

ARTICLE

Congratulatory Responses among Vietnamese and American People: A Contrastive Study

Thanh Hien Le Do ^{1,2*} , Vien Truong ^{3,4} , Thai Hong Ly ⁵ 

¹ Department of Vietnamese Studies, University of Foreign Languages and International Studies, Hue University, Hue City 530000, Vietnam

² School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, Can Tho City 900000, Vietnam

³ Department of English, University of Foreign Languages and International Studies, Hue University, Hue City 530000, Vietnam

⁴ Department of Foreign Languages, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh city 700000, Vietnam

⁵ Center for Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, Can Tho City 900000, Vietnam

ABSTRACT

This study compares strategies employed by Vietnamese and American speakers in responding to congratulations, focusing on how power dynamics, social relationships, and cultural norms influence these responses. By examining these cultural differences, the research aims to shed light on how communicative behavior varies in different societal contexts. The research employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore strategy use. We gathered data using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) given to 78 Vietnamese and 78 American participants. The DCT included three situational scenarios, each designed to reflect varying power dynamics and social contexts. Findings indicate that while both cultures exhibit a preference for acceptance strategies with Appreciation tokens, there are notable differences in the specific tactics employed. Vietnamese speakers, influenced by collectivist values, often use a variety of strategies such as Offering wish, Suggestion, and Promise in their responses. In contrast, American speakers are more likely to express personal feelings and gratitude directly. The study finds that power dynamics, in relation to social distance,

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Thanh Hien Le Do, Department of Vietnamese Studies, University of Foreign Languages and International Studies, Hue University, Hue City 530000, Vietnam; Email: ldthanhvien@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 1 April 2025 | Revised: 10 April 2025 | Accepted: 12 April 2025 | Published Online: 14 April 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i4.9554>

CITATION

Le Do, T.H., Truong, V., Ly, T.H., 2025. Congratulatory Responses among Vietnamese and American People: A Contrastive Study. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(4): 771–787. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i4.9554>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2025 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

significantly shape response patterns, with Vietnamese speakers showing more formal, hierarchical responses and American speakers engaging in more egalitarian exchanges. The data coding followed Herbert's taxonomy, with modifications made to account for the cultural differences observed. The findings highlight the impact of cultural values in shaping communicative behavior and contribute to the broader field of cross-cultural pragmatics.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Pragmatics; Congratulatory Response; Discourse Completion Task; Power in Language Use; Social Relationships

1. Introduction

The study of speech acts is essential in cross-cultural pragmatics, providing important insights into how language served not only to communicate information but also to uphold social connections. Linguistic behaviors, as defined by Austin and further developed by Searle^[1, 2], encompass a variety of communicative functions such as requests, apologies, congratulations, and compliments. Each function is governed by cultural norms and societal expectations. Understanding these acts in cross-cultural settings is crucial for promoting effective cross-cultural communication and reducing misunderstandings in an increasingly interconnected world^[3]. Among these linguistic behaviors, congratulatory acts are a common practice in most cultures, allowing the giver to express joy and share their altruistic emotions with the recipient, thereby reinforcing the relationship between the two parties^[4]. Elwood also confirms that congratulatory expressions hold a special position as a social catalyst^[5], helping to solidify interpersonal relationships by recognizing and affirming the achievements of others. This altruistic sentiment can lead to a variety of responses in alignment with the values of the recipient's cultural group^[6]. Much like greetings that expect a reciprocal reply, congratulations also anticipate a response from the recipient. This congratulatory-response sequence can be viewed as a pair of adjacencies, where an initiating utterance is expected to elicit a standardized response^[7]. In other words, the recipient must respond to the congratulations, whether by accepting or rejecting it. Depending on the social context and the participants involved, congratulatory expressions can lead to different reactions and applications.

The position of congratulatory acts within Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is quite complex^[8], as its classification within positive or negative strategies depends on the specific communicative function it serves in each interaction.

As an expression of praise and goodwill, congratulations reflect the speaker's positive evaluation of a joyful event or situation, aimed at maintaining and reinforcing relationships between the speaker and the recipient^[9]. However, it may also serve other communicative purposes. Congratulations can be seen as a potential threat to the recipient's negative face, as it may compel the recipient to think of an appropriate response or action, thereby limiting their freedom of action^[8]. At times, congratulatory expressions may be used sarcastically, rather than sincerely. Therefore, responding to congratulations appropriately and politely is a matter that warrants careful consideration.

The study of speech acts has emerged as an important area of research in linguistics and communication studies. However, current research on the similarities and differences in congratulatory speech acts across British English, American English, and other languages still remains relatively limited^[10–14]. Moreover, studies on responses to congratulations are even rarer compared to those in the same expressive group, such as responses to compliments^[15]. Zhao also observes that previous research on responses to congratulations has often been viewed solely as a cultural factor, neglecting the impact of social variables^[15]. In Vietnam, no study has yet deeply explored the characteristics and strategies of responding to congratulations among the Vietnamese and the influence of social variables on selecting appropriate strategies. Therefore, this study compares congratulatory response strategies between Vietnam and the United States to further understand responses to congratulations in non-Western settings and offer important insights into the cross-cultural comparisons of congratulatory practices in two linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. The research questions are as follows:

- (1) To what extent do strategies for responding to congratulations differ between Vietnamese and American speak-

ers?

- (2) What are the influences of the recipient's power on the selection of congratulatory response strategies in each culture?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Congratulation and Congratulatory Responses

Congratulations and their corresponding responses are frequently employed as speech acts in everyday language use. The primary function of these acts is to express sincere joy toward others, while simultaneously conveying a sense of solidarity, goodwill, and respect for the addressee^[16, 17]. The act of responding to congratulations, simply put, refers to the action of replying to someone's congratulatory utterance within a communicative exchange^[15]. This response may be verbal or non-verbal, such as through gestures or facial expressions, etc.^[18]. From a conversational perspective, congratulations and their responses are considered the smallest units of dialogue, formed through the interaction of participants. Similar to the expression of congratulations, the response to congratulations carries different meanings and cultural values depending on the context. The form of response varies according to factors such as context, level of education, life experience, personality, power distance, age, gender, profession, familiarity, and the specific content and manner of the congratulatory expression. Emery argues that even within the same culture, giving and responding to congratulations is more complex than one might assume^[19], as social factors can influence how congratulations are received. The expression and response to congratulations in cross-cultural contexts can uncover deeper societal structures, such as power dynamics, social distance, and imposition^[8]. Power dynamics, in particular, plays a central role in shaping communicative strategies across cultures. In high-context cultures such as Vietnam, where social hierarchy and respect are deeply embedded in daily interactions, the act of congratulating often reflects deference and politeness, especially when directed toward individuals of higher status^[20]. In contrast, in low-context cultures like the United States, where egalitarianism is more prominent, congratulatory expressions tend to be more direct and informal, regardless of the interlocutors' relative social positions^[21]. The ra-

tionale for comparing the speech act of congratulation in Vietnamese and American cultures lies in their contrasting cultural frameworks, particularly regarding power relations. Vietnam's collectivist orientation emphasizes group harmony and respect for authority, which influences how individuals communicate in hierarchical relationships^[22]. On the other hand, the individualistic culture of the United States promotes equality and personal achievement, often reflected in more direct and expressive communicative styles^[23]. By exploring these cultural nuances, this study seeks to highlight both the similarities and differences between Vietnamese and American congratulatory response strategies and to examine the extent to which the addressee's power influences these strategies in each cultural setting.

