A Cross-Cultural Study of Gender Differences in Using Speech Act of Congratulation in Social Networks by Iranian EFLs Learners vs. English natives

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The present study investigated the nature of the speech act of congratulation. It was an attempt to find out whether there was a significant difference between NNESS and NESS in the use of the speech act of congratulation in four different situations; namely, birthday, promotion, wedding, and New Year. The participants were 50 MA Iranian students majoring in TEFL and Translation studies at Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch and 50 NESS that were chosen based on snowball sampling. The coding scheme used for data collection was based on Elwoods (2004) Taxonomy. The findings revealed that not only did cultural differences have an unquestionable effect on the results but also participants nationality was an effective variable. Regarding the type, number, and length of congratulation comments across different occasions, Illocutionary Force Indicating Device was used frequently on the occasions of promotion, marriage, and birthday, and rarely for New Year. The conclusion was that the gender differences did not cause changes in the frequency of use of congratulation comments by Iranian and American participants of the study. (IFID) is the most frequency used congratulation comment made by both groups. The findings of the study might have implication for EFL students to be able to understand what native speakers convey by a particular speech act and how they convey it. Keywords: Speech Act, Iranian EFL learner, Social Networks, IFID, Cultural differences