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CORRECTION: Congratulation Strategies Employed by Jordanians in an Academic Setting: A Socio-Pragmatic Study

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Correction

This notice confirms that the originally published version of this article contained omissions of essential foundational citations. The following Correction supersedes sections of the originally published article as there were some initial discrepancies. Readers should refer to the Supplementary Appendix for the updated content.

The authors apologize for this oversight. This correction does not affect the results, discussion, or conclusions of the article.

DOI of original article: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i1.7361>

ABSTRACT

Congratulatory speech is one of the most linguistic aspects that is performed by people in general and among Jordanians in particular. Understanding the Jordanians' congratulations helps people from different cultures to understand them adequately. This study aims to investigate the congratulatory strategies employed by students in their writing on graduation notebooks for fourth-year students at Jerash Private University in Jordan. The writers of congratulations, typically the students' friends, classmates, and professors, are requested by the graduating students to write their congratulations in their graduation notebooks as a memento after they complete their bachelor's studies in the English language and literature department. Badarneh stated that congratulations among public university students were accomplished through the use

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ARTICLE INFO

Published Online: 26 November 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i12.12819>

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of social and religious invocations. This study inspired the current investigation to examine private university students, enriching the literature with a new study dedicated specifically to this group. To analyze the data, the congratulation strategies have been identified and then classified according to Elwood's methodology, which is similar to the one used by Badarneh. Moreover, the study also followed the pioneering framework developed by Badarneh, which categorizes strategies into three parts: opening, body, and closing. A qualitative method involving observations and memos was used to collect data from 10 congratulatory notebooks. The study revealed that the students employed various congratulatory strategies, including congratulatory statements, happiness clauses, compliments, good wishes, and the ability to attach presents. It also suggests a potential area for future research, which could investigate the students' reactions to the congratulatory text to evaluate the perlocutionary act of the students. Another suggestion for future research is to compare the Jordanians' strategies of congratulation with other societies' strategies of congratulations to shed light on the similarities and differences between them.

Keywords: Speech Act; Congratulation; Undergraduate; Jordan

1. Introduction

People in society use speech acts to express their congratulations on different occasions. In Jordan, people send congratulations gifts on the occasion of having new babies, birthdays, and weddings. At universities, students display their graduation notebooks on the walls of their departments, allowing classmates, colleagues, and professors to write congratulatory speeches and wishes of happiness for the graduates. These writings serve different functions, wishing for better and prosperous futures, finding the right jobs, and marrying their loved ones. One of the first studies, Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1], examined the speech acts of congratulatory notebooks at two public universities, analyzing the cultural messages embodied in students' congratulatory notes. The study at hand was inspired by such a study, which paved the way for a study on the congratulatory speeches used by undergraduate students on the verge of graduation in 2024 at Jerash Private University, specializing in English Language and Literature.

At Jerash University, the graduating students coordinate with their head of department to appoint a day to open the congratulatory notebooks to announce that they have completed or approximately completed their studies at the university. They want all their friends, classmates, and professors to write congratulations in their notebooks to have a nice memory that reminds them of such a great day at the university. So, they request that others write their congratulations directly or indirectly. As noted in this event, the students put their pictures on the covers of the graduation

notebooks and left a pen inside them to remind all of the community in their setting about themselves. They enjoy getting congratulations from the writers and are happy about them.

Some writers write very simple sentences, others write a full sheet, and others write one word and attach a present for the students. This means that the writers express their happiness in different strategies that attract the graduate students to be happy with them. From this observation, this research sought to investigate the exact meaning of these texts of congratulations and look for the precise strategies used by the writers of congratulations.

1.1. Previous Studies

Mohammad Mahzari (2017)^[2], in turn, explored congratulatory strategies that Saudi Facebook users utilized. The researcher distinguished 23 classes of verbal reactions. Among them, "congratulations," "expressions of good wishes," "praise," and comments stating the aptness of the situation were used most often. By using Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs), proverbs, and sayings, Yasser Al-Shboul et al. (2022)^[3] investigated congratulation strategies in Jordanian Facebook interactions for a Royal Birthday post, finding that IFIDs received the highest frequency while proverbs and sayings were less frequent. Within this trend, Ammari et al. conducted research in 2024^[4] on congratulatory ways among Jordanian social media users. They showed that IFIDs, wishes of good concord, and/or expressions of delight were the most common, often including "Allah" and

prayers for the addressee's cultural and religious tradition.

Ekechi Jemimah Ogechi (2021)^[5] discussed the sociolinguistics of congratulatory messages in Nigerian newspapers. As her research mentions, English as a second or official language takes on a particular cultural role within the framework of Nigerian society. The social usage in this context highlights status and role rather than solidarity. Another example is that Alemi et al. (2021)^[6] have discussed the congratulation strategies of English and Persian on a computer-mediated social network. The results revealed significant differences among the groups concerning some categories of congratulations.

Shena Fiosa Nofendralova and Ni Wayan Sartini (2024)^[7] studied the impact of culture on congratulatory speech strategies in Javanese and Sundanese. They concluded that expressions of surprise were the most frequent, followed by Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices. The frequency of divine remarks from both interlocutors in congratulatory speech acts testifies to the fact that Islamic culture influences them overwhelmingly in Indonesia. A related study of the congratulatory practices among Iraqi undergraduates identified seven main strategies, to wit: congratulating, wishing, being happy for one's good news, using humor, mentioning the occasion, requesting information, and complimenting or encouraging. Besides, M. Luz Celaya et al. (2019)^[8] conducted research into congratulatory language within the EFL context, noting that younger and less proficient learners tend to focus more on themselves within their responses, while older and more proficient learners address the interlocutor more directly, as usual for this speech act.