2.2. Politeness Theory

It can be observed that congratulations serve as expressions of joy, happiness, and a positive regard for the achievements or mere fortune of others, or they may convey well-wishes during special occasions. Such expressions must adhere to politeness norms to foster a positive affective response in the recipient. Consequently, congratulatory acts can be regarded as a form of politeness that deftly incorporates elements of face enhancement, conveying the speaker's goodwill, implicitly signaling camaraderie, and affirming the desire for the recipient to acknowledge the sincerity of the speaker's gesture^[8].

Leech contends that certain speech acts are intrinsically polite^[24], such as congratulations, because they provide material or emotional benefits to the addressee, thereby fulfilling a civility function. Congratulations fulfill several key politeness maxims: modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Furthermore, Leech argues that congratulations are face-enhancing acts that can bolster either the speaker's or the addressee's face. As a result, congratulatory acts are typically categorized as positive politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies, in turn, are employed to reinforce solidarity and cultivate social bonds, as they reflect the speaker's intention to establish rapport and foster connection with the recipient^[8]. Therefore, congratulatory acts do not necessitate mitigation but should instead be articulated with heightened politeness through amplifying structures.

For the recipient of congratulations, the agreement maxim mandates that the recipient should not reject the con-

gratulatory remarks. However, the act of accepting congratulations might violate the modesty maxim^[24]. Thus, if not performed with tact, a congratulatory act might cause embarrassment or discomfort for the recipient. Similarly, a poorly executed response may result in the recipient being perceived as excessively arrogant or overly modest. Accordingly, a response is deemed polite when it preserves and elevates the face of both parties while minimizing potential material and emotional harm. In this regard, it is essential that communicative exchanges surrounding congratulatory acts adhere to politeness maxims, and that positive politeness strategies are deployed when offering or responding to congratulations. Such strategies mitigate face-threatening behavior, strengthen interpersonal solidarity, and reinforce the relationship between the interlocutors. Additionally, cultural nuances must be carefully considered, as each culture dictates its own conventions for politeness. For example, Americans usually prefer to be direct in social interactions and get straight to the point, while Vietnamese culture tends to value indirectness, more explanation, and implying meaning^[25]. Consequently, responses to congratulatory acts in dialogues must reflect the communicative practices rooted in the cultural contexts of both Americans and Vietnamese, while also conforming to the principle-driven behavioral norms of each society.

2.3. The Effects of Power Dynamics on Congratulatory Responses

One area of research in cross-cultural pragmatics is the investigation of the impact of factors such as power, social distance, gender, age, and others on the selection of politeness strategies in different cultures. These factors are considered key social determinants that influence linguistic behavior^[26]. In other words, social factors act as independent variables affecting the choice of appropriate linguistic variants in specific contexts—where the act of responding to congratulations is the dependent variable, and power represents two independent variables.

Several experimental studies and the theory of Brown and Levinson have emphasized the crucial role of these contextual factors in the degree of politeness displayed in conversation^[8]. Power influences the choice between strategies that either enhance or mitigate the positive or negative face of participants. Determining the variable of power is not

always straightforward, as this concept can be defined in various ways depending on the study. In addition to its varied definitions, power also appears under different terms such as social power, status, dominance, or authority^[27]. According to Hofstede^[22], power is understood as the degree to which individuals with less power in an organization or institution (such as family, school, or community) expect and accept unequal power distribution. The concept of power distance is used to measure the level of acceptance of hierarchical structures within society.

In Hofstede's model of six cultural dimensions^[22], societies with high power distance indices typically emphasize order and rank, with those in lower positions (offspring, students, employees) tending to submit and show respect towards those in higher positions (parents, teachers, leaders). The power distance index of Vietnam, measured by Hofstede, is 70/100, significantly higher than the 40/100 index of the United States. Although Vietnam was not the primary focus of Hofstede's research, based on his criteria, it is evident that Vietnamese culture is more hierarchical and stratified than American culture. This has also been highlighted in several studies on Vietnamese communicative culture. Trần argues that due to the emphasis on hierarchical order, Vietnamese people often use "*indirect, roundabout, and tactful expressions*", contrasting with the "*direct, straightforward communication style*" of Americans^[25]. Moreover, Vietnamese people tend to use formal language in official communication, which is clearly reflected in the complex system of pronouns and address forms. For example, students do not call their teachers by name directly but must use appropriate titles, while in Western cultures, using first names is accepted without being considered disrespectful^[25]. Nguyễn refers to this as relational power, asserting that the degree of power between two individuals influences the choice of communicative forms—ranging from the use of direct/indirect language and address pronouns to expressions through body language and paralinguistic elements^[28]. Roever divides power into three levels: high, equal, and low^[29]. High power refers to the dominant role in the interaction; equal power indicates equality and low power refers to a disadvantaged position in communication. Meanwhile, Nguyễn offers a more detailed classification of power into groups such as status power, age, gender, and economics, among others^[28]. This study will focus on status power, categorized into three levels: higher,

equal, and lower.

2.4. Previous Studies on Congratulatory Responses

Previous studies have paid more attention to compliments and their responses than to responses to congratulations. This is because the sense of joy created by the speaker, whether directly or indirectly, in praising the listener's assets, personality, skills, etc.^[30], as well as the diverse types of subsequent responses (such as acceptance, avoidance, or rejection)^[31], plays a central role. Chen also reported that American English speakers' responses to compliments predominantly follow Leech's the Agreement Maxim (e.g., limited syntactical range, typically accepting the compliment)^[24, 31], while responses from Chinese speakers are mainly dominated by Leech's the Modesty Maxim (e.g., rejecting the compliment)^[24]. Building on Chen's initial findings^[31], Chen and Yang conducted a more recent longitudinal study on compliment responses in Chinese and found that the majority of participants tended to accept compliments^[32]. This result marks a significant shift, attributed to the influx of Western cultural influences into China. Culpeper and Pat's study on compliment responses in social media in Hong Kong found that acceptance strategies were the most common type of response, accompanied by expressions of gratitude, highlighting the complex relationship between the Agreement Maxim and the Obligation Maxim^[33, 34].

Unlike the well-developed body of research on compliments and responses to compliments, which has been widely explored in cultural and intercultural studies^[11], as well as in language variations^[35], congratulations — though also a common politeness behavior — have not received the same level of attention^[36], nor have responses to congratulations. One possible reason for this lack of focus on responses to congratulations lies in the widespread assumption that most Western cultures simply use expressions of appreciation, such as “*thank you*”^[32], while in Eastern cultures, it is often assumed that recipients of congratulations tend to avoid or reject them^[31]. Herbert also noted that while native English speakers prefer using phrases like “*thank you*” to accept congratulations^[37], this simple response is the most common and widespread way to acknowledge congratulations. This simplicity may stem from its use in interactions where there is social distance, or where gratitude is expressed in a

conventional, rather than emotionally charged, manner. In contrast, other cultural contexts may present more elaborate and emotionally nuanced responses, reflecting deeper layers of social interaction and relationship dynamics.

