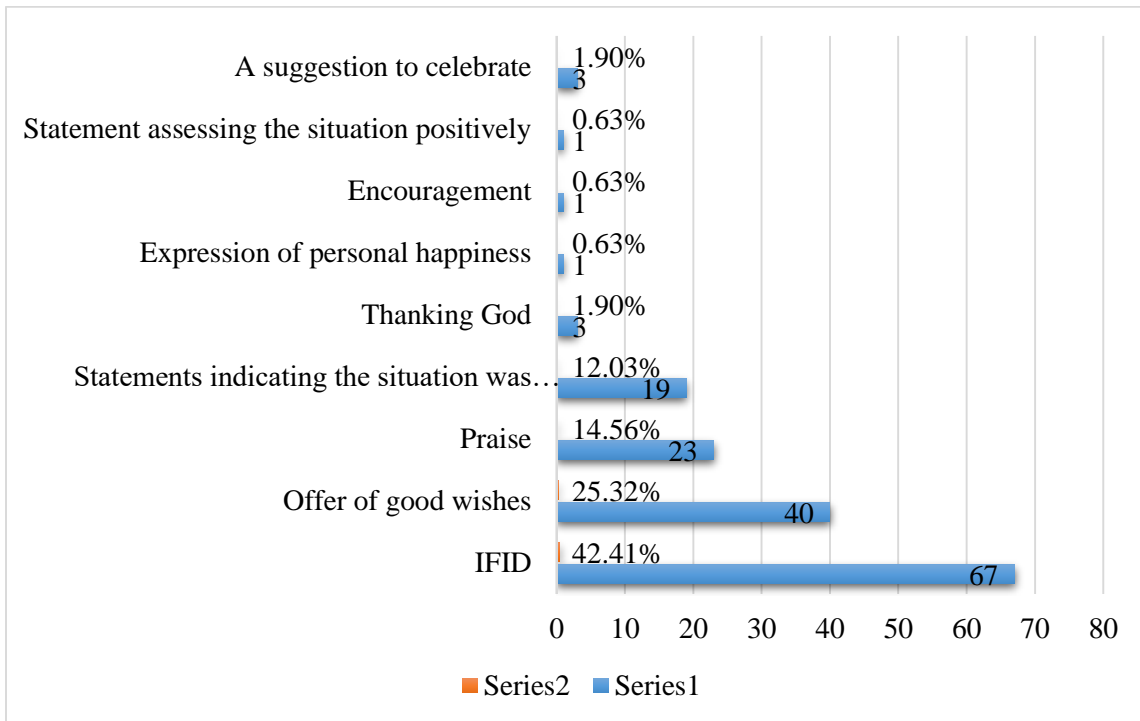


Figure 14: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of passing exams

According to Figure 14, Saudi Facebook users used nine strategies on the occasion of passing exams. The “IFID” (congratulations) was also used more frequently (42.41%) than “offer of good wishes” (25.32%). The difference between the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” is 17.09%. However, the difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.145$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0762$). “Praise” is the third most frequent strategy (14.56%) and was followed by “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (12.03%). The difference between the two strategies is only (2.53%), which is also not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.056$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.8130$). Two strategies were used equally (about 2%): “a suggestion to celebrate” (1.90%) and “thanking God” (1.90%), while the other strategies of “statement assessing the situation positively,” “encouragement,” and “happiness” did not show observable use in terms of frequency (0.63%). Figure 15 refers to the frequency of verbal strategies used in the event of getting engaged.

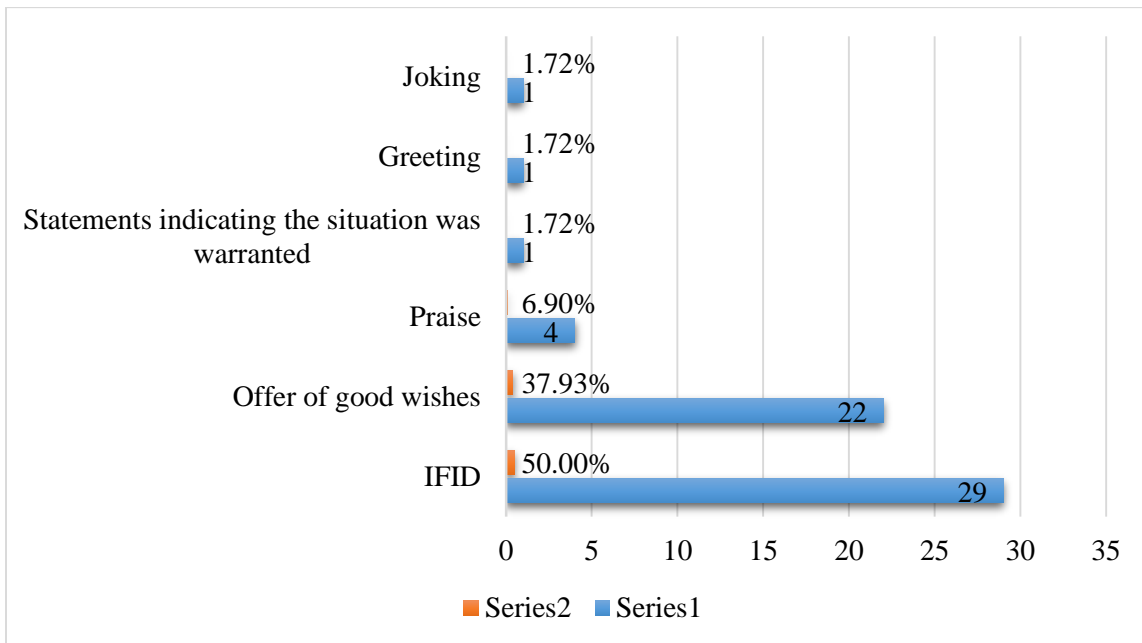


Figure 15: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of getting engaged.

As shown in Figure 15, six types of responses were used in this event. The “IFID” strategy was the most frequent one (50%) followed by “offer of good wishes” (37.93%). The percentage of 12.07% is the difference between these strategies in terms of frequency. However, the difference is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.723$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.3953$). The “praise” strategy was used 6.90% of the time. In contrast, the other types of responses such as “joking,” “greeting,” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” were all equal (1.72%). The difference between the two latter percentages is (5.18). Figure 16 represents the frequency of verbal strategies in the event of getting a Ph.D. Admission.

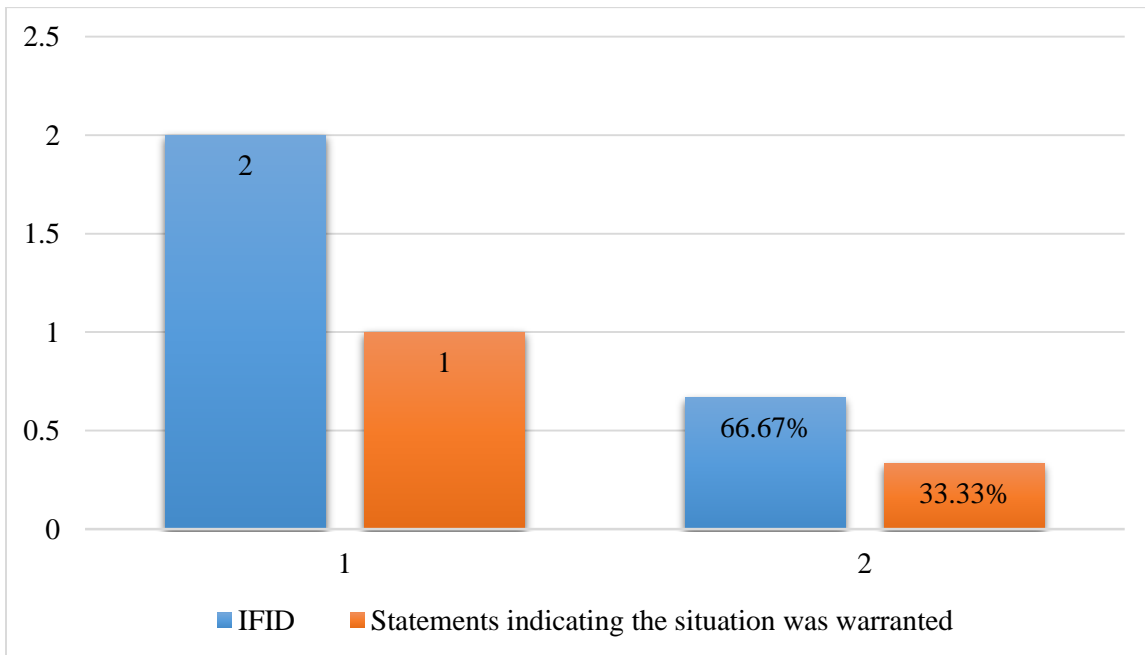


Figure 16: The frequency of verbal strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a Ph.D. admission.

In this event, there were only two congratulations comments. Two types of responses were used: the “IFID” (66.67%) and “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (33.33%).

All the strategies used in the previous events showed differences in frequency in each event, which also reflect differences across the events. Therefore, the next section will show comparisons between the frequencies of these strategies across the different types of events.

Comparing Frequency of Verbal Strategies of Congratulations Across the Events

This section contains a comparison between the use and frequency of verbal strategies across the 10 events in four tables to identify the similarities and differences. Table 7 shows six strategies such as the “IFID” (congratulations), “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” “statements indicating the situation was warranted,” “thanking God,” and “greeting.” Table 8 shows another six strategies, for instance “expression of personal happiness,” “encouragement,” “an expression of pride,” “joking,” “expressing sorrow,” and “statement assessing the situation positively.” Table 9 shows another six strategies, for example “a suggestion to celebrate,” “a statement assessing the situation negatively,” “using a proverb,” “expressing apology,” “an expression of longing,” and “requesting for information.” Table 10 shows the rest of the strategies that include the five types of responses, such as “exclamation/Expression of surprise,” “thanking the interlocutor,” “offering help,” “a prediction regarding the person’s future,” and “affection expression.”

Finally, the Chi-square test was applied here to identify whether or not the association between the use of strategies and events are statistically significant. Table 7

shows a comparison between the first types of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulations across all events, as shown in Figure 17.

Table 7

The First Type of Most Frequent Verbal Strategies of Congratulations across all the Events

The Verbal Strategies of Congratulation	Graduation	Birth of a baby	Passing a Ph.D./M.A. Thesis Defense	Receiving an award	Publishing	Getting Married	Getting a Position	Passing Exams	Getting Engaged	Getting a Ph.D. Admission	N	%
IFID	263	341	352	121	21	50	207	67	29	2	1453	39.07
Offer of good wishes	201	400	249	95	16	52	187	40	22	0	1262	33.93
Praise	53	132	107	65	16	10	88	23	4	0	498	13.39
Statements indicating the situation was warranted	76	4	109	73	6	0	136	19	1	1	425	11.43
Thanking God	4	31	11	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	54	1.45
Greeting	6	2	7	3	0	2	6	0	1	0	27	0.73
Total	603	910	835	361	59	114	625	152	57	3	3719	100

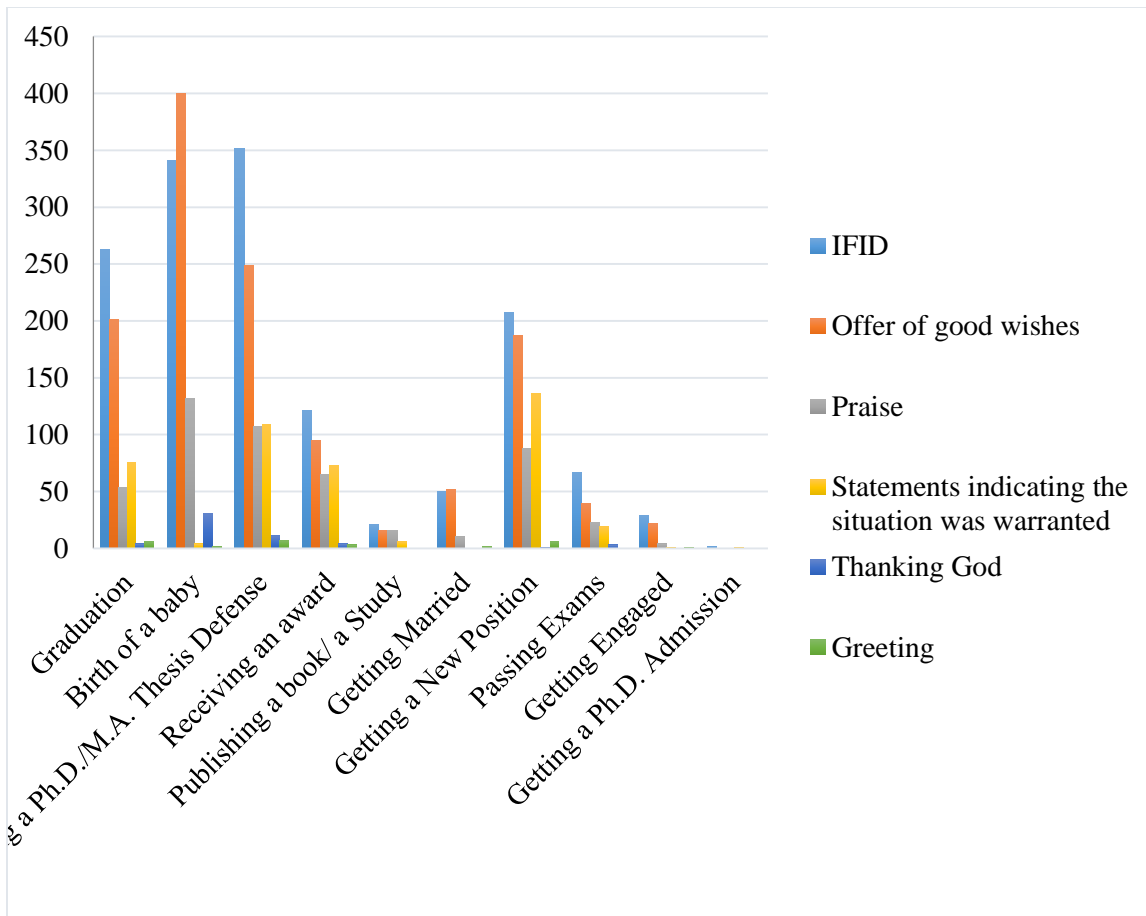


Figure 17: The first type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulations in all the events

Table 7 showed the most frequent types of responses, which were used 3,719 times, to compare them across all 10 events. These strategies are the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” “statements indicating the situation was warranted,” “thanking God,” and “greeting.” According to Figure 17, the use of “offer good wishes” was used the most often in the event of “birth of a baby” (400 times). In addition, it was used less often in the events of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (249 times), graduation (201 times), and getting a new position (187 times). It was also used less (95 times) in the event of receiving an award and still less (52 times) in the marriage event. However, the

same strategy was used less than 50 times in all the rest of the events except that it was not used in the event of getting a Ph.D. admission. For instance, it was used 40 times, in the passing exams event, 22 times in the engagement event, and 16 times in the publishing event.