These studies have also highlighted that various cultural backgrounds, traditions, and situational contexts play a major role in the choice of congratulatory strategies. This trend has encouraged the researcher to closely examine specific strategies Jordanians use within academic settings for undergraduate students at graduation events. Therefore, this paper will analyze written congratulatory messages to understand why they are frequently used in students' graduation notebooks.

Griggio et al. (2024)^[9] designed a study using emojis to communicate congratulatory messages. They established that "participants preferred the Preview design over the Alert option because it left more room for subjective interpretation of accessible messages." In a somewhat different direction,

Saleem and Yasmin (2024)^[10] studied "the verbal and non-verbal congratulatory expressions in joyful Facebook posts of Pakistani English and Urdu speakers." They found that users expressed happiness and warmth effectively, reflecting a strong adaptation of language to cultural norms, especially with the prominent use of English. Pakistani users used various congratulatory techniques; among them, Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices played an important role in enhancing self-image and acknowledging success.

Maliki and El Ghazi (2024)^[11] explored the sociocultural dynamics of compliments and criticisms within Moroccan Arabic, noting that cultural backgrounds significantly influence the interpretation and expression of these speech acts, offering deeper insights into the interplay between language, culture, and social interactions among Moroccan Arabic speakers. Meanwhile, Saydumarova (2024)^[12] examined the lingua-pragmatic aspects of greeting and farewell expressions in Uzbek, Arabic, and English cultures. Notably, eleven participants provided specific responses, with nine using "مبروك الزواج" (mabruk azzawaj) to say, "congratulations on the wedding," and two responding with "الله يتمم عليكم" (Allah ytamem alaikum), meaning "may Allah bless you."

Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1] examined the speech acts of congratulations in graduation notebooks at two public universities. They analyzed 35 graduation notebooks and found 1064 congratulatory messages. They found that divine congratulatory words were used mostly as supplication for baraka 'blessings, compliments, social and cultural concepts of collectivism, and wishing for a better future. Moreover, they also included naquot in their writing, which is an authentic tradition in Jordan to give a monetary gift in Jordan. These indicate how the congratulatory speech acts are deeply rooted in religious connotations and social identities. Although Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1] investigated the Jordanian students' congratulation notebooks (GNs) at two public universities, this study seeks to find out other congratulation strategies that have been employed by the students at Jerash Private University in Jordan to enrich the literature with a new study. Therefore, this study fills the gaps to cover other factors that impacted the Jordanian students' congratulations in their notebooks.

In the study by Hambali, Risdianto, and Rahma^[13], they found seven expressive speech types within fifty-one comments. Indeed, they found 26 for sorrow, four for con-

gratulations, two for gratitude, 13 for praise, four for happiness, and 1 each for blame and regret, respectively. Another similar study by Al-Nasrawi (2024)^[14] noted that pragmatic markers aid in explaining the ambiguities of phrases, which a non-native speaker would not easily understand without analysis. Contributions in this direction were made by Bouchard and Neveux (2024) and also by Mohd Khatatbeh.

Azam and Saleem (2018)^[15] analyzed Punjabi EFL learners' congratulatory strategy use as compared to that of British English speakers. In this case, they refer to Elwood's (2004)^[16] taxonomy of congratulatory speech acts. The findings showed that in their L2 production, Punjabi EFL learners used strategies different from those produced by British English speakers. In another study, Can (2011)^[17] explored the cultural differences in the conceptualization of congratulations in British culture and *tebrik* and *kutlama* in Turkish culture through a corpus-based analysis supported by the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach, while developing the cultural scripts of these terms. The study has revealed cultural differences and similarities in the contexts and strategies of congratulatory expressions across those cultures.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Congratulations is one type of illocutionary act, according to Searle (1969)^[18], which features four particular rules.

(1) **Propositional Content Rule:** This rule indicates that something must be happening or occurring and is usually directly related to the listener.

(2) **Preparatory Rule:** This involves something related to the listener's concerns and which the speaker deliberately knows.

(3) **Sincerity Rule:** This depicts the speaker's earnest joy regarding the incident.

(4) **Key Rule:** This means that the speaker shows their pleasure in honor of the occasion.

In this act, the hearer is the focus, but he does not control the event celebrated. Searle and Vanderveken (1985)^[19] describe congratulations as an acknowledgment of good fortune given to the hearer. The speakers in this event want to inform the hearer about his/her feelings about such a great event as Wierzbicka (1987)^[20]. In this research, the analysis will divide the congratulation text into three parts, which are the opening, body, and closing text, to be able to classify the congratulations that are related to each other and to be able to shed light on their exact meaning which could be related to the student's culture, traditions, religion that are performed in a specific context. This study followed Elwood's (2004)^[16] study on analyzing congratulation speeches and Searle's (1976)^[21] study. The congratulatory texts are divided into the opening, body, and closing of the message of congratulations. Culture, tradition, context and setting, and religious socio-pragmatic variables are considered in the analysis based on previous studies on congratulations and their impact on the writers of congratulations. All terms, words, sentences, and expressions are analyzed in relation to Jordanian culture and the academic setting of the events. The following **Figure 1** explains the stages of analyzing the data and socio-pragmatic variables that are considered in the analysis:

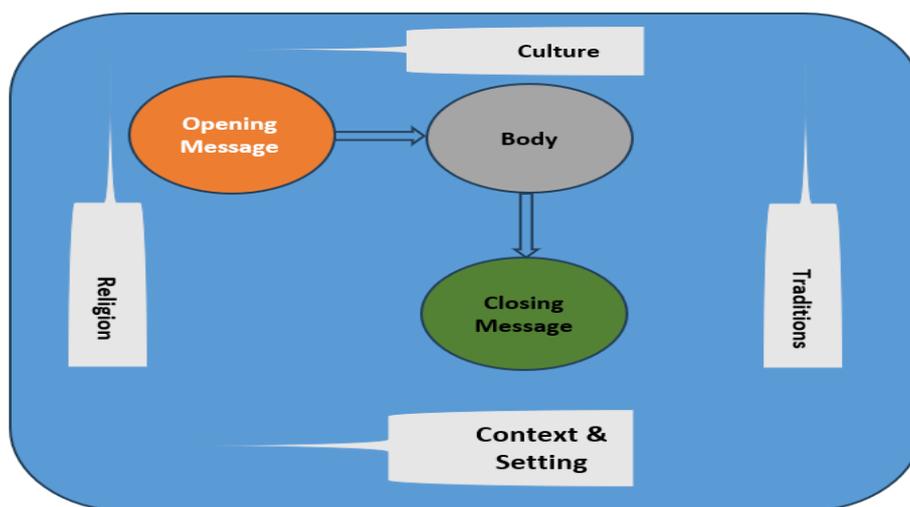


Figure 1. The Processes of analyzing the congratulation texts.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study uses observations and memos to gather data from graduation notebooks. Musante and DeWalt (2010)^[22] recommend that observers focus on understanding what occurs and the reasons behind it, distinguishing regular activities from irregular ones, and noting variations to gain a comprehensive view of the event from multiple perspectives. Observers should also identify negative cases or exceptions. When behaviors align with the study’s theoretical objectives, they should seek similar instances for observation and plan systematic observations of these behaviors or events. The quantitative data revolved around the number of strategies used in the students’ congratulation notebook. There are six processes followed to apply the observations and memos methods which are:

- 1- Getting permission to collect the list of graduate students in 2024 from Jerash University.
- 2- Randomly select ten students from the list of graduates to collect data from their congratulatory notebooks.
- 3- Contact the students and get their acceptance to collect the data from their congratulatory notebooks.
- 4- Collect the congratulation texts from their notebooks by applying the observation to the texts and
- 5- Write memos to help the researcher classify the congratulation strategies used by the writers of congratulations. As Sankaran, S. (1997)^[23] suggested, the memo tool can be utilized by researchers in qualitative research to improve reflection during an action research project.
- 6- List the similar strategies in a table based on the opening, body and closing strategies.
- 7- List the examples and the strategies to be analyzed by the researcher in detail by following Searle (1969)^[18] speech act theory and Elwood (2004)^[16] IFID classification of Congratulations Strategies.

The congratulations strategies were classified based on Elwood’s (2004)^[16] and Badarneh et al. (2022) classification of congratulation strategies into three parts: opening, body, and closing, which was previously employed by Badarneh et al.^[1] to classify and identify congratulatory strategies. The analysis involved a corpus analysis to determine the exact meaning of the congratulatory strategies used by the students. To obtain an in-depth analysis, this study focused on other variables that influenced the students’ use of congratulatory

strategies, including culture, tradition, context, setting, and religion.

The ten graduating students from the list of fifteen graduate students in the English department signed consent forms that gave the researcher permission to collect congratulatory messages from their notebooks. The participant number was limited by the small size of the graduating class; however, data collection proceeded until saturation was achieved. According to Creswell, saturation occurs when, in qualitative research, additional responses given by other participants yield no new insight. The sample was representative of this research because 70% of the graduating students contributed to this sample. These congratulatory texts were divided into categories according to the authors’ strategies, and every message was analyzed to disclose the meanings intended by its sender.

3. Analysis and Findings

The congratulatory texts are analyzed by dividing them into three parts: the opening, body, and closing. Each of these parts was analyzed in detail to shed light on the various strategies that were used by the writers of congratulations.

3.1. Opening Text

Table 1 explains the opening congratulation strategies used by the congratulation writers in the graduate students’ notebooks.

Table 1. The opening congratulation strategies.

NO.	Opening Congratulations Strategies
1	Using religious expression
2	Student name
3	Diminutive forms
4	Direct congratulate terms
5	Salutation

3.1.1. Using Religious Expressions

Religious expressions were used in most of the congratulations’ notebook pages. The reason for using these religious expressions was related to their conviction to keep track of their prophet’s recommendations to open all speeches with some religious expression, such as ‘بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ’, which means ‘in the name of Allah, the most gracious and

the most merciful'. The understanding of this opening strategy by the students was to get more blessings from Allah. Sometimes, they shorten this expression by writing 'بسم الله', which means 'in the name of Allah.' Moreover, they wrote 'الحمد لله', which means 'Praise be to Allah'. The following examples represent their usage of these expressions.

NS1: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم (in the name of Allah, the most gracious and the most merciful)

NS4: بسم الله 'in the name of Allah'

NS7: الحمد لله 'Praise be to Allah'

NS8: بسم الله نبدأ وله الحمد 'We begin with the name of Allah and his praise.'