A study by Bataineh examined strategies for responding to congratulations, thanks, and apologies among 50 native Arabic speakers from Jordan and 50 native American English speakers^[38]. The study identified five main strategies for responding: acknowledging, ignoring, acknowledging and mitigating, rejecting and denigrating, and accepting and returning. Among these, the strategy of acknowledging, combined with sub-strategies such as Thanking, Expressing joy, Noticing and Attending, and Agreeing, was the most commonly used by both groups. Khalil took a new direction by investigating the strategies for responding to congratulations among students majoring in English at Duhok University in the Kurdistan region^[39]. The study also aimed to explore the similarities and differences in strategy selection between male and female respondents. Data was collected through 10 situational discourse scenarios. The results revealed that men and women selected different strategies, and their expressions of choice also varied. Men tended to choose the expression “*Thank you*” combined with congratulations, which appeared in 8 out of 10 scenarios, while women preferred the expression “*Thank you*” alone. However, both genders shared one common choice: Praying strategy combined with congratulations, as most respondents were Muslim. Zhao's research focused on exploring the influence of gender and social status on the diversity of responses to congratulations among Chinese WeChat users^[15]. The main findings revealed that both men and women showed a significant tendency to use the acceptance strategy when responding to congratulations, but social status influenced the sub-strategies used in accepting congratulations in both genders. This challenges previous notions that Chinese speakers prioritize the Modesty Maxim in responding to congratulations, instead revealing a shift toward the use of the Agreement Maxim and the integration of the Obligation Maxim, taking into account factors such as relationships and reciprocity.

However, in Vietnam, while there have been numerous studies examining strategies for responding to compliments, none have focused specifically on strategies for responding to congratulations in Vietnamese. According to Tran^[40], in

Vietnamese culture, individuals often respond negatively or reject compliments to demonstrate modesty. Similarly, Pham found that Vietnamese people tend to reject compliments more frequently^[41], as they aim to be perceived as humble in the eyes of the person offering the compliment.

Despite this, there is still limited information regarding communication behaviors in Vietnamese, particularly in terms of responses to congratulations. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of research comparing responses to congratulations in Vietnamese and American English. Addressing this gap, the current study aims to contribute to the field of cross-cultural pragmatics by exploring strategies for responding to congratulations and examining how power distance influences the responses of both Vietnamese and American speakers in everyday communication.

3. Methodology

This research follows a descriptive design and applies a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection and analysis. To examine strategy use, the quantitative analysis focuses on frequency patterns among participants, while the qualitative analysis explores specific ways in which participants construct congratulatory response speech acts. The study primarily relies on a DCT as its main research instrument.

3.1. Participants

This study involved both Vietnamese and American participants, including men and women between the ages of 18 and 54, with the majority ranging from 18 to 34. However, age was not treated as a variable due to the predominance of young adults, leading to a relatively narrow age distribution. All participants had at least an undergraduate degree. A total of 78 Vietnamese participants (33 males and 45 females) completed a DCT in Vietnamese, while 78 American participants (22 males and 56 females) completed it in English. The Vietnamese participants were recruited from undergraduate and graduate students at Can Tho University, Vietnam. In contrast, the American participants were selected from undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, individuals involved in the Coach for College program in Vietnam, former Princeton in Asia volunteers at Can Tho University, and their relatives.

3.2. Research Instrument

To collect data for the contrastive analysis of congratulatory response speech acts, a written DCT was utilized for several reasons. First, as highlighted by House and Kádár^[42], the DCT is one of the most commonly employed instruments in cross-cultural pragmatics research, particularly in examining speech act production. Second, they argue that elicited data from DCTs hold the same validity as naturally occurring data in cross-cultural pragmatics studies. Third, DCTs enable researchers to manage social variables, efficiently collect data from diverse contexts, and create comparable datasets — a challenge often encountered when working with naturally occurring data, particularly in comparative research^[36]. Lastly, the adaptability of the DCT allows it to be used across different languages, facilitating the comparison of speech act strategies across various linguistic and cultural communities under similar conditions^[43].

Due to the limited research on congratulatory responses, this study utilized a DCT with three scenarios, designed based on situations derived from previous studies on Vietnamese and American congratulatory speech acts^[12, 14, 44]. These prior studies have validated the DCT as a reliable instrument for examining congratulatory speech acts. Consequently, it can also serve as an effective tool for investigating congratulatory response strategies. Additionally, this approach allows for easy comparison of findings with both national and international studies. We developed the DCT in two language versions: Vietnamese and English. To ensure linguistic accuracy, the English version was reviewed by two American colleagues for proper wording and grammatical correctness.

The DCT comprises two main sections:

Section A gathers demographic details of participants, including nationality, native language, occupation, gender, and age.

Section B records participants' congratulatory response strategies based on the three selected scenarios. These situations were categorized according to varying levels of power dynamics: Situation 1 represents a low-to-high power interaction, Situation 2 reflects an equal power relationship, and Situation 3 illustrates a high-to-low power dynamic.

Situation 1: *You have been appointed as the new Head of the English department at a university. During your first meeting with your new colleagues, a junior lecturer congratulates you. What will you say in response to the lecturer's*

congratulations?

Situation 2: *You have just won a scholarship for further study. You have worked so hard over the last three years, and you are so happy because your hard work has finally paid off. Your best friend gets the news and congratulates you. What will you say in response to your best friend's congratulations?*

Situation 3: *You are an employee at a company. You run into your boss in the parking lot and you tell him/her that you have bought a new car. Your boss congratulates you. What will you say in response to your boss' congratulations?*

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

For the Vietnamese participants, the survey, written in Vietnamese, was directly distributed to undergraduate and graduate students at Can Tho University. Prior to participation, individuals were informed about the study's objectives, and their consent was obtained. Clear instructions were given regarding response length expectations and the contextual elements influencing the selection of congratulatory speech acts and replies in the DCT scenarios. Participants were required to provide written responses to the DCT situations. While no strict time limit was enforced, most completed the survey within 15 to 20 minutes.

For the American participants, the English version of the survey was administered through two different approaches. The first approach involved direct distribution to American students engaged in the Coach for College program in Vietnam, following the same process used for the Vietnamese participants. The second approach utilized an online Google Form, where the survey link was sent via email and Facebook to American volunteers who had previously taken part in the Princeton in Asia program at Can Tho University. These individuals were also encouraged to share the link within their networks. Furthermore, a colleague teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin, was requested to distribute the survey link among American students at the university. Data collection took place between December 2023 and March 2024. A total of 468 responses were gathered, consisting of 234 from American participants and 234 from Vietnamese participants. The collected data were categorized, coded, entered, processed, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

3.4. Data Coding and Analysis

As previously mentioned, responding to congratulations has not been studied as extensively as compliment responses. Existing studies have yet to develop a comprehensive classification of congratulatory responses or offer an in-depth analysis of their use. Elwood posits that compliments can be considered a form of implicit congratulations^[5], with compliment response strategies functioning as a means of conveying congratulations. Similarly, Placencia and Es-lami suggest that both compliment responses and responses to congratulations are commonplace social interactions that play a vital role in enhancing interpersonal relationships^[45], although they are not always easily distinguishable. Given this context, the present study adopts Herbert's taxonomy as the most appropriate model for categorizing congratulatory response strategies^[37]. The two primary response strategies to congratulations, as identified in this study, are drawn from and adapted based on Herbert's taxonomy of compliment response strategies^[37]. These strategies are categorized into two main types: acceptance and non-acceptance. Additionally, several sub-strategies are presented, accompanied by coding diagrams, in **Tables 1** and **2**.