The event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense has the first largest number of the frequency of the “IFID” (352 times), followed by the event of the birth of a baby (341 times). The second largest number of times the “IFID” was used was in the event of graduation (263 times) followed getting a new position (207 times) and receiving an award (121 times). The third largest number of times the “IFID” was used was in the event of passing exams (67 times), followed by the marriage event (50 times). Use of the “IFID” decreases in the rest of the events to less than 50, such as in the engagement event (29 times), in the publishing event (21 times), and in the Ph.D. admission (2 times).

“Statement assessing the situation was warranted” was used in the event of getting a new position (136 times) followed by the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (109 times). Also, it was used in the event of graduation (76 times), in the event of receiving an award (73 times), and in passing exams (19 times). However, it decreases in the rest of the events to less than 10 times until it was not used at all in the event of marriage. However, it was used in publishing (6 times), in the birth of a baby (4 times), and only one time in the event of engagement and Ph.D. admission. Finally, it was not used in the event of marriage.

The use of “praise” was used often in the event of the birth of a baby (132 times), followed by the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (107 times). In addition, it

was used in the event of getting a new position (88 times), receiving an award (65 times), and graduation (53 times). However, it was used less than 50 times in the rest of the events, such as passing exams (23 times), in publishing (16 times), in marriage (10 times), and in engagement (4 times). In contrast, it was not used in the event of getting the Ph.D. admission.

The event of the birth of a baby has the largest number of the strategy of “thanking God” (31 times) followed by the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (11 times). Also, it was used equally in the event of graduation and receiving an award (4 times) followed by passing exams (3 times), and only one time in getting a new position. However, it was not employed in the other events such as publishing, engagement, marriage, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

The type response of “greeting” is the least used type of response in Figure 17. It was used in the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (7 times) followed by two events: graduation and getting a new position (6 times). Also, it was used (3 times) in the event of receiving an award, followed by the event of birth of a baby and marriage (2 times). Additionally, it was used only one time in engagement whereas it was not used for other events such as publishing, passing exams, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

Table 8 shows the second type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulations in all the events as represented in Figure 18.

The frequency of strategies in Table 8 are less than the types of responses in Figure 17. The total number of frequency is only 76 times for the six strategies: “expression of personal happiness,” “encouragement,” “an expression of pride,”

“joking,” “expressing sorrow,” and “statement assessing the situation positively.” As shown in Figure 18, the strategy of “encouragement” increases in the event of getting a new position (7 times) and then in the event of receiving an award (6 times). Also, it was used least in the following events: passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (2 times) and only one time in graduation, publishing, and passing exams. However, it was not used in the other events, such as the birth of a baby, marriage, engagement, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

Table 8

The Second Type of Most Frequent Verbal Strategies of Congratulation across all the Events

The Verbal Strategies of Congratulation	Graduation	Birth of a baby	Passing a Ph.D./M.A. Thesis Defense	Receiving an award	Publishing	Getting Married	Getting a Position	Passing Exams	Getting Engaged	Getting a Ph.D. Admission	N	%
Expression of personal happiness	1	1	6	3	1	0	5	1	0	0	18	23.68
Encouragement	1	0	2	6	1	0	7	1	0	0	18	23.68
An expression of pride	3	0	5	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	14	18.42
Joking	1	5	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	13	17.11
Expressing sorrow	3	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	8	10.53
Statement assessing the situation positively	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	5	6.58
Total	9	6	17	14	5	1	20	3	1	0	76	100

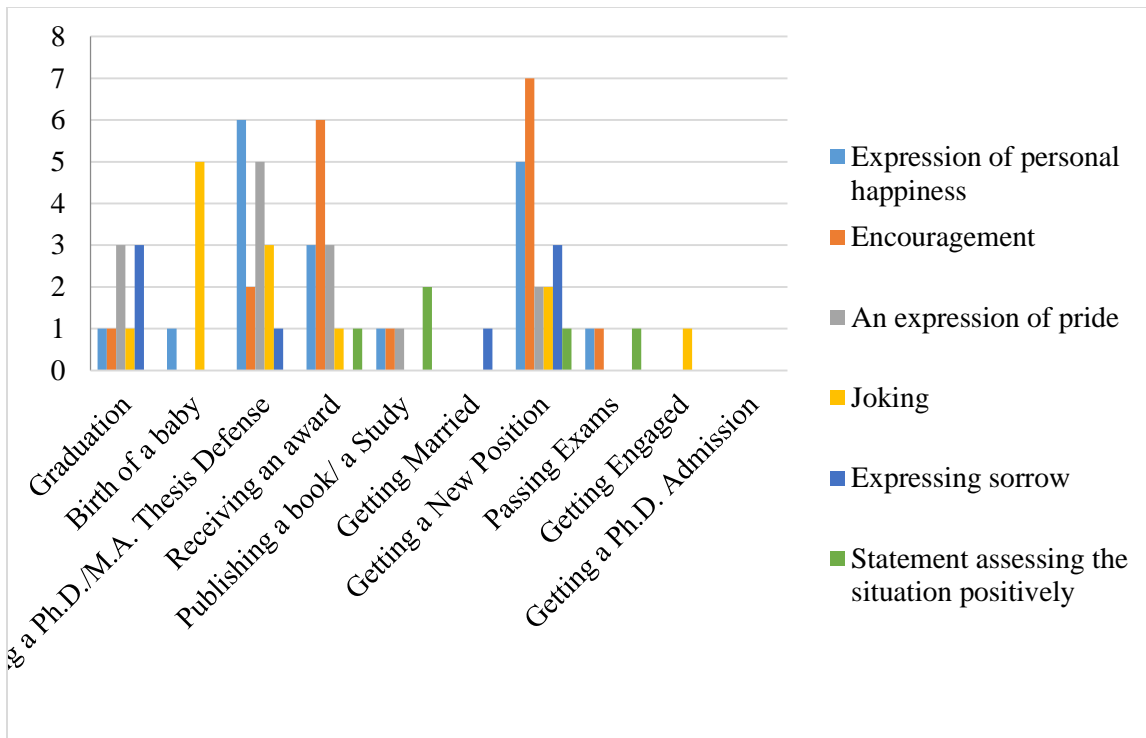


Figure 18: The second type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulation in all the events

The event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense has the largest number of expressions of personal happiness (6 times) followed by getting a new position (5 times) and in receiving an award (3 times). It was used only one time in the rest of the events, for example graduation, the birth of a baby, publishing, and passing exams. In contrast, it was not used in the event of marriage, engagement, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

The expression of pride was used in the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (5 times), and remained stable in the event of receiving an award (3 times) and graduation (3 times). However, its use decreased in the event of getting a new position (2 times) and publishing (1 time). Finally, it was not used in the rest of the events, for instance the birth of a baby, marriage, passing exams, engagement, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

Most of joking type of responses were used in the event of the birth of a baby (5 times), followed by the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (3 times). However, it was used least in the event of a new position (2 times) followed by graduation, receiving an award, and engagement (1 time). It was not used in the other occasions, such as publishing, marriage, passing exams, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

Expressing sorrow was used more in the event of graduation (3 times) and getting a new position (3 times) than in the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense (1 time) and marriage (1 time). In contrast, it was not used in the rest of the events, such as the birth of a baby, receiving an award, publishing, passing exams, engagement, and getting the Ph.D. admission.

Finally, the strategy of “statement assessing the situation positively” was used more in the event of publishing (2 times) than in the events of receiving an award, getting a new position, and passing exams (1 time). However, it was not used in the following events: graduation, the birth of a baby, passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense, marriage, engagement, and getting the Ph.D. admission. Table 9 displays the third type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulation in all events, as shown in Figure 19.

Table 9 shows the frequency of six types of responses:(a) “a suggestion to celebrate,”(b) “a statement assessing the situation negatively,” (c) “using a proverb,” (d) “expressing apology,” (e) “an expression of longing,” and (f) “requesting for information.” They were used only 24 times in all the 10 events. In other words, they were used on specific occasions with a limited number of frequency of use.

As shown in Figure 19, the strategy of “a statement assessing the situation negatively” was used only in the event of getting a new position, that is, being a vice principal (4 times). “A suggestion to celebrate” was used in only three events: passing exams (3 times), the birth of a baby (1 time), and getting a new position (1 time).

Table 9

The Third Type of Most Frequent Verbal Strategies of Congratulations across all the Events

The Verbal Strategies of Congratulation	Graduation	Birth of a baby	Passing a Ph.D./M.A. Thesis Defense	Receiving an award	Publishing	Getting Married	Getting a Position	Passing Exams	Getting Engaged	Getting a Ph.D. Admission	N	%
A suggestion to celebrate	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	5	20.83
A statement assessing the situation negatively	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	16.67
Using a proverb	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	16.67
Expressing apology	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	16.67
An expression of longing	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	16.67
Requesting for information	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	12.50
Total	3	4	3	1	0	2	8	3	0	0	24	100

Regarding the frequency of “expressing apology,” the event of getting married (2 times) is larger than the event of graduation (1 time) and the birth of a baby (1 time). “Using a proverb” was used in the event of getting a new position (2 times) but was used less in the events of graduation and receiving an award, which is only (1 time) in each event.

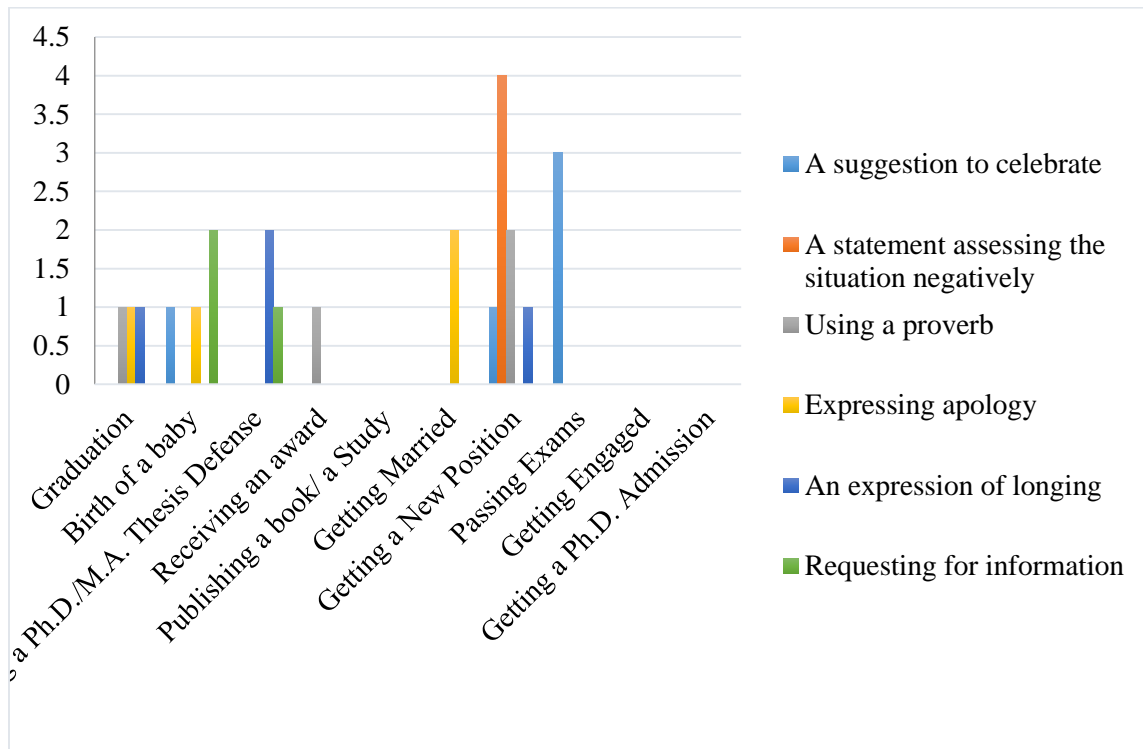


Figure 19: The third type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulations in all the events.

The strategy “expressing longing” was used more frequently in the event of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense (2 times) than the event of graduation and getting a new position (1 time). Finally, the use of the strategy of requesting for information was used more in the event of the birth of a baby (2 times) than in the event of passing a

Ph.D./MA thesis defense (1 time). Table 10 shows the fourth type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulations in all the events, as also shown in Figure 20.

Table 10

The Fourth Type of Most Frequent Verbal Strategies of Congratulation across all the Events

The Verbal Strategies of Congratulation	Graduation	Birth of a baby	Passing a Ph.D./M.A. Thesis Defense	Receiving an award	Publishing	Getting Married	Getting a Position	Passing Exams	Getting Engaged	Getting a Ph.D. Admission	N	%
Exclamation/ Expression of surprise	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	28.57
Thanking the interlocutor	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	28.57
Offering help	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	14.29
A prediction regarding the person's future	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.29
Affection expression	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	14.29
Total	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	7	100

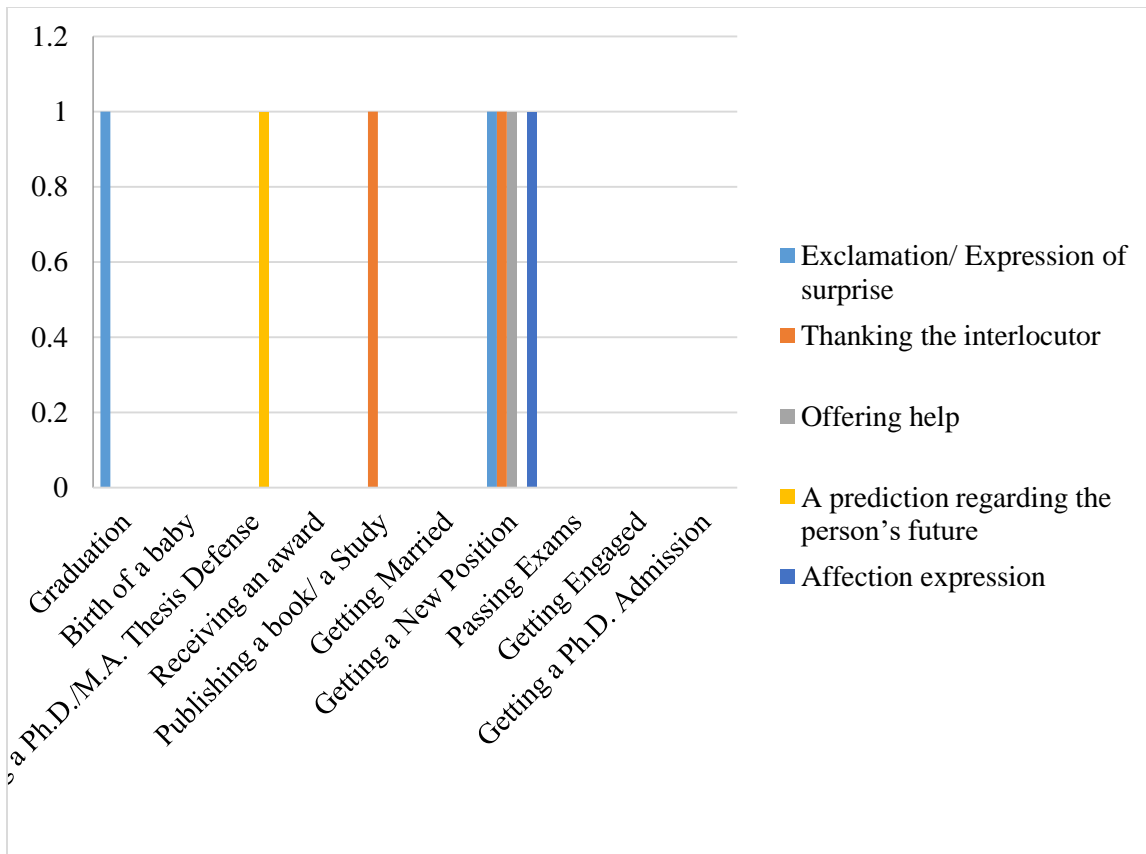


Figure 20: The fourth type of most frequent verbal strategies of congratulations in all the events

As shown in Figure 20, the least used among all the strategies were “a prediction regarding the person’s future,” and “affection expression.” They were used only seven times and in a very limited number of occasions. In other words, the strategies were used only one time in Table 10. The strategy of “exclamation/ expression of surprise” in the event of graduation is equal to the event of getting a new position. Similarly, “thanking the interlocutor” was used in the event of publishing and getting a new position. The strategy of predicting the future of the person was used only in the event of passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense. Finally, the strategies of “offering help” and “affection expression” were used only in the event of getting a new position.