NS10: 'Glory be to Allah' سبحان الله بالأمس بدأنا واليوم ننهي دراستنا 'Allah', yesterday we started and today we finish.

As noted in **Figure 2**, it is one of the quotes from the students' graduation notebooks, and the examples indicate that the students were assiduous in following their religious rules. They preferred to use religious terms to get Allah's blessing. As noted, they used various expressions that are traditionally used by Jordanian society to indicate their belief in the great meaning of Allah. It is a sociocultural expression understood positively to make the readers feel Allah's mercy and compassion. The expression 'سبحان الله' is not used mostly at the beginning of the Jordanian's speeches, but sometimes it was used to show their deep feeling about the time that was extremely finished. In this context, it indicated the positive feeling for the days that went with the graduate students on their study journey. As noted in the analysis, the students in this study employed additional religious expressions in their opening strategies that were not previously discussed in Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1]. An example of these expressions like 'الحمد لله، سبحان الله بالأمس بدأنا واليوم ننهي دراستنا' which means in English 'Praise be to Allah, Glory be to Allah'. Although they are from the same setting and research context, the students employed different religious expressions that represent their loyalty to Allah in all aspects of their lives.

'الحمد لله' is a great expression used to thank Allah for a great achievement or for all the good things that Allah has decided for the Muslims. So, they intentionally used it to thank Allah for reaching this great level once the students completed their studies. It is a kind expression that expresses a deep feeling for the students who have finished their studies at the university.

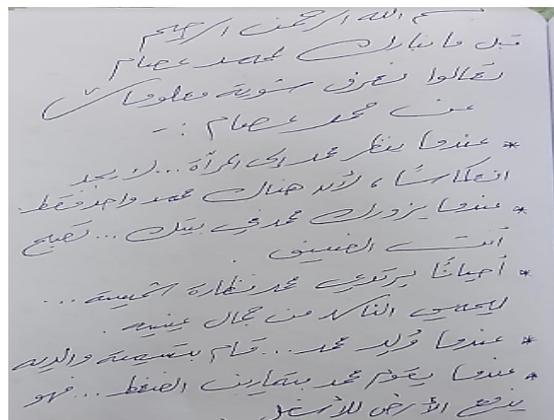


Figure 2. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

3.1.2. Student Name

This strategy of opening the congratulations texts indicated the close relationship between the writer and the graduate students. It was used to write their names at the beginning to show that they did not have distance. Obliviously, they used the names of the students such as 'Lara, Aya, Mohammad, Wael, Rwan, ...'. They used a complementary clause after the names, such as diminutives, which will be explained in the next sections. Examples of these strategies are 'محمد الغالي' (Dear Mohammad), 'لارا العزيزة' (dear Lara), 'روان رفيقة الدرب' (Dear friend Rawan), 'بيسان جميلة الجميلات' (Bisan, The most beautiful). These expressions are sometimes used with the students' names to express the strength of their relationship. In this case, the students integrate two strategic expressions in one strategy to show their closeness and respect for their colleagues. It is a polite opening strategy that was adopted to attract the readers to the ongoing text on the pages. **Figure 3** is one of the quotes from the student's graduation notebook that is illustrated using the student's name:

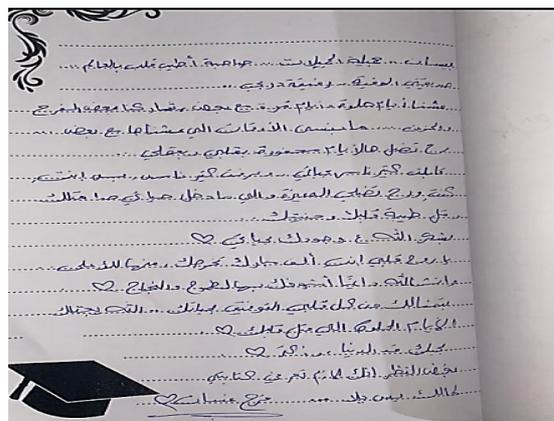


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3.1.3. Diminutive Forms

The diminutive forms were used by the students many times, especially by the female students to female graduates. They liked to call them diminutives to express their feelings of closeness and strong relationships. The following examples showed part of these diminutives that were used by the students to their graduate friends.

- 'حمادة العزيز' (This diminutive form was used for a person whose name is Ahmad, Mohammad or Mahmoud).
- 'أمون' (This diminutive was used for different female names such as Eman, Amani, or Amira)
- 'رورو' (This diminutive was used for female names such as Sara, Samar, Samiah).
- 'شوش' (This diminutive was used for female names such as Shahad, Shia'a, Shereen).

The writers of congratulations in the preceding examples showed that Jordanian students preferred to use diminutive forms in their congratulations. Female students used them mostly because they traditionally liked to show kindness and soften their speeches with each other. **Figure 4** is one of the quotes from the student's graduation notebook that is illustrated using one of the diminutive forms:

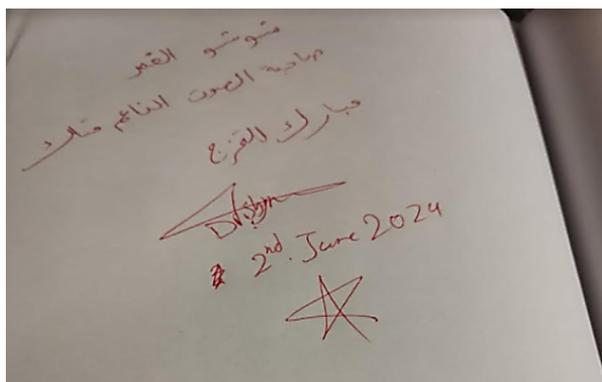


Figure 4. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

The interesting finding in this usage was related to using the same diminutive form for different names. For example, they used 'حمادة /حمودة' for various names such as 'Mohammad, Ahmad or Mahmoud'. Similarly, the female students used 'رورو' for different female names such as 'Rawan, Ro'a, and Raya.'