Following the identification of congratulatory response strategies and the completion of the initial analysis, a validation process was conducted to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the classification system. To enhance the robustness of the coding framework, two colleagues — one an expert in linguistics and the other a doctoral candidate in the field — were invited to participate in the data coding process. Both independently coded the dataset, and any initial discrepancies were addressed and resolved through discussion facilitated by our guidance and support.

The systematic coding of congratulatory responses contributed to a more structured and comprehensive classification. Below, an illustrative example of the coding process is presented, demonstrating its application to an expression of congratulatory response from DCT.

"Thank you! I'm excited for what's to come!"

The above expression consists of two congratulatory response strategies:

(1) Appreciation token: *Thank you.*

(2) Expression of feelings: *I'm excited for what's to come!*

Table 1. Acceptance Strategies.

Strategies	Illustrations	Examples	
		In English	In Vietnamese
Appreciation tokens	Expression of thanks and gratitude	<i>Thank you/I appreciate...</i>	<i>Cảm ơn/Em cảm ơn sếp.</i>
Agreement	Agreeing with the congratulatory event	<i>Sure</i>	<i>Đĩ nhiên rồi/Okay</i>
Transfers	Transferring the congratulatory assertion to the first speaker	<i>I couldn't have done it without your support.</i>	Using some common words such as “Nhờ/nhờ vào...”
Comment acceptance	Offering a relevant comment on the congratulatory event	<i>It's such.../It's truly...</i>	Relevant comment on the congratulatory event
Explanation	Explaining about their achievement/effort	<i>I've worked really hard for it.</i>	Using some common words as “nỗ lực/cố gắng”
Expression of feelings	The expression of positive feelings includes joy and expectation.	<i>I am glad/thrilled/excited... I'm looking forward to...</i>	<i>Tao vui/mừng quá... Thầy cũng hân hạnh....</i>
Promise	Expression of sincere promise	<i>I will...</i>	<i>Anh sẽ/nhất định sẽ...</i>
Suggestion	A suggestion to celebrate or constructive suggestion	<i>Let's... together</i>	<i>... cùng cố gắng/phấn đấu... ...đi ăn mừng/nhậu/khao...</i>
Offering wish	Expression of sincere wish/hope	<i>I hope...</i>	<i>...mong/hi vọng... ...chúc...</i>

Table 2. Non-Acceptance Strategies.

Strategies	Illustrations	Examples	
		In English	In Vietnamese
Negation	Negating the congratulatory event		<i>Không</i>
Scale down	Minimizing the force of the congratulation	Using the structures and adjectives that carry a negative connotation regarding either the person being congratulated or the event being acknowledged.	Using some words/phrases as “hèn/thường/bình thường/quá khen/quá lời”

4. Findings

4.1. Congratulatory Response Strategies

4.1.1. Frequency of Usage of Congratulatory Response Strategies

As previously discussed, Herbert's modified framework was utilized to categorize the congratulatory response strategies^[37]. The frequency analysis shows notable variations in strategy use. **Table 3** presents a statistical comparison of the congratulatory response strategies employed by participants from Vietnam and the United States.

Vietnamese and American participants favor Acceptance Strategies as the most frequently employed response to congratulations, with Vietnamese participants using them 96.4% of the time (346 occurrences out of 359) and Americans 100% (373 occurrences out of 373). Non-acceptance strategies were extremely rare, used by just 3.6% of Vietnamese participants (13 occurrences) and none among American participants.

Among Acceptance sub-strategies, the frequency of *Appreciation Tokens* showed a significant difference: 60.9% of American participants used them, while Vietnamese participants employed this strategy in 49.9% of cases. *Offering wish*, a secondary strategy for Vietnamese speakers, was used by 10% of them, compared to only 0.5% among American speakers. Similarly, *Promise* was a common response among Vietnamese participants (8.4%), whereas it was almost negligible among American participants (0.8%). Conversely, *Expression of Feelings* was the second most frequently used strategy among American participants, with a significant 29.5% usage rate, compared to only 5.8% among Vietnamese participants. A notable finding is that Vietnamese participants also employed *Suggestion* as a response strategy, with 9.2% of them using it, whereas this strategy was rarely observed in the responses of American participants (only 1.6%). *Promise* strategy was used notably more frequently by Vietnamese participants than by American participants. Specifically, 8.4% of Vietnamese participants employed this strat-

egy in response to congratulations, compared to just 0.8% of American participants. Besides, both groups used *Transfers* similarly, with 3.1% of Vietnamese participants and 3.2% of American participants employing this strategy. Moderately used strategies were observed with *Explanation* being utilized 3.3% of the time by Vietnamese participants, com-

pared to just 1.9% among American speakers. Additionally, *Agreement* occurred 4.2% of the time among Vietnamese participants, while only 0.8% of American participants employed this strategy. Similarly, *Comment acceptance* was observed in 2.5% of Vietnamese responses, compared to 0.8% among American participants.

Table 3. Frequency of Usage of Congratulatory Response Strategies by the Participants.

Response Strategies	Vietnamese		American	
	N	%	N	%
Acceptance strategies	346	96.4	373	100
Appreciation tokens	179	49.9	227	60.9
Agreement	15	4.2	3	0.8
Transfers	11	3.1	12	3.2
Comment acceptance	9	2.5	3	0.8
Explanation	12	3.3	7	1.9
Expression of feelings	21	5.8	110	29.5
Promise	30	8.4	3	0.8
Suggestion	33	9.2	6	1.6
Offering wish	36	10	2	0.5
Non-acceptance strategies	13	3.6	0	0
Negation	2	0.5	0	0
Scale down	11	3.1	0	0
Total	359	100	373	100

4.1.2. Construction of the Speech Act of Congratulatory Response

The previous section provided a statistical analysis of the congratulatory response strategies used by both groups of speakers. The current subsection delves into a qualitative examination of how the speech act of congratulatory response is expressed in each language.

As highlighted in the previous analysis, in both cultures, *Appreciation tokens* were the most frequently used strategy in Acceptance strategies. Vietnamese speakers primarily use the concise verb (1) “*cảm ơn*” (thank) or a complete expression that includes the person thanking, the verb “*cảm ơn*”, and the recipient of the thanks, such as (2) “*Thầy cảm ơn em*”. (Thank you). Additionally, Vietnamese speakers often added politeness markers, such as (3) “*xin*” before “*cảm ơn*” to express gratitude formally. On the other hand, Americans emphasized gratitude with tokens (4) such as “*thank you*” or the verb “*appreciate*”. Furthermore, most Americans emphasize the intensity of their gratitude by adding degree modifiers like (5) “*much*” or “*so much*”.