Finally, the Chi-square test was applied to identify the association between the strategies and types of events. The events were categorized into three groups, except the event of getting a Ph.D. admission was excluded because of the insufficient data. The first group included graduation, passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense, and passing exams. The second group consisted of getting a new position, publishing, and receiving an award. The third group contained the birth of a baby, engagement, and marriage. Only four strategies were chosen for the Chi-square test in the first and second group, such as the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted.” The reason was that they had sufficient data for that test, which requires at least five in a cell. In the third group, only three strategies were chosen: the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise,” because the strategy of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” was used less than five times in the events.

In the first group, it was found that the association between graduation, passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense, and passing exams with the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” is not significant ($\chi^2 = 9.630$, $df = 6$, $p = .141$). In the second group, it was also found that the association between getting a new position, publishing, and receiving an award with the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” is not significant ($\chi^2 = 11.427$, $df = 6$, $p = .076$). The same result was also found with the association between the birth of a baby, engagement, and marriage, and the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” ($\chi^2 = 7.965$, $df = 4$, $p = .093$). The chi-square test found no significant association between the groups and strategies. However, it found

statistically significant associations between most of the events in general and the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” ($\chi^2 = 69.043, df = 14, p = .000$).

The Frequency of Verbal Compound Strategies of Congratulations

This section shows the frequency of using the verbal compound strategies. The first pie chart (Figure 21) shows all the patterns and frequency of the verbal compound strategies in all the events and identifies whether the differences in frequency are significant or not by using the test of proportion. The other figures show the use of patterns and frequency in each event. Figure 21 shows the compound verbal strategies of congratulations.

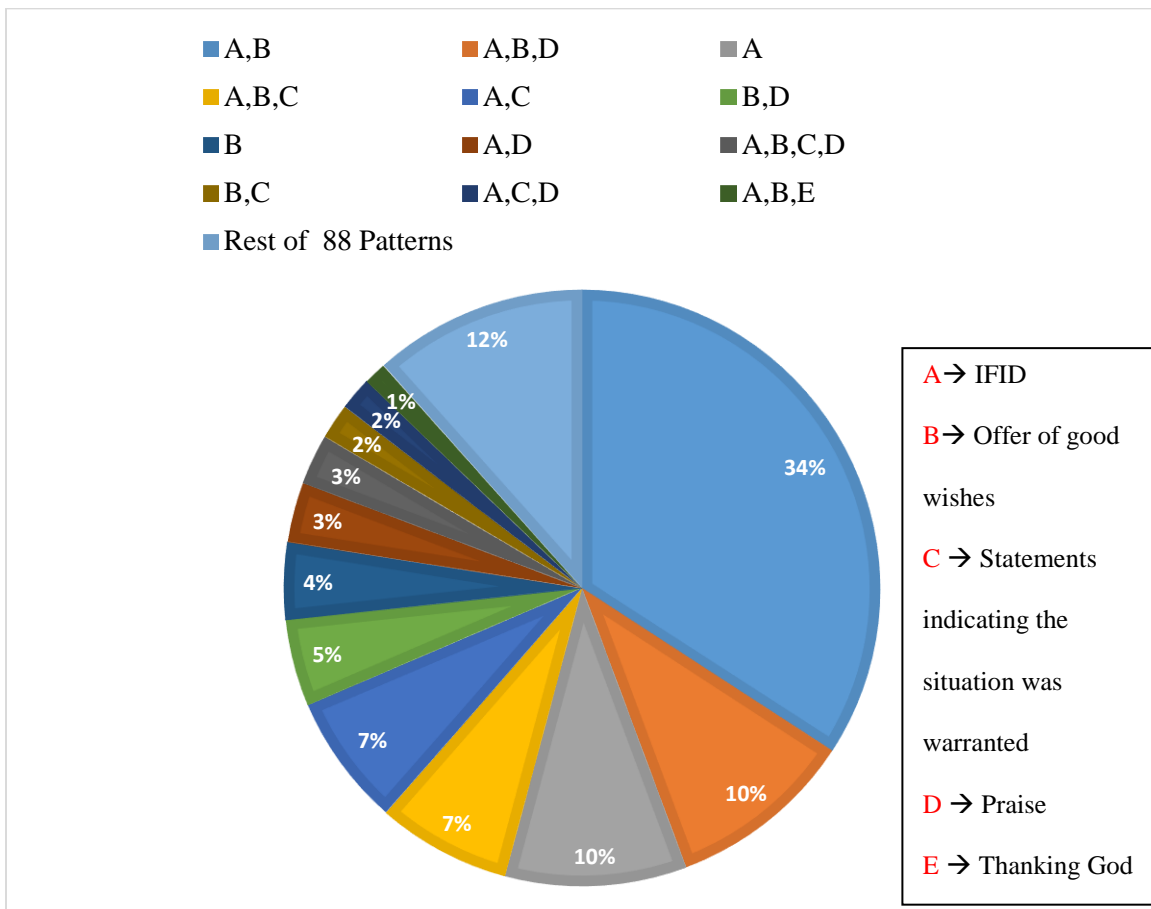


Figure 21: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations

Figure 21 is a summary of 100 patterns of compound strategies that were found in the data and were used 1,717 times in all the events (see Appendix B). However, the majority of them, which are 88 patterns, were used less than 1% of the time, with the exception of 12 patterns that were used more frequently, as shown in Figure 21. It is obvious that the use of the pattern of the “IFID” (congratulations) with “offer of good wishes” (A, B) has the largest frequency of use (34%). The second largest frequency of use was in two different patterns that were used equally in terms of frequency (10%): (A, B, D) and (A). The first pattern refers to the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise,” while the second pattern is the use of only a single strategy, the “IFID.” The difference between the percentage of the “A, B” (34%) and of the “A, B, D” (10%) is 24%, and it is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 37.878$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0001$). The fourth largest number of frequency of use is 7% for the two different types of compound strategies that were used equally: (A, B, C) and (A, C). The first pattern is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted.” The second pattern is the “IFID” with “statement indicating the situation was warranted.” The difference between the (10%) of the “A” and (7%) of the “A, B, C” is 3%, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.809$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.3683$). The pattern of (A, B, C) and (A, C) were followed by 5% for the use of “offer of good wishes” with “praise” (B, D). However, the difference between the percentage of “A, C” (7%) and of “B, D” (5%) is only 2%. This means that the difference is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.334$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.5633$). Finally, the rest of the six patterns were used less than 5%, and the difference between each one is only 1%, except the pattern of “B, C” and “A, C, D” that were used equally (2%). Figure 22 shows the

frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of the birth of a baby.

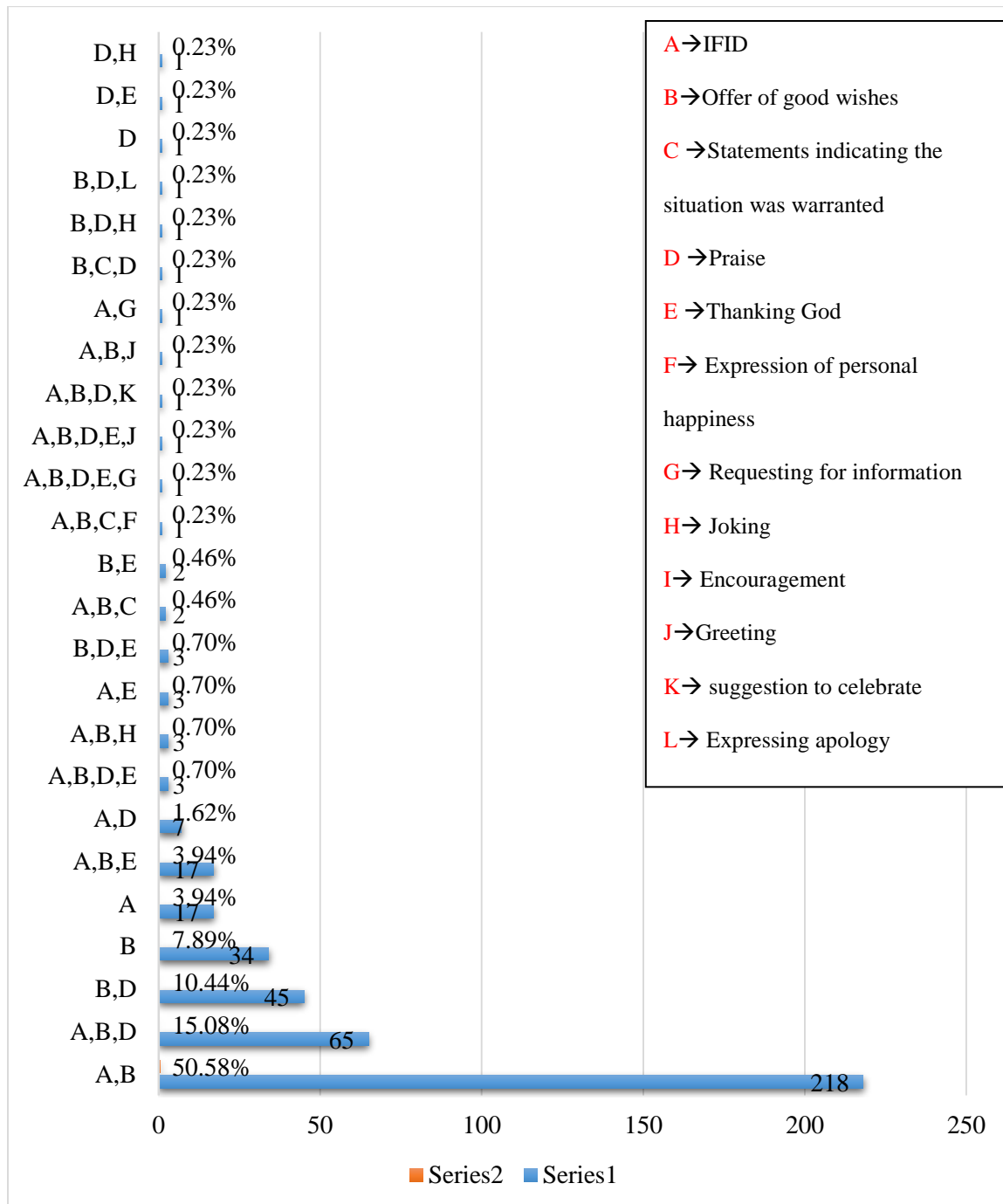


Figure 22: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of the birth of a baby

Saudi Facebook users tended to employ more than one compound strategy when offering congratulations on the event of the birth of a baby. They used 25 patterns of the compound strategies. However, the use of compound strategies differed in frequency. As shown in Figure 22, using the compound strategy of the “IFID” (congratulations) and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) is the most frequent compound strategy (50.58%). The second most frequent compound strategy used is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D; 15.08%). There is also a big difference in the frequency between the first and second compound strategies (35.5%), which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 25.742$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0001$). The third most frequent compound strategy is using “offer of good wishes” and “praise,” (B, D; 10.44%), followed by 7.89% for using only one strategy, which is “offer of good wishes” (B), with a slight difference between them (2.55%). Therefore, the difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.147$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7016$). The fifth most frequent compound strategy is a single strategy, which is the use of “IFID” (congratulations), (A; 3.94%), followed by the compound strategy of “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “thanking God” (A, B, E), which also has the same percentage (3.94%). They were followed by using the “IFID” with “praise,” (A, D; 1.62%). For example, the difference between the percentage (3.94%) of (A, B, E) and (1.62%) of (A, D) is only 2.32% and is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.081$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7759$). Finally, the rest of the compound strategies (18 patterns) were used less than 1% of the time. Figure 23 shows the verbal compound strategies of congratulations and frequency in the event of graduation.