This finding indicates the limited diminutive forms that could be used based on the sounds of the names which could begin with the same sounds. Moreover, the male students had

limited usage for the diminutives because they did not like to indicate themselves as younger or softer than others. Contrastively, females like to be called with diminutives, which indicates that they are younger or softer. So, the inequality of using diminutives could be associated with the gender of the communicators, which was not discussed by previous research like Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1], who covered the terms of endearment without specifically indicating the impact of gender on communicators and its types of forms used by the students in their congratulatory terms. This research clearly explained the role of the gender aspect in students' formulation of their congratulations, shedding light on what is acceptable and unacceptable in their congratulations according to their gender. Research was conducted on the diminutive expressions in Mosuli speech. The researcher revealed that females frequently use diminutive expressions as a positive politeness strategy that demonstrates an emotional and compassionate sense (Mohammed & AL-Bajjari (2023)^[24]. This research found that the females preferred to use the diminutives where necessary, but the interesting finding was that they used them more than the male participants. The reason was related to the common cultural norms that obligated the males to avoid using such terms as diminutives, except in some situations when they call their friends, which enables them to use diminutive terms.

3.1.4. Direct Congratulate Terms

Direct congratulations were used when the students wanted to show their happiness to their friends. They sometimes wrote their words on a full page to represent their feelings. Using this strategy by the writers of congratulations supports Elwood's (2004)^[16] Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) to classify the congratulation strategy. They utilize this strategy in one word in different forms or with numbers such as 'مبارووووك' (congratulation), 'مباراارك' (congratulation), '1000 مباروك' (1000 congratulations), 'مليون مباروك' (Million congratulations). These congratulatory forms are represented at the beginning of the pages the students used to show their feelings to their friends. The meaning of them was approximately similar. The difference between them was using some other words with them or numbers or writing them with repetition for part of the word's letters. **Figure 5** is one of the quotes from the student graduation notebook that is illustrated using direct congratulate terms:

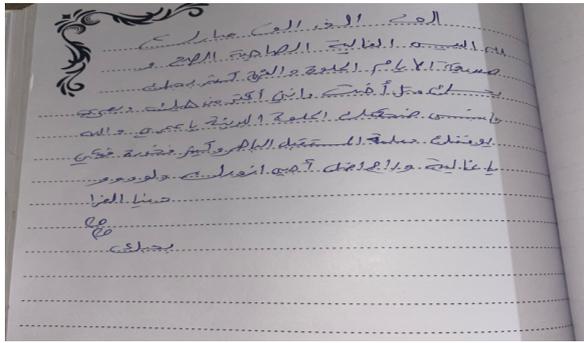


Figure 5. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

This strategy is a novel approach that could be integrated with the study’s findings on the same phenomenon. It was not previously discussed, as in Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1], who stated that the students sometimes did not open their congratulations with any form. The students in this research were obviously using this strategy to express their happiness to their colleagues. Accordingly, the impact of the Jordanian varieties on the students’ congratulations enlightens a new contribution in this study. This new contribution can help future researchers investigate various cultural forms in different regions of Jordan to identify additional reasons for these differences, based on regional cultural differences within Jordan.

3.1.5. Salutation

The most salutation used by the students was ‘السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته’, which means ‘Peace and blessings to you.’ This is the traditional Islamic salutation form that all Muslims worldwide use once they speak or write to each other. So, the students culturally preferred to use this opening in their congratulations as it is normally used by them in their daily communications. Figure 6 is one of the quotes from the student’s graduation notebook that illustrates salutation:

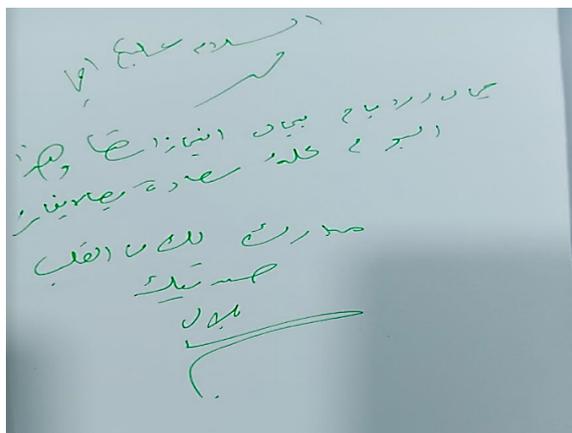


Figure 6. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

Badarneh et al. (2022)^[1] found out that the students utilized salutations in their congratulations with examples that are related to some religious expressions and terms of address, but this research explored other expressions that are not related to the same salutation terms that showed their depth feelings and relationships, such as ‘حياتي’ My love, ‘ابداء الكلام بالسلام’ I begin my speech with peace be upon you, ‘كيفك؟’ How are you? The students use these salutation forms exclusively once they are very close to each other. They preferred to use them to change the traditional openings that were used by others in the previous pages. The religious impact on the students in their salutation was clear, for preferring to use the Islamic salutation in the congratulation notebooks, which was ‘السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته’, which means ‘Peace and blessings to you.’