Expression of Feelings emerged as the second most

preferred strategy among American speakers. In American English, common expressions included terms such as

(6) *I am glad/thrilled/excited...*

(7) *I'm looking forward to the work.*

Vietnamese people also express joy or positive emotions in a similar way to those congratulating them, or in response to their recent achievements, through common expressions such as

(8) *Tao vui/mừng quá...* (I'm so happy/glad...)

(9) *Thầy cũng hân hạnh được làm việc với em.* (I am also honored to work with you.)

Among the most frequently employed strategies in the collected data is *Offering wish*, which was observed more frequently among Vietnamese speakers compared to their American counterparts. This strategy was predominantly used in situations welcoming a new head of the department. Typical terms in Vietnamese of this strategy include (10) “*...chúc/mong/hi vọng...*” (wish/expect/hope), while American speakers use some common terms as (11) “*I hope...*”

Suggestion is another frequently used strategy among Vietnamese participants, particularly in scenarios involving

the purchase of a new car and best friend's scholarship. Instead of simply expressing appreciation, the congratulator suggested holding a party or a celebration or a constructive plan for future cooperation, as demonstrated in the following examples:

(12) "...đi ăn mừng/nhậu/khao..." (Go celebrate/Go drink/Treat (someone))

(13) "Chúng ta cùng phấn đấu nhé!" (Let's strive together!)

In American English, this strategy was used less, as illustrated follows:

(14) *Let's celebrate!*

Another frequently employed strategy in Vietnamese was *Promise*, which not only confirms agreement with the congratulations but also affirms a continued effort to strive in the future. A representative example from the Vietnamese data includes:

(15) "Anh sẽ cố gắng hết sức mình để hoàn thành tốt công việc." (I will do my best to complete the job well.)

In American English, similar expressions were used to communicate happiness, as demonstrated in the following examples:

(16) "I'll keep working hard as I always have."

Agreement was employed more often by Vietnamese speakers compared to their American counterparts. Specifically, it appeared 15 times in the responses of Vietnamese participants, whereas it was used 6 times by American speakers. This strategy was predominantly observed in Situation 2 (best friend's scholarship). Vietnamese speakers frequently utilized this strategy to show their agreement with the congratulatory event, as demonstrated in the following examples:

(17) "Dĩ nhiên rồi." (Of course.)

To American speakers, they agree by using the word (18) "sure".

Transfer strategy, in which the speaker agrees with the congratulatory assertion and subsequently attributes it to a third person, is illustrated in the following example. A Vietnamese participant claimed that his friend's congratulations were the main reason for his effort and success, as seen in the remark:

(19) "Nhờ lời chúc mừng của bạn cho tôi thêm động lực để cố gắng hơn." (Your congratulations give me more motivation to try harder.)

American speakers also have their own way of attributing their success to their friends, as exemplified in the following responses:

(20) "I couldn't have done it without your support."

Both Vietnamese and American participants tend to use the *Explanation* strategy to explain more about the process of gaining their achievement. The common expressions in Vietnamese and American English can be:

(21) "Đó là sự nỗ lực và cố gắng trong những năm qua." (That is the effort and hard work over the past years.)

(22) "I've worked really hard for it."

Two strategies identified in the responses of Vietnamese speakers but absent in those of American speakers were *Negation* and *Scale down*. They both belong to Non-acceptance strategy. *Scale down* was employed 11 times by Vietnamese participants to minimize the force of the congratulations by saying that this success was achieved just by luck. The expression of this strategy is exemplified in the following response:

(23) "Hên thôi." (Just luck.)

In case a friend receives praise from his buddy about gaining a scholarship, a Vietnamese person can use *Negation* strategy to negate the praise force, which can be illustrated as follows:

(24) "Tao không có giỏi vậy đâu." (I'm not that good.)

4.2. Effects of Power in the Usage of Congratulatory Response Strategies

The analysis of the impact of power on the use of congratulatory responses revealed some notable effects. The frequencies of use based on power are shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4 illustrates the distributional variation of congratulatory response strategies across power dynamics. In Situation 1, the congratulator holds a faculty position, whereas the recipient is the newly appointed Head of the English Department, signifying a hierarchical relationship with the latter holding greater institutional authority. The interaction occurs within a formal context, characterized by limited interpersonal familiarity between the interlocutors.

Both Vietnamese and American participants predominantly utilize *Appreciation tokens*, with frequencies of 91% and 98.7% respectively. Among Vietnamese participants, the second and third most frequent strategies are *Offering wish* (41%) and *Expression of Feelings* (15.4%). In con-

trast, American participants favor *Expression of Feelings* (66.7%) as the second most commonly used strategy, with its frequency being significantly higher than that observed

in the Vietnamese context— more than four times greater. Notably, *Offering wishes* is seldom employed by Americans, with only 1.3% of responses reflecting this strategy.

Table 4. Effects of Power on Strategy Choice.

Strategies	P+ (Low-High)		P= (Equal)		P– (High-Low)	
	V	A	V	A	V	A
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Acceptance strategies						
Appreciation tokens	71 (91)	77 (98.7)	49 (62.8)	74 (94.9)	59 (75.6)	76 (97.4)
Agreement	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	10 (12.8)	4 (5.1)	4 (5.1)	1 (1.3)
Transfers	0 (0)	2 (2.6)	5 (6.4)	9 (11.5)	6 (7.7)	1 (1.3)
Explanation	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3.8)	2 (2.6)	9 (11.5)	5 (6.4)
Expression of feelings	12 (15.4)	52 (66.7)	9 (11.5)	30 (38.5)	0 (0)	28 (35.9)
Promise	8 (10.3)	1 (1.3)	13 (16.7)	2 (2.6)	9 (11.5)	0 (0)
Suggestion	5 (6.4)	1 (1.3)	19 (24.4)	5 (6.4)	18 (23.1)	0 (0)
Offering wish	32 (41)	1 (1.3)	4 (5.1)	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Non-acceptance strategies						
Negation	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Scale down	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	6 (7.7)	0 (0)	4 (5.1)	0 (0)

*Abbreviation: P = Power; V = Vietnamese; A = American.

In Situation 2, the recipient of the congratulations is a close friend who has recently been awarded a scholarship abroad. This interaction occurs in an informal setting, where both the congratulator and the recipient hold equal power and share a strong mutual connection. In this situation, *Appreciation tokens* remain the most commonly used strategy among American participants, at 94.9%. However, the percentage of Vietnamese participants using this strategy is lower, at 62.8%. Instead, Vietnamese participants tend to rely more on alternative strategies, such as *Suggestion* (24.4%), *Promise* (16.7%) and *Agreement* (12.8%). In contrast, American participants continue to use *Expression of Feelings* as the second most frequently used strategy, at 38.5%. Notably, a distinctive feature of this scenario is that Vietnamese participants utilized *Scale Down* strategy (7.7%) and *Negation* (2.6%) — strategies not observed among American participants — in an attempt to downplay or not accept the congratulation from their friend.