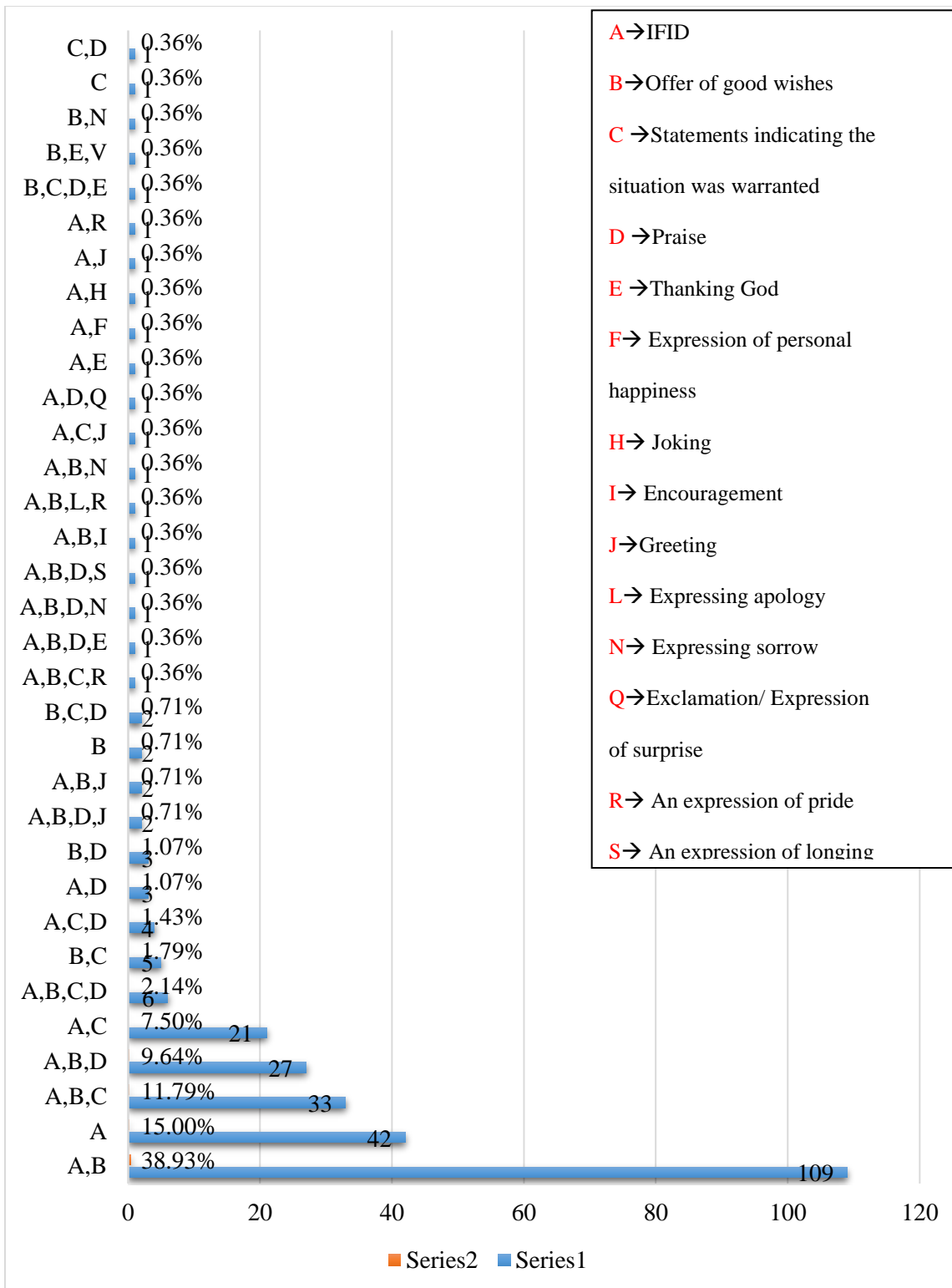


Figure 23: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of graduation.

According to Figure 23, the Saudi Facebook users employed 33 patterns of the compound strategies. However, the compound strategy of the IFID “congratulations” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) has also the largest frequency number (38.93%), followed by use of only one strategy the “IFID,” (A; 15%) in the event of graduation, which has a big difference between them (23.93%) and is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.890$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0050$). The third most frequent compound strategy is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” (A, B, C; 11.79%), followed by the compound strategy of “the IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (9.64%) with a small difference between them (2.15%) that is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.070$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7914$). The fifth most frequent compound strategy is the “IFID” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” (A, C; 7.50%), followed by 2.14% for the compound strategy of “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, B, C, D). The difference between the previous two types of compound strategies is 5.36%, and it is significant ($\chi^2 = 0.218$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.6402$). Other compound strategies were used about 1% of the time, for instance the use of “offer of good wishes,” with “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” (B, C; 1.79%) followed by the compound of “IFID,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, C, D; 1.43%). The difference is only 0.36% between them, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.002$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9681$). The “IFID” with “praise” (A, D) as a compound strategy does not differ in the frequency of use from the compound strategy of “offer of good wishes” with “praise” (B, D; 1.07%). The rest of the compound strategies that make up 23 patterns were used less than 1% of

the time. Figure 24 refers to the frequency and verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of passing a dissertation/thesis defense.

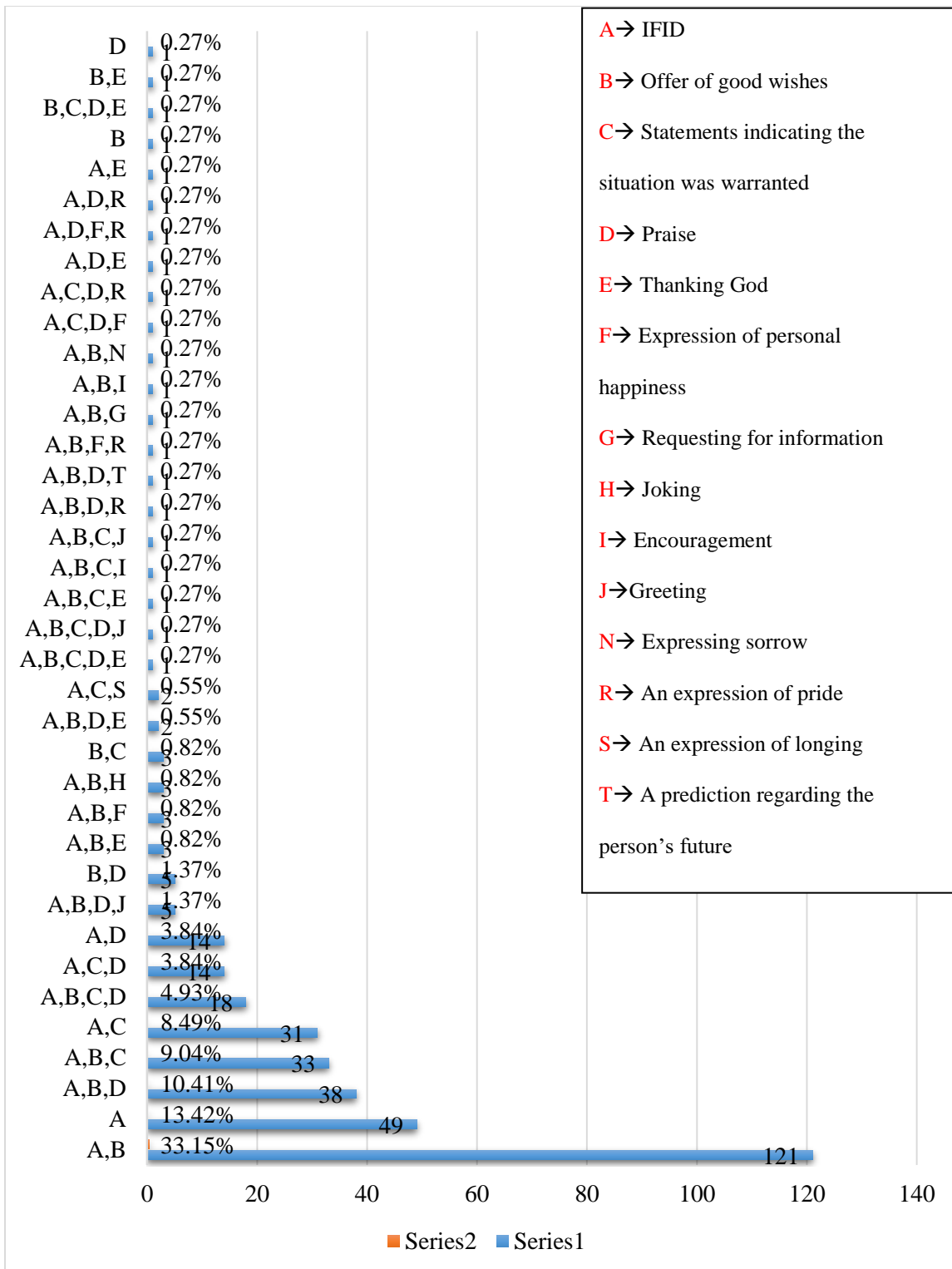


Figure 24: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense

As shown in Figure 24, there were 37 patterns of compound strategies used in this event. However, the compound strategy of “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) is also the most frequent one (33.15%), followed by the use of a single strategy “IFID,” (A; 13.42%) with a difference of 19.73% between them. This percentage indicates a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 6.775$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0092$). The compound strategy of “IFID” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D) has the third largest number (10.41%) followed by the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, B, C) compound strategy (9.04%). The difference between them is slight (1.37%); therefore, it is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.037$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.8473$). The compound strategy of “IFID” with “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, C) is the fifth most frequent compound strategy (8.49%), followed by the compound strategy of “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, B, C, D; 4.93%). The percentage of 3.56% is the difference between the two types of compound strategies and is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.212$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.6451$). The compound strategy of “IFID,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, C, D) was used 3.84% of the time, which is similar to the percentage of the compound strategy of “IFID” with “praise,” (A, D; 3.84%). In addition, the compound strategy of “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “greeting” (A, B, D, J) is similar to the compound strategy of “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (B, D) in the frequency of use (1.37%). For instance, the difference between the percentage (3.84%) of the “A, D” and the percentage (1.37%) of the “A, B, D, J” is 2.47%. It is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.069$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7929$). The other compound

strategies numbered 27 and they were employed less than 1% of the time. Figure 25 represents the frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of receiving an award.

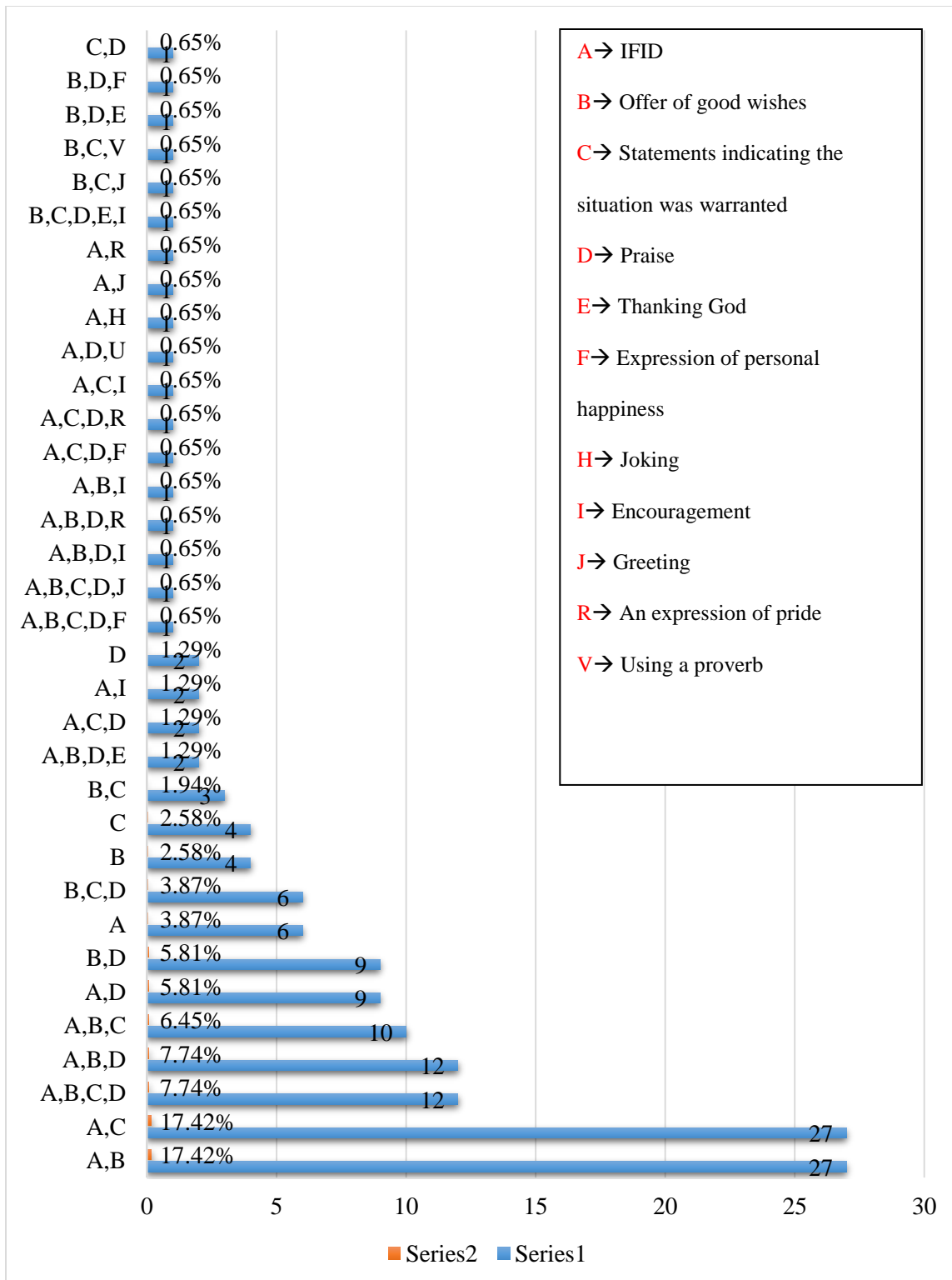


Figure 25: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of receiving an award.

According to Figure 25, the commenters used 34 patterns of compound strategies in this event. Two compound strategies: the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) and the “IFID” with “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, C) had the largest number (17.42%) and were also used similarly in frequency. They were followed by two types of compound strategies: (A, B, C, D) and (A, B, D) that also had the same frequency (7.74%). The first one is the compound strategy of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, B, C, D). The second one is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D). For example, the difference between the percentage (17.42%) of the “A, C” and (7.74%) of the “A, B, C, D” is 9.68%, which is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.614$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.4333$). The fifth frequent compound strategy is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” (A, B, C; 6.45%) followed by (5.81%) for two types of compound strategies that have the same frequency of use: the “IFID” with “praise” (A, D) and the compound strategy of “offer of good wishes” with “praise” (B, D). For instance, the difference between the percentage of the “A, B, C” (6.45%) and “the A, D” (5.81%) is only 0.64%. Therefore, it is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.003$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9550$). The “IFID” strategy was used 3.87% of the time, which is similar to the frequency of the compound strategy of “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (B, C, D; 3.87%). They are followed by the use of single strategies such as “offer of good wishes,” (B; 2.58%) and “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” (C; 2.58%). For example, the difference between the percentage of the “B, C, D” (3.87%) and the “B” (2.58%) is only

1.29%, which is also not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.011$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9161$). The compound strategy of “offer of good wishes” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (B, C) was used (1.94%) followed by (1.29%) for four types of compound strategies that are similar in frequency. The first compound strategy is “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “thanking God” (A, B, D, E). The second one is “IFID,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, C, D). The third one is “IFID” and “encouragement” (A, I). The fourth one is using “praise” (D). For instance, the difference between the percentage of the “B, C” (1.94%) and of the “A, B, D, E” (1.29%) is only (0.65%), and that is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.002$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9605$). Finally, the rest of the compound strategies comprised only 18 types that were used less than (1%). Figure 26 describes the frequency of compound strategies of congratulations on the event of publishing.