3.2. Body

The data showed that the writers of congratulations preferred to use five strategies. Table 2 shows these strategies: congratulation statements, happiness clauses, compliments, good wishes, and attaching presents. Each strategy is explained with examples to shed light on the exact meaning of using it by the writers of the congratulations.

Table 2. Strategies of congratulations in the body texts.

NO.	Congratulation Strategies
1	Congratulation statements
2	Happiness clauses
3	Complements
4	Good wishes
5	Attaching presents

3.2.1. Congratulations

As Searle (1976)^[21] stated, the illocutionary act is the action itself, performed in words. For example, the congratulation act is the words used to perform congratulations, such as saying congratulations, I am happy to know that you have graduated, let us make a party for your graduation, etc. Moreover, Elwood (2004)^[16] claimed that IFID can be performed in different strategies by expressing happiness, joking, encouraging and other IFID devices used by the person who offers congratulations. This strategy was exhibited once the writers of congratulations directly used the word ‘congratulation’ (مبارك، مبروك) at the beginning of the body text in the notebooks. This research aligns with Badarneh et

about them. They mentioned their compliments to show their notable, distinctive positive personalities. Many examples indicate compliments in the writer's congratulation texts such as 'it is not a strange accomplishment for such great students like you' (مو غريب هالانجاز على طالب مثلكم), 'you are one of the best students who I have known to be very polite' (من افضل), 'you are beautiful like your achievement that you got' (انت جميلة مثل انجازك الي حققتيه), 'A well-mannered student always does the best attainment' (الطالب حسن السلوك بعمل افضل الإنجازات). **Figure 9** is one of the quotes from the student's graduation notebook that illustrates the complement form:

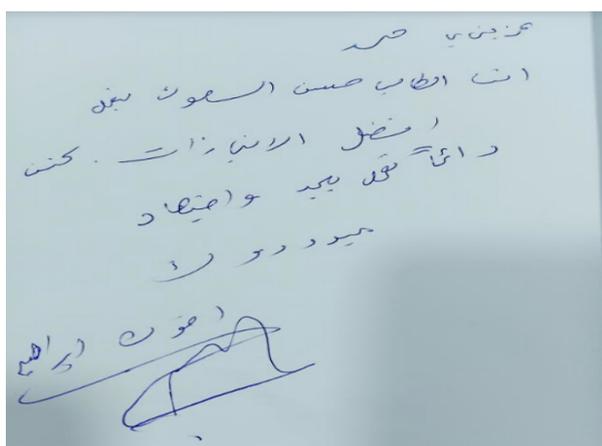


Figure 9. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

Although the performance of complements sometimes embarrasses the hearers in the verbal speech act, the written speech act excludes this kind of reaction by the hearers. The understanding of such great complements in the written text expressed the great emotional meaning that the writer implicitly conveyed to the receivers of the actions. As noted on the congratulation pages, some students wrote a word of gratitude to those who wrote their kind compliments. In other words, the graduate students showed their happiness with the words the writers wrote to them because they were attracted by their feelings, which were explicitly or implicitly presented in their texts.

3.2.4. Good Wishes

An offer of good wishes is one of the IFIDs stated by Elwood (2004)^[16]. The writers of the congratulations offered that in different forms in the graduation notebooks. This strategy was one of the most important strategies used by the writers to congratulate the graduating students' notebooks.

The reason was related to the writer's various wishes for the students after they finish their studies at the university. Communication preferences vary based on gender, with males tending to focus on getting a job and women tending to focus on getting married. This study demonstrates that the gender factor played a significant role in the students' formation of conclusions, as illustrated in the examples. The congratulatory forms of the females were often different from the males' forms. This feature was not thoroughly highlighted and analyzed by previous researchers. For the females' wishes, they illustrated their wishes which were related to the female's interests such as 'أتمنى لك زواجا سعيدا بعد هذا الانجاز' (I wish you will get a happy marriage after this achievement), 'كل' (All my happiness wishes for you and to get an interesting marriage), 'عقبال ما نسمع عن' (We look forward to hearing from you getting the best job), 'أتمنى لك حياة سعيدة مع عائلة مثلكم' (I wish you a very happy family like you), 'امنياتك ليكم' (All my wishes for you to prove all your wishes and what you like to attain), 'ان شاء الله نشوفك عاروس قريبا' (I wish you were bride soon). As observed in the examples of female wishes, they wrote that their wishes were mostly related to marriage and attaining jobs. This indicator demonstrated their interest after completing their studies.