In Situation 3, a manager congratulates a subordinate for buying a new car. The interaction takes place informally in a parking lot, where the hierarchical power difference remains apparent, despite the collegial relationship within the same organization. As in previous situations, *Appreciation tokens* emerge as the most frequently employed strategy, with 75.6% of Vietnamese participants and 97.4% of American participants using them. Among American participants,

Expression of Feelings remains the second most commonly used strategy, accounting for 35.9%. In contrast, Vietnamese speakers more frequently employ *Suggestion* (23.1%), followed by *Explanation* and *Promise*, each at 11.5%. Additionally, a notable feature of the Vietnamese responses is the use of *Scale down* strategy, with 5.1% of participants downplaying or not fully accepting the manager’s congratulations.

Based on the preceding analysis, it is clear that the choice of congratulatory response strategies among both Vietnamese and American participants is significantly influenced by the social context and power dynamics of the interaction. While both groups share some common strategies, such as *Appreciation tokens*, cultural differences are evident in their preferences for emotional expression, and the downplaying of congratulations, especially in hierarchical settings.

5. Discussion

This study provides valuable insights into the congratulatory response strategies used by Vietnamese and American speakers, revealing both shared patterns and distinct cultural differences. Our analysis is organized around three key themes: frequency-based patterns, the effects of power distance, and culture-specific strategies. By discussing each theme, we highlight how the findings relate to existing research and offer deeper interpretive insights into the role of

cultural and social factors in communication.

5.1. Frequency-Based Patterns

The most frequent congratulatory response strategy among both Vietnamese and American participants was *Appreciation Tokens*. This strategy, which aligns with common practices in many cultures, emphasizes acknowledgment and gratitude. Our findings align with those of Zhao^[15], Chen and Yang^[32], Bataineh^[38], and Herbert^[37]. As these studies suggest, native English speakers frequently employ tokens of appreciation, such as “*thank you*,” when responding to congratulations or compliments, a form of response often interpreted as lip service. Similarly, the majority of Vietnamese respondents follow suit, favoring *Appreciation tokens* strategy in their responses. This pattern mirrors the results from Chen and Yang’s investigation of how Chinese individuals respond to congratulations^[32]. However, this outcome stands in contrast to Chen’s assertion that recipients in Eastern cultures typically avoid or reject congratulations^[31]. The current findings suggest a noteworthy shift, likely influenced by the pervasive impact of Western cultural norms on Eastern societies. Vietnam, likewise, seems to be profoundly influenced by this cultural intersection, underscoring the evolving nature of cross-cultural pragmatic practices. While both Vietnamese and American participants employed *Appreciation Tokens* extensively, there were marked differences in the secondary strategies they favored.

In particular, Vietnamese participants showed a strong inclination toward *Offering Wish*. In Vietnam’s collectivist society, offering good wishes transcends a mere social convention, becoming a profound expression of hope for prosperity and good fortune for others. This practice is deeply embedded in tradition and serves as a significant marker of genuine care, reinforcing social bonds within communities^[47]. Nguyễn found that the act of offering good wishes plays a pivotal role in bridging both power distance and social distance between interlocutors^[37], contributing to a more cohesive social interaction.

For American speakers, beyond *Appreciation tokens*, *Expression of Feelings* is also highly preferred. In American culture, expressing personal emotions towards others is widely regarded as a positive and common communicative practice, allowing individuals to freely articulate their feelings, even when addressing someone of higher status.

This strategy, emerging from the data collected in this study, introduces a new dimension to response strategies not previously identified in Herbert’s taxonomy^[37]. By incorporating this strategy, the classification of congratulatory and compliment response strategies can be expanded, offering a richer understanding of cross-cultural communication practices.

5.2. The Effects of Power Distance

Power dynamics significantly influenced the selection of response strategies, with a clear contrast between Vietnamese and American participants. Among Vietnamese speakers, individuals tend to respond appreciatively to congratulations regardless of the power differential, whether from someone of higher or lower status. This reflects their intention to enhance the positive face of the interlocutor, thus reinforcing social rapport — particularly in professional settings. Such a response aligns with Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory^[8], which posits that congratulatory acts help to foster intimacy and expand social relationships by signaling a desire for connection. Consequently, responses to congratulations in this context are designed to maintain politeness and reinforce harmony.

However, in interactions where power is equal, Vietnamese individuals tend to adopt a broader range of strategies, with a marked preference for *Suggestion* strategy. This preference is also evident in workplace settings, particularly in the context of relationships between supervisors and subordinates. Drinking alcohol during joyful occasions can be regarded as a traditional practice in Vietnam^[48]. In situations where close relationships are present, this tradition is often employed to strengthen social ties, or it can be seen as an integral component of workplace culture. In such contexts, a subordinate may suggest a celebration or a party to their superior, both as an expression of respect and as a means of narrowing the social gap, thereby reinforcing relational bonds.

Among American speakers, the overall impact of power on their selection of response strategies remains minimal. This finding reinforces the general cultural tendency in the United States to value open and explicit expressions of personal emotions, regardless of hierarchical status. Even when addressing individuals in positions of authority, American speakers continue to prioritize the expression of positive emotions as a means of fostering social connection and mutual

acknowledgment. This aligns with the conclusions drawn in Hofstede's Six Dimensions of Culture^[22], which suggest that individuals in individualistic cultures, such as that of the United States, are inclined to express positive emotions during communication, even in hierarchical relationships between superiors and subordinates.

An intriguing finding in this study is the use of *Scale down* strategy by Vietnamese participants in both power-imbalanced (e.g., Situation 3, where a manager congratulates a subordinate) and power-balanced contexts (e.g., Situation 2, where a person congratulates a best friend). This strategy, which involves modestly rejecting or downplaying the congratulatory message, was not observed among American respondents. This divergence may reflect cultural differences in how each group navigates hierarchical relationships. Vietnamese participants, for instance, may feel a need to downplay the significance of the congratulation or compliment to display humility or avoid overtly accepting praise from a superior. In contrast, American participants appear more comfortable accepting congratulations openly, even from those in positions of authority.

Furthermore, the results of this study highlight that humility is also expressed by Vietnamese participants when responding to friends or others with equal power. This mirrors the cultural values found in China, where humility is highly valued. The influence of traditional Confucian values, which have been deeply ingrained in Vietnamese society over centuries, plays a significant role in shaping this behavior. Confucianism, with its emphasis on integrity, kindness, and humility, remains a central aspect of Vietnamese culture, much like in China. Humility in Vietnamese culture is not only evident in the acceptance of these values but is also reflected in daily interactions, where respect and politeness towards elders and individuals in higher positions are highly prioritized^[30, 49].

5.3. Culture-Specific Strategy and Language Means

Several culture-specific strategies emerged from the data, particularly the use of *Suggestion* among Vietnamese speakers. This strategy was most common in informal contexts, such as conversations among friends or peers, sometimes with colleagues, and reflects the collectivist nature of Vietnamese society. Expressions like "*Let's celebrate to-*

gether" or "*Go drink*" emphasize the importance of shared experiences and community in Vietnamese culture. This aligns with Thái's findings^[48], which emphasized the role of social gatherings and celebrations in Vietnamese communication practices, further supporting the notion that the act of congratulation is not only a personal acknowledgment but also a collective celebration. In a similar vein, American culture also values communal expressions in celebratory contexts, but with a different focus. For example, Americans may say "*Let's celebrate!*" or "*I'm so happy for you!*" to show excitement and joy, but the focus remains more on individual emotion rather than the collective experience. This individualistic perspective is reflected in the tendency of American speakers to prioritize personal emotional expression over communal activities.