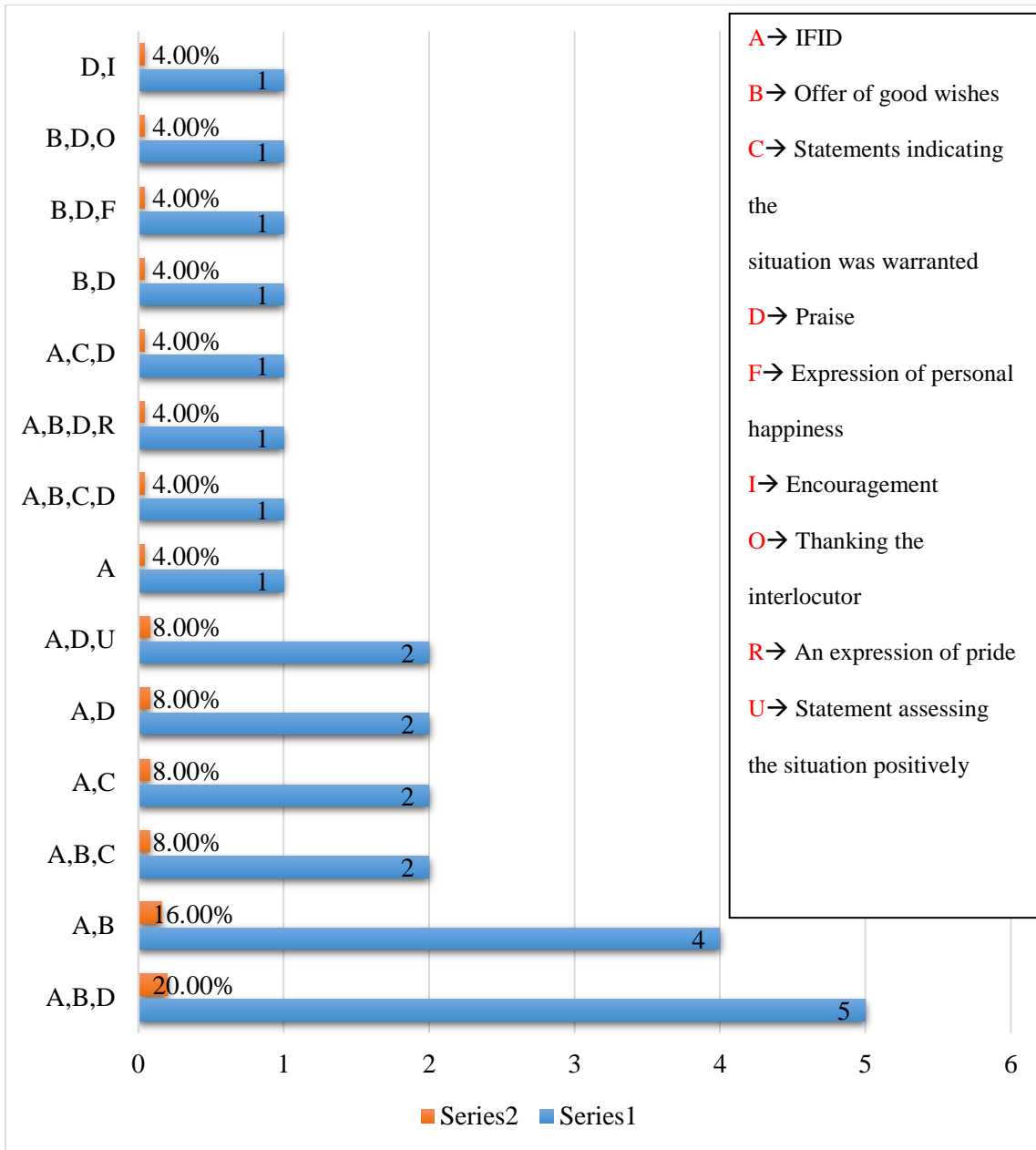


Figure 26: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of publishing

As shown in Figure 26, 14 patterns of compound strategies were used in this event. The compound strategy of “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D) has the largest number of frequency use (20%) followed by the compound strategy of

“IFID” and “offer of good wishes,” (A, B; 16%), with a difference of 4% between them. However, this difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.021$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.8842$).

The third frequent compound strategies are four types of compound strategies that were used similarly in terms of frequency (8%). The first compound strategy is “IFID,” “Offer of good wishes,” and “Statements indicating the situation was warranted” (A, B, C). The second one is “IFID” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (A, C). The third one is the “IFID” and “praise” (A, D). The fourth one is the “IFID,” “praise,” and “statement assessing the situation positively” (A, D, U). The remaining 8 compound strategies have the same frequency of use (4%). For example, the difference between the percentage of the “A, D, U” (8%) and the “A” (4%) is also (4%), which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.011$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9149$). Figure 27 shows the frequency of compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting married.

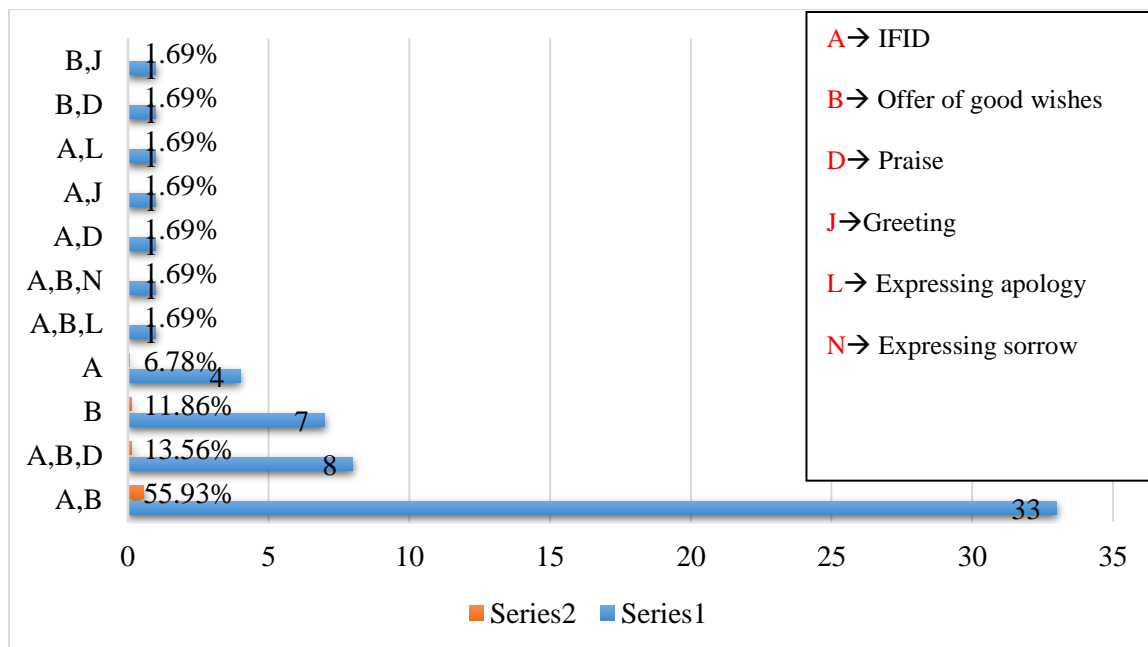


Figure 27: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting married

According to the figure, the Saudi Facebook users used 11 patterns of compound strategies. However, the compound strategy of the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) is the most frequently used one (55.93%), followed by the compound strategy of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D; 13.56%). Obviously, the difference is large between the two percentages (42.37%). Therefore, the difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.521$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0335$). The third compound strategy is a single strategy “offer of good wishes” (B; 11.86%), followed by a single strategy “IFID,” (A; 6.78%) with a difference of 5.08% between them, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.066$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7968$). The remaining seven types of compound strategies were used similarly in frequency (1.69%). Figure 28 shows the frequency of compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a new position.

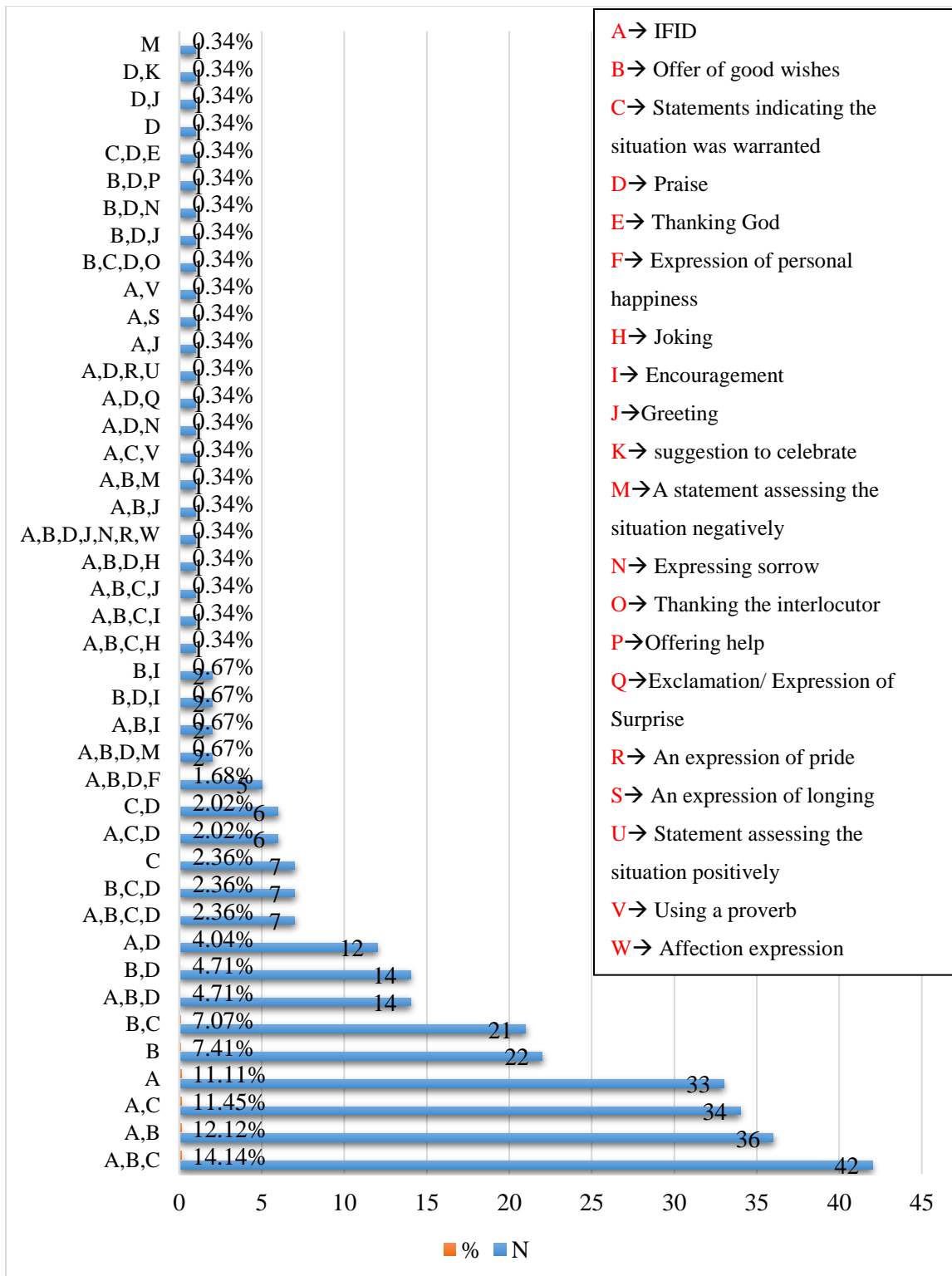


Figure 28: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a new position

As shown in Figure 28, the commenters used 42 patterns of compound strategies in the event of getting a new position. These are considered the highest number of patterns employed by the users in an event. The compound strategy of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (A, B, C) was used more frequently (14.14%) than the compound strategy of the “IFID” with “offer of good wishes,” (A, B; 12.12%). However, the difference between them is only 2.02%, and it is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.068$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.7941$). The third largest frequency number is the compound strategy of the “IFID” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted,” (A, C; 11.45%), followed by 11.11% for using the single strategy “IFID” (A) with a very small difference between them of 0.34%, and this was not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.002$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9652$). The single strategy of “offer of good wishes” (B) was used in 7.41% of the responses, followed by the compound strategy of “offer of good wishes” and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (B, C; 7.07%). The difference is also very small (0.34%); therefore, the difference is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.002$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9661$). Two types of compound strategies were used with the same frequency (4.71%). The first one was the strategy of “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D). The second one was the strategy of “offer of good wishes” and “praise” (B, D). These two strategies were followed by the compound strategy of the “IFID” and “praise,” (A, D; 4.04%). For instance, the difference is very small (0.67%) between the percentage of the B, D (4.71%) and the percentage of the A, D (4.04%), which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.007$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9351$). The percentage of (2.36%) is the frequency number for three patterns of compound strategies, which means that they are similar in frequency of use.