Contrastively, the male students rarely wrote marriage wishes for male or female students after completing their studies. Most of their wishes were related to getting the best jobs, positions or health. These wishes were illustrated in their written texts such as 'أتمنى لك وافر الصحة وافضل الوظائف' (I wish you good health and a good job), 'عقبال الوظيفة' (I wish you get the best position in your future job), 'انت مميز وياذن الله رح تتوظف باحسن وظيفة' (You are a distinguished person and I wish Allah will give you the best job), 'ان شاء الله نشوفك عاريس يا حلو' (I wish we will see you groom), 'أتمنى لك وافر الصحة و السعادة صديقي العزيز' (I wish you my dear friend a full of health and happiness), 'عقبال ما نشوفك وزير يا امير' (I wish you will be a minister my prince), 'أتمنى لك حياة سعيدة في ضل والديك ومن تحب' (I wish you a happy life with your parents and loved ones). The examples demonstrated the interests of the males which were almost different from the females' interests. **Figure 10** is one of the quotes from the student's graduation notebook that illustrates using good wishes:

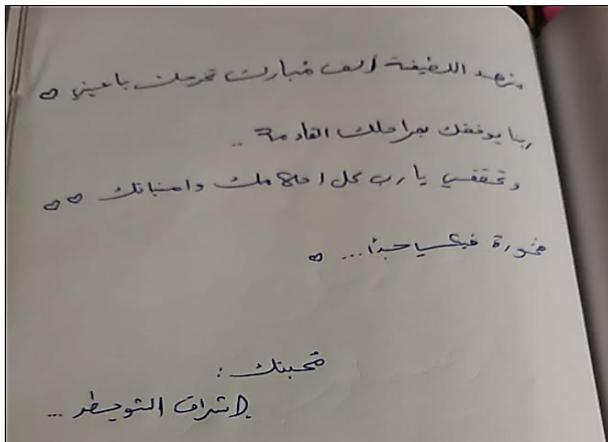


Figure 10. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

This indicator explained that the male students wish to prove these wishes in their previous communications with each other. This kind of wish showed the very polite feelings that the writers had for the graduating students. As known to everyone worldwide, health is the best treasury they have in their lives. So, the male or female writers' wishes consisted of these for the students. Males are particularly responsible for their families and relatives in Arabic culture. Because of that, the males' congratulations indicated that they wish for the graduated students to have the ability to be responsible once they have a good job to take care of their families. A very limited number of male students wrote for the students to get married because it is a great goal they must be responsible for. Using religious words such as 'ان شاء الله' represented that they were following the cultural and religious practices in their communications. Religions affect Jordanian speech, as explained by Al-Natour et al. (2024)^[25]. They stated that the term of address 'أختي' meant 'sister' and elaborated another different meaning which was related to the religious relationship among Muslims. The impact of culture and religion was indicated in both female's and males' wishes. So, most of them prefer these wishes to the graduated students to be able to get married. This illocutionary act demonstrated the cultural aspect of the Jordanians. The men have to be responsible to be able to get married.

3.2.5. Attaching Presents

The writers of congratulations noted the sense of humor in this strategy once they attached a little money to the graduation notebook pages. The meaning of this strategy is consistent with the joking strategy mentioned in the IFID by Elwood (2004)^[16]. They sometimes attached just half a

dinar, ten cents, or simple things like empty small envelopes. Traditionally, Jordanians give presents 'نقوت', which could be a common gift or money present which could not be less than 10 JD. So, once they attached like these presents, they liked to joke with the graduated students to have a memory that makes them laugh once they see them. The attachment of presents was observed in many pages of the congratulatory notebooks at the end of the written speech on the pages. Subsequently, with the constitutive rules proposed by Searle (1969:67)^[18], this strategy is concerned with preparatory rule once the writers of congratulations believe that this congratulation event is interesting for the graduated students. So, they want to show their interest by attaching a present for them in their graduation notebooks. The writers of congratulations employed the essential rule without words in this strategy but they express their pleasure by attaching the present to make the graduated students feel happy about them. Figure 11 is one of the quotes from the student graduation notebook that illustrated attaching present:

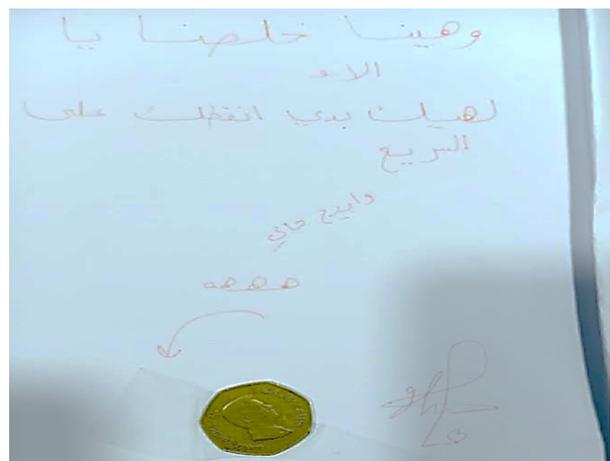


Figure 11. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

The writers of the congratulations for the students used this strategy as a sense of humor in this context, which the graduating students understood positively. This result aligns with Badarneh et al.^[1] and Al-Shboul et al.^[3], who ensured that the amount of money attached to the congratulations can carry different meanings, such as humor or presents 'نقوت'. The small presents could not be given during the actual congratulatory event because they would indicate an impolite or inappropriate act by the giver to the receiver. However, it was understood politely in the academic context and setting once the writers of congratulations attached them to the

graduating students. The impact of traditions, context, and setting was clearly employed in this strategy.