Another distinctive feature identified in this study is the use of politeness markers such as "*Dạ*" and "*Dạ vâng*" at the beginning of responses from Vietnamese participants when replying to individuals of higher power. These markers, signaling respect and deference, are common in the formal responses of Vietnamese speakers. For example, in a scenario where a subordinate responds to a congratulatory remark from a superior about a new car purchase, the response might be as follows:

(25) The director: *Ah mới mua xe à em? Chúc mừng em!* (Ah, you bought a new car? Congratulations!)

The subordinate: *Dạ, em cảm ơn giám đốc.* (Yes, thank you, Director.)

This reflects the high-context nature of Vietnamese communication, where power distance is emphasized, and formal registers are used to reinforce hierarchical distinctions. In contrast, in American communication, although there are formalities in professional settings, the directness of communication tends to reduce the emphasis on formality and hierarchy. For example, an American speaker in a similar situation might simply say, "*Thank you!*" or "*Thanks, boss!*", with a focus more on the direct expression of gratitude rather than using honorifics or politeness markers. This approach is consistent with low-context cultures like the United States, where interpersonal interactions often emphasize equality and individuality, even in professional contexts.

In terms of addressing power distance, Vietnamese communication consistently reflects the Confucian influence, which prioritizes respect for authority and elders. The use

of honorifics like "*giám đốc*" (director) and "*sếp*" (boss) serves to convey respect and reinforce the social hierarchy. When these findings are viewed through the lens of previous research on politeness and face theory, it is clear that high-context cultures, such as Vietnam, tend to place a greater emphasis on power distance^[20]. This cultural trait likely explains the frequent use of polite expressions and honorifics by Vietnamese speakers in these scenarios, as a means of acknowledging and reinforcing hierarchical distinctions in social interactions. In contrast, American speakers are more likely to use first names or informal titles (e.g., "*boss*" instead of "*director*"), reflecting a less rigid approach to power dynamics in interpersonal communication. This distinction underscores the differences between high-context, collectivist cultures (Vietnam) and low-context, individualistic cultures (the United States), where the level of formality and deference to authority varies significantly.

6. Conclusions

This study provides valuable insights into how congratulatory responses differ between Vietnamese and American speakers, highlighting the influence of cultural values, social dynamics, and power relations. Both groups predominantly favor acceptance strategies, but the specific sub-strategies reflect cultural differences. Vietnamese speakers, shaped by collectivist values and hierarchical structures, tend to employ strategies like *Offering wish*, *Suggestion*, and *Promise*, particularly in formal or hierarchical settings. This is in line with their cultural emphasis on humility, respect, and maintaining social harmony. In contrast, American speakers, influenced by individualistic values, prioritize direct expressions of gratitude and personal emotions, such as "*thank you*" and "*I'm excited.*" They tend to be less concerned with power dynamics in these interactions, reflecting the more egalitarian nature of American culture. Power relations play a significant role in responses of Vietnamese speakers, with greater use of formal language and politeness markers in hierarchical situations. Responses of American speakers, however, remain relatively consistent regardless of power dynamics, emphasizing personal acknowledgment and emotional expression.

The findings of this study have important practical implications for language pedagogy and intercultural training.

For pedagogy, the findings suggest that language instructors should integrate cross-cultural pragmatics into their teaching practices by focusing not only on linguistic accuracy but also on appropriate cultural responses in various social contexts. Educators can design role-playing activities, case studies, and real-life simulations where students practice congratulatory exchanges, helping them to identify when to use formal or informal expressions based on cultural norms and power dynamics. This approach can enhance learners' ability to navigate culturally specific communicative practices, improving both their language proficiency and intercultural competence. In business communication and diplomatic settings, understanding the nuances of congratulatory responses can improve intercultural competence, enabling international organizations to foster more effective and respectful communication. For instance, diplomats and business professionals working with Vietnamese or American counterparts can use this knowledge to adapt their responses in ways that are culturally appropriate, fostering mutual respect and trust.

In the realm of intercultural training, the study highlights the need for training programs that focus on cultural sensitivity and the practical application of cultural knowledge in real-world settings. These programs can include workshops on understanding the underlying values of different cultures, such as collectivism and individualism, and how these values shape communication styles. By preparing individuals to recognize and respect cultural differences in congratulatory responses, they will be better equipped to foster positive interactions in both personal and professional settings.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its methodological limitations. The use of DCTs, though effective for controlled elicitation of data, may not fully capture the spontaneous nature of real-world communication. The responses provided in the DCTs likely reflect idealized politeness norms rather than authentic, real-time interactions, which may not account for factors such as hesitations, overlaps, or prosodic features. Future research could explore more dynamic methods, such as role-plays or ethnographic recordings, to observe pragmatic strategies in naturalistic settings. This would help validate the findings and provide a more accurate reflection of how individuals respond to congratulations in everyday communication.

Furthermore, future studies could explore how context

— such as the medium of communication (e.g., face-to-face vs. online) — affects response strategies. By expanding the research to include different interaction settings, researchers could gain a more comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural communicative practices.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, T.H.L.D.; methodology, T.H.L.D.; software, T.H.L.D.; validation, T.H.L.D., V.T. and T.H.L.; formal analysis, T.H.L.D.; investigation, T.H.L.D.; resources, T.H.L.D.; data curation, T.H.L.D., V.T. and T.H.L.; writing—original draft preparation, T.H.L.D.; writing—review and editing, V.T.; visualization, T.H.L.D.; supervision, V.T.; project administration, T.H.L.D. 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

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

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

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all the editors and reviewers.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Austin, J.L., 1962. *How to do things with words*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, USA.
- [2] Searle, J.R., 1969. *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- [3] Thomas, J., 1983. Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*. 4(2), 91–112. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/4.2.91>
- [4] Norrick, N.R., 1978. Expressive illocutionary acts. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 2(3), 277–291.
- [5] Elwood, K., 2004. “Congratulations!”: A cross-cultural analysis of responses to another’s happy news. *The Cultural Review*. 25, 355–386.
- [6] Markus, H.R., Shinobu, K., 1991. Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*. 98(2), 224–253.
- [7] Schegloff, E.A., Sacks, H., 1973. Opening up closings. *Semiotica*. 8(4), 289–327.
- [8] Brown, P., Levinson, S.C., 1987. *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- [9] Culpeper, J., Haugh, M., 2014. *Pragmatics and the English Language*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, UK.
- [10] Saleem, A., Saleem, T., Aziz, A., 2022. A pragmatic study of congratulation strategies of Pakistani ESL learners and British English speakers. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*. 7(1), 1–22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00134-9>
- [11] Alghazo, S., Zemmour, S., Al Salem, M.N., et al., 2021. A cross-cultural analysis of the speech act of congratulating in Kabyle and Jordanian Arabic. *Ampersand*. 8, 100075. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2021.100075>
- [12] Avazpour, K., 2020. Cross-cultural analysis of congratulations in American English, Indian English and Peninsular Spanish [Master’s Thesis]. Dalarna University: Dalarna, Sweden.
- [13] Alameen, M.I., 2017. Investigating similarities and differences between Sudanese Arabic and British English speech acts of congratulations [Doctoral dissertation]. Sudan University of Science and Technology: Khartoum, Sudan.
- [14] Dastjerdi, H.V., Nasri, N., 2012. Congratulation speech acts across cultures: The case of English, Persian, and Arabic. *Journal of Language, Culture, and Translation*. 1(2), 97–116.
- [15] Zhao, Z., 2025. “Saying ‘thank you’ or something more than lip service”: a variational analysis of the influence of gender and social status on responses to congratulations on Chinese WeChat. *Journal of Politeness*