The first pattern is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “statements indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, B, C, D). The second pattern was “offer of good wishes,” “statements indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (B, C, D). The third pattern used a single strategy, “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (C). These strategies were followed by 2.02% for two types of compound strategies. The first one was the “IFID,” “statements indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, C, D). The second one was the use of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” and “praise” (C, D). For example, the difference between the percentage of the “C” (2.36%) and of the “A, C, D” (2.02%) is only (0.34%); therefore, it is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.002$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9681$). Finally, the use of the compound strategy of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “praise,” and “a statement assessing the situation negatively” (A, B, D, F) was used only 1.68%. However, the remaining 27 strategies were used less than 1%. Figure 29 shows the frequency of compound strategies of congratulations in the event of passing exams

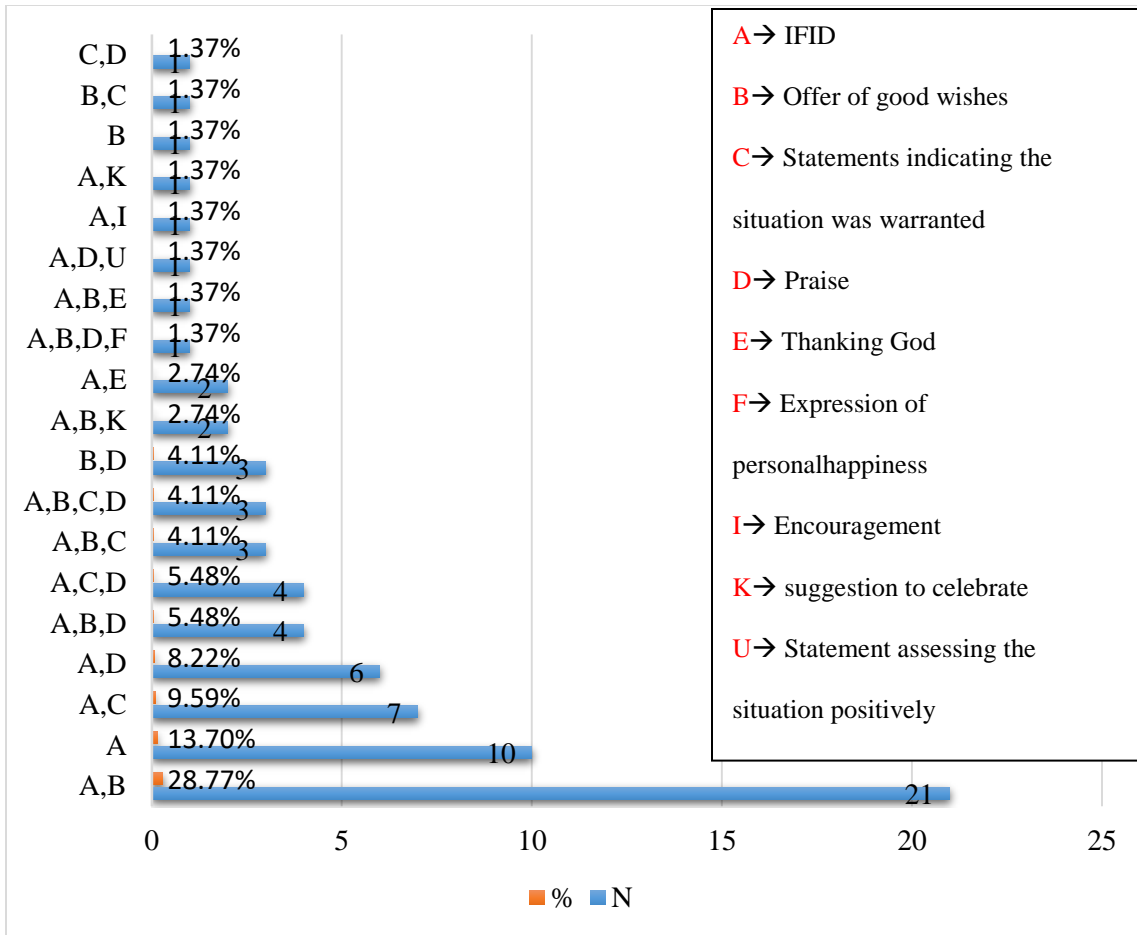


Figure 29: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of passing exams

According to Figure 29, 19 patterns of compound strategies were employed. The compound strategy of the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) has the largest number of frequency of use (28.77%), followed by the use of the single strategy “IFID,” (A; 13.70%), which means that the difference between the two is 15.07%. However, it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.818, df = 1, p = 0.3657$). The compound strategy of the “IFID” with “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, C) has the third largest frequency of use number (9.59%), followed by the “IFID” and “praise,” (A, D; 8.22%). However, the difference is only 1.37%, which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.007, df =$

1, $p = 0.9340$). Two patterns of compound strategies were used with the same frequency (5.48%). The first one was the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D). The second one was the “IFID,” statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, C, D). They were followed by the use of three types of compound strategies that have the same percentage of use (4.11%). The first pattern of compound strategy was the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, B, C). The second pattern was the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted” and “praise” (A, B, C, D). The third pattern was “offer of good wishes” and “praise” (B, D). For instance, the difference between the percentage of the “A, C, D” (5.48%) and of the “A, B, C” (4.11%) is only 1.37%, which is also not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.006$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9386$). Finally, two types of strategies were also used with the same frequency (2.74%). The first one was the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “suggestion to celebrate” (A, B, K). The second one was the “IFID” and “thanking God” (A, E). The remaining eight compound strategies were used only 1.37%. For example, the difference between the percentage of the “A, E” (2.74%) and of the “A, B, D, F” (1.37%) is only 1.37%. Therefore, it is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.004$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9512$). Figure 30 shows the frequency of compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting engaged.

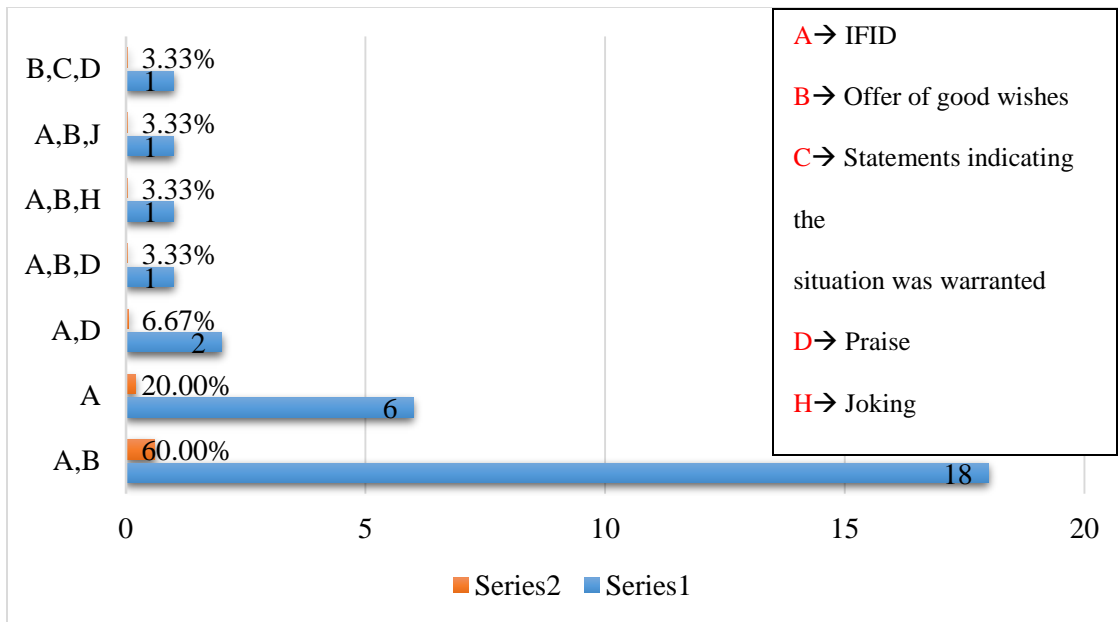


Figure 30: The frequency of compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting engaged

According to Figure 30, only seven patterns of compound strategies were used in this event. However, the compound strategy of the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) was the most frequent pattern (60%), followed by the use of a single strategy “IFID,” (A; 20%), which shows a big difference between them (40%). However, the difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.760, df = 1, p = 0.0966$). The third frequent compound strategy is the “IFID” and “praise,” (A, D; 6.67%), followed by (3.33%) for four patterns of compound strategies. The first pattern is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D). The second one is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “joking” (A, B, H). The third one is the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “greeting” (A, B, J). The fourth one is “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (B, C, D). For instance, the difference between the percentage of the “A, D” (6.67%) and of the “A, B, D” (3.33%) is 3.34%,

which is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.009$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.9226$). Figure 31 refers to the frequency of compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a Ph.D. admission.

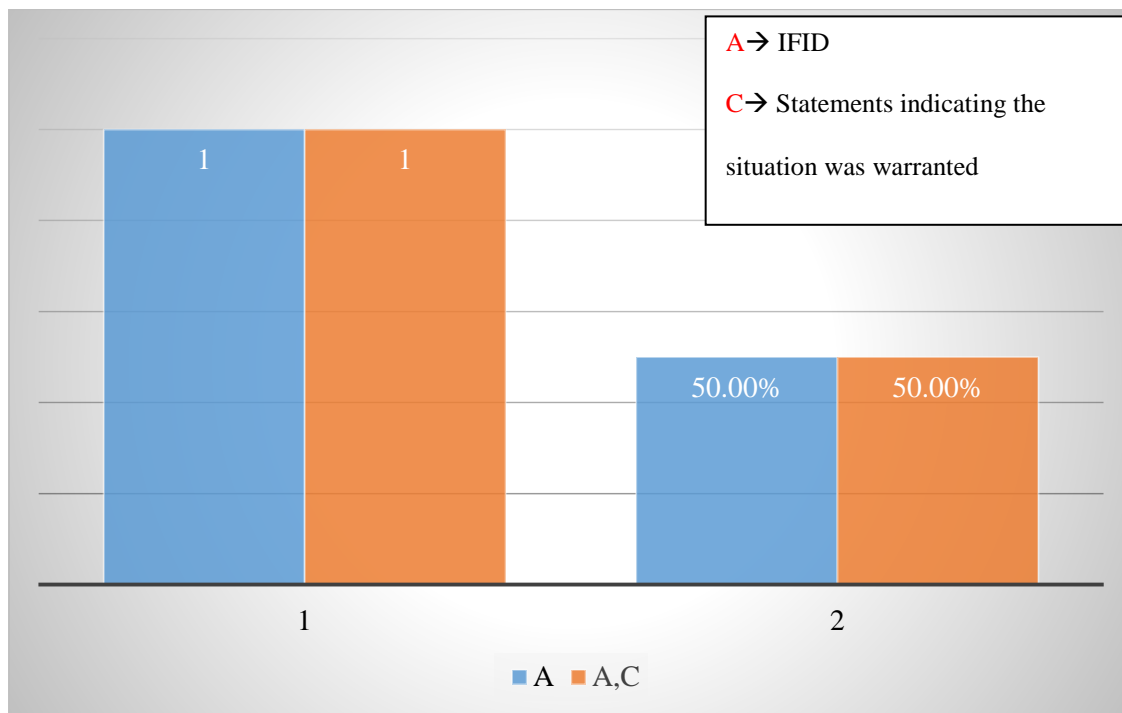


Figure 31: The frequency of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in the event of getting a Ph.D. admission

As shown in Figure 31, there were only two patterns of compound strategies that were used similarly (50%) in this event. The first pattern is the single strategy of the “IFID” (A), while the second one is the compound of the “IFID” and “statement indicating the situation” (A, C) was warranted.” Therefore, there is no difference between them. Table 11 represents the top four compound strategies of congratulations in each event that is visualized in Figure 32.

The Comparison of Verbal Compound Strategies Across all the Events

This section contains a comparison between the use and frequency of the verbal compound strategies across the 10 events. The top four verbal compound strategies in

each event were chosen for a comparison between them across the events in frequency of usage. However, the other patterns were not included in the comparison because most of them were used least frequently.

Table 11

The Top Four of Verbal Compound Strategies of Congratulations in Each Event

The Compound strategies	Birth of a Baby	Graduation	Passing a Thesis Defense	Receiving an Award	publishing	Getting Married	New Position	Passing Exams	Getting Engaged	Getting a Ph.D. admission	Total	%
A,B	218	109	121	27	4	33	36	21	18	0	587	49.96
A,B,D	65	27	38	12	5	8	0	0	1	0	156	13.28
B,D	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	3.83
B	34	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	41	3.49
A	0	42	49	0	0	4	33	10	6	1	145	12.34
A,B,C	0	33	33	0	2	0	42	0	0	0	110	9.36
A,C	0	0	0	27	2	0	34	7	0	1	71	6.04
A,B,C,D	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	1.02
A,D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	8	0.68
TOTAL	362	211	241	78	13	52	145	44	27	2	1175	100

Table 11 shows the top four frequent compound strategies used in each event which have similarities and differences across the events as also shown also in Figure 30.

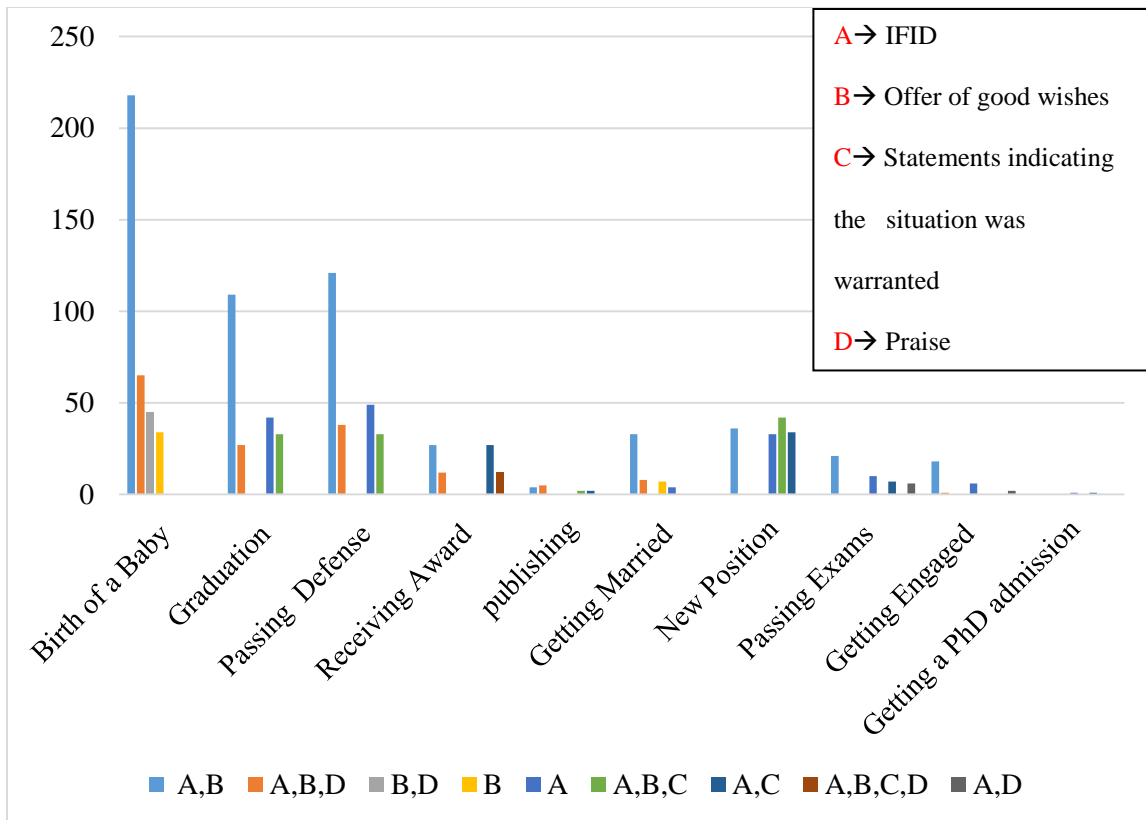


Figure 32: The top four of verbal compound strategies of congratulations in each event

Figure 32 differs from Figure 21, which shows the compound strategies in general and regardless of type of event. The compound strategy of the “IFID” and “offer of good wishes” (A, B) is the most frequent pattern among the other patterns of compound strategies (49.96%). However, it differs in frequency from one event to another. For instance, it was used more frequently in the event of the birth of a baby (218 times) than the event of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense (121 times) and graduation (109 times). Also, it was used frequently in the event of getting a new position (36 times) followed by the event of getting married (33 times). In addition, it was employed in the event of receiving an award (27 times), in passing exams, (21 times) and in getting engaged (18 times). Finally, it was used only 4 times in the event of publishing.

The compound strategy of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “praise” (A, B, D) had the second largest frequency of use percentage (13.28%). The largest frequency of use number was in the event of the birth of a baby (65 times) followed by the event of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense (38 times) and graduation (27 times). Additionally, it was used 12 times in the event of receiving an award, followed by 8 times in the event of getting married and 5 times on the occasion of publishing. However, it was used only one time in the event of getting engaged.