3.3. Closing Text

Closing congratulation texts, in particular, were limited to writing a word, signatures, simple expressions, or clauses. Some of the students closed their congratulations by attaching a present. An example of their closing congratulations was by writing 'صديقك للابد وائل' (Your forever friend-Wael), 'كل التحايا' (best regards), 'اختك العزيزة شيماء' (Your beloved sister-Shaima'a), 'صديقك الوفي' (Your faithful friend), 'بالرفاه والبنين' (With prosperity and children), 'بالتوفيق' (Good luck), 'اتطلع لاستمرار صداقتنا للابد' (I look forward to being friends forever), 'مودتي' (My best wishes). The writers used *Self-related comments, an expression of envy and longing*, one of Elwood's (2004)^[16] IFID. As the texts showed, they sought to make friends and expected to stay in contact after finishing their university studies. Similarly, they tried to insist on their relationship by using honest words such as 'your sister, your beloved, forever.' These expressions express their deep, honest feelings toward their friends who will leave the university after graduation. **Figure 12** is one of the quotes from the student's graduation notebook that illustrates closing the text of congratulations:

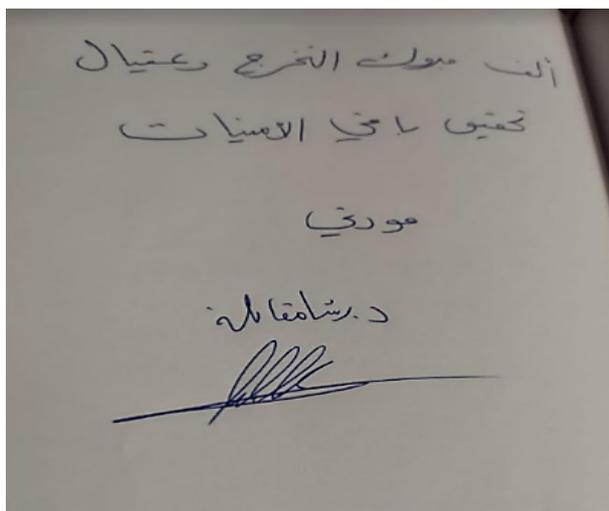


Figure 12. This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

As noted, the writers of congratulations closed the congratulations briefly. The reason for that was related to the body of the text they wrote before closing the congratulations. They consider writing a lot in this speech context

as not required because they want to use expressive, brief words, expressions, or clauses. This kind of writing represents the contextual impact on the writers as they could write just on one page, not more than that. This limited choice obligated them to write more than one sentence in the body and to avoid writing long texts at the end of the page. They carefully used very polite and kind closing texts to leave a good impression on the students about their emotions toward them. The study recommends the use of the classification of Badarneh et al. 2022^[1] and highlights that short ending texts, as contributed in our study, including the body and opening strategies of the students' congratulations, can be examined further in future research to identify the cohesion structure of the strategies used by the congratulators. This can add to their understanding of linguistic competency and delve into the impact of their culture and identity as they form their conclusions.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the congratulations strategies that the writers of congratulations used for the graduating students after they finished or approximately finished their bachelor's studies at Jerash University. The data were collected from 10 students' congratulation notebooks. The speech act that was analyzed in this research was written. Searle's (1976)^[21] theory of speech acts and Elwood's (2004)^[16] were followed to analyze the data. As the analysis showed, they used five opening strategies: religious expression, student name, diminutive forms, direct congratulate terms, and salutation. The body congratulation strategies were congratulation statements, happiness clauses, compliments, good wishes, and attaching presents. The closing strategies used by the writers were words, signatures, simple expressions, or clauses—attached presents. As the analysis exhibited, the Jordanian culture, tradition, religion, setting, and context affected their congratulation texts. The impact of these elements was noted in their speeches. Therefore, this study revealed that the formulation of congratulations was structured based on the sociocultural variables that directed their speeches. Consequently, the gender variable varied in its formulation, indicating they had to be careful about the congratulations offered to the graduated students. This study recommends that future researchers look into the impact of

congratulations on graduate students after they read them. This future research can be settled by interviewing the graduated students to get an in-depth understanding of the congratulation forms that were written for them in their congratulation notebooks by the writers of congratulations. Moreover, congratulations on the new positions among professors, or once one of the professors is promoted to associate professor, or when professors are examined by future researchers. Additionally, future researchers can compare the morphological and syntactical forms of the professors' congratulations with the findings of this research to identify similarities and differences between the forms of congratulations that students and their professors use in the same setting.

It is also worth mentioning that the conclusion of the study agrees with (Badarneh et al.^[1], Al-Shboul et al.^[3], Celaya et al.^[8], Mohammed & AL-Bajjari^[24]). The study found new strategies that have not been discussed before, such as the direct congratulation terms strategy as part of the opening strategies, and introduced new forms of congratulations, including *مباروك ومبارك*, used by the students. One example of the new contribution of this study is the role of gender in influencing the forms of congratulations students use, especially in the happiness clauses strategy. The various forms of female and male congratulations clearly represented the impact of the social, gender, and cultural variables in their expressions. Regarding the new forms utilized by the students in this study, they performed their congratulations using forms that were not previously mentioned in other studies. They correlated them with other social events, such as marriage, and used rhythm clauses.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.M.A.-N. and A.B.; methodology, Z.A.; software, K.B.A.-B.; validation, M.M.A.-N., A.M.M.A.-H. and Z.A.; formal analysis, M.M.A.-N., and A.M.M.A.-H.; investigation, M.M.A.-N., and Z.A.; resources, K.B.A.-B.; data curation, A.B.; writing—original draft preparation, M.M.A.-N. and A.B.; writing—review and editing, M.M.A.-N., A.M.M.A.-H. and Z.A.; visualization, K.B.A.-B.; supervision, A.M.M.A.-H. and Z.A.; project administration, M.M.A.-N. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This work received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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