- Research Language Behaviour Culture. 21(1), 73–94. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2023-0063>
- [16] Holmes, J., 1986. Compliments and compliment responses in New Zealand English. *Anthropological Linguistics*. 28(2), 485–508.
- [17] Vanderveken, D., 1990. *Meaning and speech acts*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- [18] Holmes, J., 1988. Paying compliments: A sex-preferential politeness strategy. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 12(4), 445–465.
- [19] Emery, P.G., 2000. Greeting, congratulating and commiserating in Omani Arabic. *Language Culture and Curriculum*. 13(2), 196–216.
- [20] Nguyễn, Q., 2019. Returning to the issue of face and politeness in communication [Trở lại vấn đề thể diện và lịch sự trong giao tiếp]. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies [Tập chí nghiên cứu nước ngoài - Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội]*. 35(2), 1–14.
- [21] Kasper, G., 2006. Speech acts in interaction: Towards discursive pragmatics. In: Bardovi-Harlig, K., Félix-Brasdefer, J.C., Omar, A.S. (eds.). *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, Vol. 11. National Foreign Language Resource Center: Hawaii, USA. pp. 281–314.
- [22] Hofstede, G., 2001. *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*, 2nd ed. SAGE Publications: London, UK.
- [23] Ting-Toomey, S., 1999. *Communicating across cultures*. The Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA.
- [24] Leech, G., 1983. *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman: London, UK.
- [25] Trần, N.T., 1996. Returning to the cultural identity of Vietnam [Tìm về bản sắc văn hóa Việt Nam]. Ho Chi Minh City General Publishing House [Nhà xuất bản Tổng hợp Tp. HCM]: Ho Chi Minh City, Việt Nam.
- [26] Perez-Sabater, C., Montero-Fleta, B., 2014. Pragmatic competence and social power awareness: The case of written and spoken discourse in non-native English environments. *International Journal of English Studies*. 14(2), 21–38.
- [27] Spencer-Oatey, H., 2008. Culture and communication. In: Spencer-Oatey, H. (ed.). *Culturally speaking – Culture, communication and politeness theory*. Continuum: New York, USA. pp. 48–70.
- [28] Nguyễn, Q., 2004. Some issues of intracultural communication and intercultural communication [Một số vấn đề giao tiếp nội văn hóa và giao văn hoá]. VNU Publishing House – Ha Noi [Nhà xuất bản Đại học quốc gia Hà Nội]: Hanoi, Vietnam.
- [29] Roever, C., 2015. Researching pragmatics. In: Paltridge, B., Phakiti, A. (eds.). *Research methods in applied linguistics: A practical resource*. Bloomsbury Publishing: London, UK. pp. 387–420.
- [30] Zhu, Q., Ren, W., 2022. Memes and emojis in Chinese compliments on Weibo. *Chinese Semiotic Studies*. 18(1), 69–95.
- [31] Chen, R., 1993. Responding to compliments: A contrastive study of politeness strategies between American English and Chinese speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 20(1), 49–75.
- [32] Chen, R., Yang, D., 2010. Responding to compliments in Chinese: Has it changed? *Journal of Pragmatics*. 42(7), 1951–1963.
- [33] Culpeper, J., Pat, K., 2021. Compliment responses in Hong Kong: An application of Leech's pragmatics of politeness. *Text & Talk*. 41, 667–690. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2020-0047>
- [34] Leech, G., 2014. *The pragmatics of politeness*. Oxford University Press: New York, USA.
- [35] Dendenne, B., 2021. Complimenting on-the-go: Features from colloquial Algerian Arabic. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 172, 270–287.
- [36] Qiu, J., Chen, X., Cao, Y., et al., 2023. A contrastive analysis of congratulate by native speakers of Chinese and advanced learners of Chinese. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 33(3), 476–492.
- [37] Herbert, R.K., 1986. Say “thank you” – Or something. *American Speech*. 61(1), 76–88.
- [38] Bataineh, R.F., 2013. On congratulating, thanking, and apologizing in Jordanian Arabic and American English. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*. 32, 01–14.
- [39] Khalil, A.R., 2015. A Study of Congratulations' responses in Kurdish with reference to English. *Journal of Kirkuk University Humanity Studies*. 10(1), 21–47.
- [40] Tran, Q.G., 2010. Replying to compliments in English and Vietnamese. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*. 30(1), 104–109.
- [41] Phạm, T.H.N., 2014. Strategies employed by the Vietnamese to respond to compliments and the influence of compliment receivers' perception of the compliment on their responses. *International Journal of Linguistics*. 6(2), 153–176.
- [42] House, J., Kádár, D., 2021. *Cross-cultural pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- [43] Nelson, G.L., Carson, J., Al Batal, M., et al., 2002. Cross-cultural pragmatics: Strategy use in Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals. *Applied Linguistics*. 23(2), 163–189. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/23.2.163>
- [44] Vo, T.K.H., 2008. An English-Vietnamese cross-cultural study of congratulating. *Journal of Science and Technology*. 9, 98–104.
- [45] Placencia, M.E., Eslami, Z.R., 2020. Complimenting behavior and (self-)praise across social media: New contexts and new insights. John Benjamins: Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- [46] Nguyễn, Q., 2014. Types of transfer in intercultural communication [Các loại chuyển giao trong giao tiếp giao văn hóa]. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies [Tập chí nghiên cứu nước ngoài - Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội]*. 30(3), 14–22.

- [47] Nguyễn, T.T., 2015. SOME CONGRATULATION TYPES IN WEDDING CEREMONY OF SOUTHERN PEOPLE [Các hình thức chúc mừng trong lễ cưới của người Nam bộ]. *Journal of Language and Life* [Tập Chí Ngôn Ngữ và Đời Sống]. 234(4), 94–96.
- [48] Thái, L., 2004. The culture of alcohol [Văn hóa rượu]. Nhà xuất bản Văn hóa thông tin: Hanoi, Vietnam.
- [49] Dương, T.K.H., Liêu, L.C., 2012. Some cultural and thinking characteristics of Chinese and Vietnamese people through expressions of praise [Vài nét đặc trưng về tư duy văn hóa của người Trung Hoa và người Việt Nam qua thành ngữ chúc tụng]. *Vietnam Journal of Educational Sciences* [Tập chí Khoa học và Giáo dục]. 23(3), 88–95.