The third largest frequency number was in the pattern of the “IFID” (A) as a single strategy (12.34%). It was used frequently in the event of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense (49 times), followed by the event of graduation (42 times) and getting a new position (33 times). Also, it was used 10 times in the event of passing exams, 6 times in getting engaged, and (4 times) in getting married. Nevertheless, it was used only one time in the event of getting a Ph.D. admission.

The compound strategy of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, B, C) is the fourth largest frequency number (9.36%). The most frequent use was in the event of getting a new position (42 times), while it was used equally (33 times) in the event of passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense and graduation. It was, however, used only two times in the event of publishing.

The pattern compound strategy of the “IFID” and “statement indicating the situation was warranted” (A, C) was used (6.04%) among the other strategies. However, it was used frequently in the event of getting a new position (34 times) followed by

receiving an award (27 times) and passing exams (7 times). However, it was used only two times in the event of publishing and one time in the event getting a Ph.D. admission.

The compound strategy of “offer of good wishes” and “praise” (B, D) was used only in the event of the birth of a baby as one of the top four of compound strategies in events (45 times). The other pattern was the use of “offer of good strategies” (B). As a single strategy, it was also used frequently (34 times) in the event of the birth of a baby, followed by getting married (7 times). The pattern of the “IFID,” “offer of good wishes,” “statement indicating the situation was warranted,” and “praise” (A, B, C, D) was used only in the event of receiving an award as one of the top four strategies (12 times). Finally, the compound strategy of the “IFID” and “praise” (A, D) was used 6 times in the event of passing exams and only 2 times in the event of getting engaged.






















The cells that show zero in Table 11 do not mean that the patterns of compound strategies were not used in that event. It means that the type of compound strategies are not one of the top four patterns in that event. The next section shows the types of emojis and frequency used in the comments of congratulations.

The Frequency of Types of Emojis in the Congratulations Comments

This section shows all the types of emojis and the frequency of use in the comments of congratulations. In addition, they were categorized based on their functions that were found in the qualitative analysis.

Table 12

The Types of Emojis Used by Saudi Facebook Users in the Congratulations Comments

The Name of Emoji	Emoji	N	%
Red rose/red flower		60	23.17
Slightly smiling face/slightly happy emoji		28	10.81
Red heart, sparkling heart, growing heart, and two hearts		27	10.42
Bouquet of flowers		24	9.27
Thumbs up		17	6.56
Party popper/celebration/party hat		13	5.02
Smiling face with heart-eyes/heart eyes		9	3.47
Graduation cap/graduate emoji		8	3.09
Face blowing a kiss/kissing/face throwing a kiss		7	2.70
Face with tears of joy		5	1.93
Smiling face with smiling eyes/smiling face		5	1.93
Applause		5	1.93
Tulip		5	1.93
Confetti ball		4	1.54
Cherry blossom		4	1.54
Sparkles/stars		4	1.54
Winking face		4	1.54
Hibiscus		3	1.16
Perfect/okay hand		3	1.16
Victory hand		2	0.77
Flexed biceps		2	0.77

Continued

Table 12: *The Types of Emojis Used by Saudi Facebook Users in the Congratulations Comments* (continued)


















The Name of Emoji	Emoji	N	%
Grinning face/happy face/smily face		2	0.77
Broken heart		1	0.39
Balloon/party/red balloon		1	0.39
Oncoming fist		1	0.39
Hundred points		1	0.39
Raising hands		1	0.39
A gold crown with jewels on the sides/king/queen emoji		1	0.39
High five/ stop emoji		1	0.39
Collision		1	0.39
Circle and star/dizzy		1	0.39
Praying hands/please/thank you/high five		1	0.39
String quartet/world's smallest violin		1	0.39
Blossoming flower/yellow flower		1	0.39
Man running		1	0.39
Woman dancing/salsa dancer/red dress woman		1	0.39
See-no-evil monkey/cheeky monkey		1	0.39
Open hands/hug/jazz hands		1	0.39
Total		257	100

Table 12 shows the emojis that were employed by Saudi Facebook users in the congratulations comments. It is obvious that the use of the red rose emoji was the one most frequently used (23.17%) while the other emojis differ in frequency. However, these emojis were categorized into seven groups based on their functions in the

congratulations comments, such as expressing endearment, using as a gift, celebrating, expressing happiness, praising, joking, and emphasizing prayer.

Expressing endearment is the most frequent function (103 times). It was used by using the following different types of emojis, for instance red rose, heart emojis, smiling face with heart-eyes, and face blowing a kiss. Additionally, the emoji of face blowing a kiss was used to express happiness along with endearment.

The second function was using some emojis as a gift (37 times). They were used by bouquet of flowers, tulip, cherry blossom, hibiscus, and blossoming flower. The third function was using some emojis to celebrate the occasion (36 times), such as party popper, graduation cap, confetti ball, sparkles, red balloon, a gold crown with jewels on the sides, collision as fireworks, circle and star, string quartet, and woman dancing.

The fourth function was expressing happiness (35 times). It was expressed by the emoji of slightly smiling face, smiling face with smiling eyes/smiling face, and happy face. The fifth function was praising expressed by the emoji of thumbs up, applause, perfect, victory hand, flexed biceps, oncoming fist, and hundred points. This type of function was used 35 times.

The sixth function was using some emojis to convey laughter, humor, and joking. This function was expressed by the emoji of face with tears of joy, winking face, and cheeky monkey. In two congratulations comments, it was found that the winking face was used to express happiness. In addition, it was found that the emoji of face with tears of joy was also used to express happiness; however, it was only used in one comment. The function of this type of emoji as joking was used seven times. The seventh function

was using praying hands, raising hands, and open hands to emphasize prayer and was used three times. The rest of the emojis, such as broken heart, stop emoji, and man running were used for different functions related to the text in the congratulations comments. Chapter 5 will interpret and discuss the results of the types of verbal and nonverbal responses in the qualitative and quantitative analyses.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim in this study was to identify the verbal and nonverbal types of responses used by Saudi Facebook users in the comments of congratulations on the events of happy news status updates on Facebook. A total of 1,721 comments of congratulation were collected from 61 different occasions and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to understand how users express congratulations on new social media such as Facebook. The results showed 23 verbal types of responses used 3,826 times. The results also showed 100 patterns of verbal compound strategies that were used 1,717 times. In addition, 42 types of emojis were found in the comments and used 257 times. Based on their functions, they were categorized into seven functions. In addition, the results showed that the posts received 31 sharings and 3 types of emoji reactions, such as like (Thumbs up), love (Beating heart), and wow (Surprised face), which were posted 2,568 times.

Only four types of responses were used more frequently than the other types of strategies. These were the IFID “congratulations” (37.98%), followed by “offer of good wishes” (32.98%), “praise” (13.02%), and “statements indicating the situation was warranted” (11.11%). Although the first two types were the most frequent strategies, the difference between them was statistically significant. In contrast, the last two strategies showed no significant statistical difference.

It was expected to find “congratulations” used more frequently than the other strategies because the events were happy occasions or news. Also, it is usually the first expression to utter when hearing something good to express happiness and share the

occasion with others. This result is supported by almost all the studies on congratulation in different languages and cultures that found “congratulations” is the most frequent expression. However, this differs from Makri-Tsilipakou’s results (2001) in Greek and Hernández’s (2008) in Peninsular Spanish. Makri-Tsilipakou explained that the use of the expression “congratulations” refers to formality or distance in the relationship between the speaker and addressee. Therefore, the use of “well wishes” is more than “congratulations” in Greek. Hernández found that “congratulations,” which was used only by women, was less common than expressing approval, happiness, and making celebration plans.

In the current study, “congratulations” was used most frequently in the event of “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense” (352 times) and the event of “the birth of a baby” (341 times). Although there is more than one form for *mabruuk* “congratulations” in Arabic, *mabruuk* is the most frequently used one. The other form for *mabruuk* is *mubarak*, and it was not used frequently because it is from Standard Arabic. Therefore, the simple form was found frequently. *Mabruuk* was intensified in more than one way, often by using various numbers, such as a thousand, million, billion, and so forth, to intensify its meaning. In addition, it was intensified by repetition, such as by repeating its vowel (u), the expression “*mabruuk*” itself, the number itself, or by adding other bigger numbers to the form. These various ways of intensifying “*mabruuk*” can be a result of the absence of prosodic strategies. Additionally, they emphasize Leech’s (2007) point of view that intrinsically courteous speech acts, such as congratulations, need intensification or gradable expressions. Face enhancing acts such as congratulation also need to be

hardened and maximized (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997). Although communication on Facebook lacks the physical dimension, the social dimension exists by interacting with friends on activities (Derks, Fischer, and Bos, 2008). Therefore, offering congratulations on Facebook emphasizes the fact that the goal of congratulation is not only to express a psychological state but also it has a social goal that is aimed at strengthening social relationship and intimacy (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2001) among individuals or just to satisfy the social expectation (Bach and Harnish, 1979).

However, in this current study, the results showed that although “congratulations” was the most frequently used, it was not usually used alone. It was used as a single strategy only 10% (169 times) and mostly in the event of “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense” and “graduation.” The comparison of compound strategies among events was conducted based on the top four compound strategies in each event. Therefore, “congratulations” is mostly used with “offer of good wishes” 34% (587 times), which was statistically significant. This result refers to the importance of taking into consideration the patterns of polite compound strategies, and focus not only on the polite expressions alone based on their frequency. The compound strategy of “congratulations” with “offer of good wishes” was used mostly in the event of “birth of a baby,” “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense,” and “graduation.” This compound strategy was followed by the use of “congratulations” with “offer of good wishes” and “praise” 10% (174 times). This pattern of compound strategy was also used primarily in the event of “the birth of a baby,” “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense,” and “graduation.”

“Offer of good wishes,” as the second most frequently used strategy among the other types of responses, is supported by research by Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011) in Persian; Kočovska (2013) in Latin; and Dastjerdi and Nasri, (2013) in Persian, American English, and Syrian Arabic. Some studies in Persian, such as Ghaemi & Ebrahimi (2014) found that “offer of good wishes” is the third most frequently used strategy, while other studies, such as García (2010) in Spanish, found it to be a common strategy in general. However, the different results that indicate preference and frequency are usually affected by many factors, such as the background of participants, relationship, situation, the tool for collecting data, and so forth.

Most of the expressions used in the current study in “offer of good wishes” are religious expressions, which are prayers/blessings rather than nonreligious wishing expressions. “Offer of good wishes” was also used primarily in the event of “the birth of a baby” (400 times) and “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense” (249 times). However, the way of congratulating others in the event of “the birth of a baby,” for example, can vary or differ based on the medium of communication. For instance, Willer (2001) found that different words are used to describe emotion and physical characteristics of the newborn boy or girl in congratulation greeting cards. This way of congratulating is affected by the different genre in the way of expressing congratulation.

It was also observed that users tend to employ more than one prayer/blessing or wishing expression in a comment. The use of prayers/blessings as well-wishing is a result of Islamic principles in Saudi society. Blessings are used by people who believe in the power of words (Wierzbicka, 1987); however, this power is believed to come from

Allah, not from the words by themselves. The use of prayers in the situations of congratulation also were found by Emery (2004) and Bataineh (2013) in Arabic, and by Ghaemi and Ebrahimi (2014) in Persian because they are influenced by the same religion, Islam. This influence was also observed in the other studies of speech acts by Saudis, such as greetings and leave takings (Hassanain, 1994; Turjoman 2005), compliment (AlAmro, 2013), thanking (Altalhi, 2014), refusal (Al-Shalawi, 1997), and invitation (Alfalig, 2016). In addition, the use of religious expressions were found on Facebook in the speech act of condolence in Jordanian Arabic (Al-Shboul & Maros, 2013). However, Saudi Facebook users used some emojis, such as praying hands, raising hands, and open hands to emphasize the prayers/blessings in a few comments.

As mentioned above, the third and fourth most frequently used strategies are the use of “praise” and “Statements indicating the situation was warranted,” which means “you deserve it/you deserve all blessings” respectively. These two strategies, which are called “expression of validation,” were also found as one of the most frequently used strategies by Elwood (2004) in Japanese and American English. The use of praise was also found in Latin as a congratulation strategy (Unceta Gómez, 2016).

However, the use of religious expression is also used in “praise” in the current study. Although various expressions were used in praise, the religious expression such as *mashaallah/mashaallah tabarakaallah* “as Allah wills/ as Allah wills, Allah blesses” was used more frequently than the other praising expressions. It was also used more frequently in the event of “birth of a baby” and “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense.” It is usually used by Muslims to express praise or happiness when someone hears good news

or sees something he/she likes. It is believed that Allah protects the good news/object from jealousy and the evil eye (AlAmro, 2013). Also, compliments were employed in addition to praise, and some of them were used in an exaggerated way in complimenting the poster. They were used as reinforcing devices with acts such as congratulation (Sifianou, 2001). The use of exaggeration can indicate a strong relationship between the commenter and poster because the compliments were used mostly about personality and skills. It is similar to Alamro's (2013) result that, among Najdi speakers in Saudi Arabia, found men focused on complimenting personality and performance in face-to-face communication. In contrast, the preference of focus in complimenting others differs from Spanish Facebook users who preferred using positive evaluation of other's appearance and possession over personality and skills (Maíz-Arévalo & García-Gómez, 2013). This can be the result either of cultural differences or the nature of different situations on Facebook.

However, using verbal strategies is not the only way to praise or compliment on Facebook. Facebook users employed some emojis, such as the emoji of thumbs up, applause, perfect, and so forth to praise or to intensify compliments used in the comment. Also, it could imply intensification of the comment of congratulation in general. The use of this type of emoji in the comments, as a new nonverbal pattern of interaction, is a result of the absence of the physical dimension. Emojis are used to distinguish informal digital messages on Facebook and the other new social media from formal letters/messages. Also, emojis are used to distinguish Facebook messages from face-to-

face communication. The emojis such as thumbs up and applause can be used physically by hands in face-to-face communication.

“Statements indicating the situation was warranted” were used mostly in the event of “getting a new position” and “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense.” However, the high frequency of this strategy could be affected by the high number of total comments about academic achievements (1,198 comments) compared to family occasions such as “engagement,” “marriage,” and “newborn” (521 comments). “Statements indicating the situation was warranted” was used primarily as part of a compound strategy with “congratulations” and “offer of good wishes” 7% (125 times), and was one of the top four compound strategies.. It was used mostly in the event of “getting a new position,” “graduation,” and “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense” as one of the top four compound strategies. This pattern of compound strategy is followed by the use of “statements indicating the situation was warranted” with “congratulations” which was also used 7% (123 times). However, it was used mostly in the events of “getting a new position” and “receiving an award.”

In addition, the strategy of “thanking God” was the fifth most frequently used strategy among the other types of responses. It was used mostly in the event of “the birth of a baby” where it was expected to find the frequent expression of thanking God for the safety of mother and baby at delivery. This strategy was also especially used in the event where a person struggles or makes an effort to accomplish a task. However, Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011) found it was rarely used in Persian.

The previous discussed variants of frequent strategies and compound strategies of congratulation emphasize how expressing “congratulation” can vary (Elwood, 2004). In other words, speech acts have different ways of being performed that also can be perceived differently in different languages and cultures (Holmes, 1995; Wierzbicka, 1985). Based on the different verbal ways of expressing congratulation, the emphasis was on exploring expressions in particular contexts to understand and interpret politeness (Culpeper, 2011), which was done by using the frame-based-approach.

Other types of response were found in some events; however, they were not used frequently. For instance, the use of “greeting” was shown in various ways, such as “welcome,” and “dear” in opening, or “my greetings” and “your brother” in closing the comment of congratulation. It was found frequently in the event of “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense,” “graduation,” and “getting a new position.” These patterns of greetings are an interesting type of response that is similar to writing formal letters, especially the use of “dear,” although Facebook is considered as an informal medium of communication or informal digital messages. However, the use of “dear,” in addition to some terms like “doctor” in the comments could be interpreted more as a way of showing respect for the poster than as considering them a formal pattern. Also, the use of greetings can be related to the relationship between the commenter and poster. Therefore, it is difficult to correlate it with a specific event.

The strategy of “expressing personal happiness” was used only 0.47%, which means it was not frequently used. It was used mainly in the event of “passing the Ph.D./MA thesis defense” and “getting a new position.” The result of this strategy

contradicts many studies, such as those of Elwood (2004), Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011), and Ghaemi & Ebrahimi (2014). They categorized “expressing personal happiness” and “a statement assessing the situation positively” as expressions of happiness, and one of the most frequently used strategies. However, in the current study, these expressions were used only 0.13% of the time, and mostly in reference to “publishing events.” The current study also differs from earlier studies, such as those of García (2010) and Hernandez Ramirez (2008) who found that expressing happiness is more common than the other expressions in Spanish. In addition, Nikšić (2016) found that “congratulations” is usually followed by expressing happiness in informal written discourse in English and Montenegrin.

However, some Facebook users used emojis to express happiness (35 times), such as the emoji of slightly smiling face, happy face, smiling face with smiling eyes, and so forth, which are a result of the absence of facial expressions. Therefore, one of the most interesting of the emojis of happiness is the ability to choose the degree of happiness for each emoji such as slightly happy face and very happy face to describe the degree of someone’s happiness. The emoji of happiness is similar to the emoji of praise in terms of using emojis instead of verbal expressions to convey some messages such as happiness or praise.

In the current study, some strategies were used infrequently, and most of those were supported by Elwood (2004) and Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011) who found the strategies used with a low frequency. For instance, “encouragement” was used only 0.47%, mostly in the event of “getting a new position” and “receiving an award.” Also,

“expressing pride” was used only 0.37% and mostly in the event of “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense,” “the event of graduation,” and “receiving an award.” In addition, “Joking” was used only 0.34% and mostly in the event of “birth of a baby” and “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense.” Can (2011) also found the use of joking was rare in both Turkish and British English. However, in the current study, a few Facebook users used emojis, such as the emoji of face with tears of joy, winking face, and cheeky monkey to convey laughter, humor, and joking. It is a result of the absence of nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and prosodic strategies.

“A suggestion to celebrate” was used in the current study only 0.13% of the time and mostly in the event of “passing exams.” In contrast, Hernandez Ramirez, (2008) found that it is common in Peninsular Spanish. However, it was interesting to find that Facebook users employed some emojis (36 times), such as party popper, confetti ball, red balloon, and so forth to celebrate the occasion. Moreover, some emojis, such as bouquet of flowers, tulip, cherry blossom, and so forth, were used 37 times as a gift to the poster. The use of emojis for celebration or as a gift is a result of the absence of the physical dimension. Therefore, the Facebook users used these types of emojis to show more concern when sharing with the posters on their occasions.

The strategy of “assessing the situation negatively” was used only 0.10% of the time in one of the events, that of “getting a new position” (i.e., the position of “vice principal”), However, the use of this strategy was not expected because people usually express their feelings positively and use courtesy in happy events and avoid negative comments. Therefore, it was used only four times in the data because of the nature of

responsibilities in the position of “vice principal” in school. An expression of “longing” was also used (0.10%), mostly in the event of “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense.” It was used by commenters who were in the home country and waiting for the poster who graduated from abroad to come back home. Therefore, they expressed their longing to see the person soon in the home country. However, it was used in a different way in Allami and Nekouzadeh’s (2011) study, such as “I also longed to be a doctor, but I could not.” The difference lay in expressing longing to be in a particular job rather than longing to see a person.

“Exclamation/expressing of surprise” was used only 0.05% of the time in the event of “graduation” and “getting a new position” to express surprise, and/or that the occasion was not expected. It was used only two times by a male and a female commenter. However, Unceta Gómez (2016) found that expressing surprise as a strategy of congratulation was not used by women in Latin. “Offering help” was used only 0.03% of the time in the event of “getting a new position” and “vice principal.” The commenter seemed to be an expert in administration, so he offered help in administrative consultation to the poster. “A prediction regarding the person’s future” was used only one time in the event of “passing a Ph.D./MA thesis defense.”

“Affection expression” was used only one time in the event of “getting a new position.” However, some Facebook users showed or expressed endearment by using emojis such as red rose, heart emojis, smiling face with heart-eyes, and so forth. They were used (103 times) and are considered the most frequent function, which is expressing endearment among the other functions of the other types of emojis. However, the

function of red rose and red heart sometimes are tricky. Although the main function of the previous emojis is to express love, it was difficult to consider them so in the comments of congratulation in the current data. The main reason is that they were used by males to male posters in the comments. Sometimes it was used to show appreciation for the addressee based on intuitions of Saudi Facebook users. Therefore, the differences of interpreting the meaning and function of particular emojis emphasize the concept of multifunctional and cultural variation in uses of emojis (Herring & Dainas, 2017; Danesi, 2017).

“Requesting information” was used only 0.08% of the time and mostly in the event of “birth of a baby.” However, this result was not supported by a number of studies in which it was found that it is one of the most frequently used strategies (Elwood, 2004; Hernandez Ramirez, 2008; Dastjerdi & Nasri, 2013; Nasri, Dastjerdy, & Ghadiri, 2013). Probably, people feel more comfortable asking questions about the personal news of occasions in face-to-face communication than on Facebook.

Expressing “sorrow” was used only 0.21% of the time, mostly in the event of “graduation” and “getting a new position” because of farewell. This type of response was found only by Hernandez Ramirez (2008) in the event of promotion where the addressee will leave the office. “Thanking the interlocutor/poster” was used only 0.05% of the time in the events of “publishing a book/ a study” and “getting a new position.” The commenter thanked the poster for what he offered to people. Also, Can (2011) found “thanking” was used rarely in both Turkish and British English.

“Using [a] proverb” was used only 0.10% of the time, mostly in the event of “getting a new position.” It was probably used to encourage the poster or to emphasize that the achievement was a result of hard work. Expressing “apology” was used only 0.10% of the time and only in the event of “marriage,” “graduation,” and “birth of a baby.” The reason for using “apology” was that the commenters could not attend the wedding and ceremony to share it with their friends. This response emphasizes the overlap between the online and offline world, and users use Facebook to strengthen offline relationships by showing emotional support, sharing activities, commenting on the posts, and so forth (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, and Espinoza, 2008). In the event of “birth of a baby,” it was used because the commenter felt that he was late in offering congratulations to the poster about the arrival of a new baby. However, the two types of responses: “using a proverb” and “apology” were not found in the previous studies. The first response can be a cultural preference to use when offering congratulations. The second response is related to Facebook, such as physical distance and/or not surfing Facebook regularly. Finally, it must be emphasized that not all the previous responses are strictly congratulations speech acts, but they can be possible responses to good news.

However, using the compound strategies and emojis in the comments were not the only way to share others’ happy news on Facebook. For example, Facebook users also posted emoji reactions to the posts and sharing the news. The use of “like” (thumbs up) with no comment or sharing was the most frequent emoji reaction and type of interaction on the posts of happy news (45.98%), and was used 1,487 times. It reflects the informality and simplification of the new ways of interacting with others on the status

update in general and happy news in particular when offering congratulations. This result was also supported by Placencia and Lower's (2013) study and Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo's (2015) results in which it was found that using the nonverbal response "like" were more than verbal strategies in compliments. Placencia and Lower claimed that "like" means compliment. However, "like" is multifunctional; therefore, it constitutes its meaning/meanings based on the type of situation of the status update on Facebook. In the current study, for instance, it can mean "congratulations," "like," "praise," and so forth. In other words, "like" does not strictly mean "congratulations."

Some Facebook users used the emoji reaction "like" on the post and comment (31.88%; 1,031 times). In this case, "like" could function in addition to what was mentioned previously as an intensifier for the congratulation in general or to assure your concern towards friends and your presence on Facebook. Other Facebook users used comment with no "like" or "sharing," but it was used less than the last two types of interactions: "only like" and "like with comment." It was used 20.41% (660 times). The other emoji reactions, such as beating heart (love) and surprised face (wow) were used on the posts but less frequently, with beating heart (24 times) and surprised face only one time.

It was interesting to find some Facebook users used "sharing" along with or without "comment" and "like." Also, it was expected that it be used in the events of "publishing," for example, to inform others who are interested in the book or study. However, it was not expected to be used in the event of "getting a new position." This

new way of sharing with others their news, especially in the last event, could mean “congratulations,” “expressing pride,” “encouraging,” and so forth to support the poster.

All the previous ways of verbal and nonverbal strategies used, such as using compound strategies, emojis in the comments, sharing, and emoji reactions to the posts are considered new ways, not only in the types of responses and interactions in how to share others’ happy news on Facebook and offer congratulation but also to intensify expressing congratulation. Finally, all the verbal and nonverbal types of responses showed how congratulation is constructed on Facebook by Saudi Facebook users.

Understanding the verbal strategies of congratulation in Saudi Arabic, among other languages, will benefit communication training, language teaching, and nonnative speakers in developing pragmatic competence and awareness of language use so that misunderstandings, miscommunications, and pragmatic failures in communication can be avoided. This study will also benefit native speakers of Arabic themselves by helping them to be aware of the differences in linguistic behavior found in the varieties of Arabic. In addition, the use of some emojis that are not universal in their functions can educate nonnative speakers of Arabic about the functions that are culturally specific in online communication.

However, the number of comments and types of events/occasions used in the analysis are considered limited to generalizing the results about Saudi Facebook users. Also, the majority of commenters were male. Therefore, it is suggested that further studies should have more comments and types of events that also include female commenters to identify how Saudi female Facebook users express congratulations. The

current data showed how Saudi users express congratulation among friends. Further studies should identify how Saudi Facebook users offer congratulations on public Facebook pages among unknown users. The type of events used in the current study are personal events, so further studies should examine offering congratulation on public events/occasions such as New Year, national day, Ramadhan, Eid al-Adha, and Eid al-Fitr by Saudis. This study can be compared to future studies about offering congratulations in face to face communication or on other platforms of communication, such as Twitter, WhatsApp, text messages, and so forth to explore new strategies or identify the similarities and differences in using congratulations. Finally, emojis are multifunctional and more studies are needed about their functions in Saudi culture, especially the use of the red rose and beating heart among male friend

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APPENDIX A

THE LETTER OF IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Karen Adams
English
480/965-3013
KLAdams@asu.edu

Dear Karen Adams:

On 10/21/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	A Sociopragmatic Study of the Congratulation Strategies of Saudi Facebook Users
Investigator:	Karen Adams
IRB ID:	STUDY00004992
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HRP-503a-TEMPLATE_PROTOCOL_SocialBehavioralV02-10-15.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;• Mahzari's CITI completion report, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 10/21/2016.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

APPENDIX B

THE TYPES OF VERBAL COMPOUND STRATEGIES

Table B

All the Types of Verbal Compound Strategies

Verbal Compound strategies	N	%
AB	587	34.19%
ABD	174	10.13%
A	169	9.84%
ABC	125	7.28%
AC	123	7.16%
BD	81	4.72%
B	71	4.14%
AD	56	3.26%
ABCD	47	2.74%
BC	33	1.92%
ACD	31	1.81%
ABE	21	1.22%
BCD	17	0.99%
C	12	0.70%
CD	9	0.52%
ABDE	8	0.47%
ABDJ	7	0.41%
ABH	7	0.41%
AE	7	0.41%
ABDF	6	0.35%
ABI	5	0.29%
ABJ	5	0.29%
D	5	0.29%
ADU	4	0.23%
AJ	4	0.23%
BDE	4	0.23%
ABDR	3	0.17%
ABF	3	0.17%
ABN	3	0.17%
AI	3	0.17%
BE	3	0.17%
ABCDJ	2	0.12%
ABCI	2	0.12%
ABCJ	2	0.12%
ABDM	2	0.12%
ABK	2	0.12%

ACDF	2	0.12%
ACDR	2	0.12%
ACS	2	0.12%
ADQ	2	0.12%
AH	2	0.12%
AR	2	0.12%
BCDE	2	0.12%
BDF	2	0.12%
BDI	2	0.12%
BI	2	0.12%
ABCDE	1	0.06%
ABCDF	1	0.06%
ABCE	1	0.06%
ABCF	1	0.06%
ABCH	1	0.06%
ABCR	1	0.06%
ABDEG	1	0.06%
ABDEJ	1	0.06%
ABDH	1	0.06%
ABDI	1	0.06%
ABDJNRW	1	0.06%
ABDK	1	0.06%
ABDN	1	0.06%
ABDS	1	0.06%
ABDT	1	0.06%
ABFR	1	0.06%
ABG	1	0.06%
ABL	1	0.06%
ABLR	1	0.06%
ABM	1	0.06%
ACI	1	0.06%
ACJ	1	0.06%
ACV	1	0.06%
ADE	1	0.06%
ADFR	1	0.06%
ADN	1	0.06%
ADR	1	0.06%
ADRU	1	0.06%
AF	1	0.06%
AG	1	0.06%
AK	1	0.06%

AL	1	0.06%
AS	1	0.06%
AV	1	0.06%
BCDEI	1	0.06%
BCDO	1	0.06%
BCJ	1	0.06%
BCV	1	0.06%
BDH	1	0.06%
BDJ	1	0.06%
BDL	1	0.06%
BDN	1	0.06%
BDO	1	0.06%
BDP	1	0.06%
BEV	1	0.06%
BJ	1	0.06%
BN	1	0.06%
CDE	1	0.06%
DE	1	0.06%
DH	1	0.06%
DI	1	0.06%
DJ	1	0.06%
DK	1	0.06%
M	1	0.06%
TOTAL	1717	100.00%
