

## EFL Learners' Awareness of Utilizing the English Speech Acts of Congratulation in Oral Discourse

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### Abstract

Expressing feelings positively is very necessary when good news happens to a person, it considered a sign of jealousy when person doesn't show his pleasure. The main objective of the study is: to discover to what extent EFL graduates are aware of utilizing the expressions related to congratulation when speaking English, to investigate if EFL graduates are acquainted with the situations which demand the usage of the expressions of congratulations. The study adopted the descriptive analytical method. The data were gathered by using two tools: a diagnostic test for a sample of forty (40) EFL graduates and a questionnaire that was designed for a sample of ten (10) EFL university teachers from University of Gezira, University of Neelain and Alahlia University-Wad Medani. The data were analyzed manually using means and percentages. The findings reached are: The majority EFL graduates are not aware of utilizing the social expressions concerning congratulation in oral discourse (63%).

**Keywords:** Speech act, Congratulation, Awareness, Oral Discourse

### المستخلص :

التعبير عن الأحاسيس إيجابيا مهم جدا عند حدوث الاخبار السارة. يعتبر علامة على الغيرة عندما لا يظهر الشخص سروره. الهدف الأساسي للدراسة هو، لاكتشاف مدى إدراك طلاب اللغة لاستخدام العبارات التي لها علاقة بالتهاني عند التحدث. لاكتشاف ما اذا كان الطلاب علي بينة من مختلف الحالات التي تتطلب استخدام العبارات الاجتماعية للتعازي والتهاني. إتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. تم جمع البيانات عن طريق أداتين: الإختبار التشخيصي لعينة قوامها (40) طالبا والاداة الثانية هي الإستبيان الذي تم تصميمه لعينة من (10) معلمين من جامعة الجزيرة، جامعة النيلين والجامعة الأهلية بود مدني. وقد تم تحليل البيانات يدويا بإستخدام المتوسط والنسب المئوية. توصلت الدراسة الي عدة نتائج اهمها: ان غالبية طلاب الدراسات العليا (63%) لا يدركون استخدام العبارات الاجتماعية التي لها علاقة بالتهنئة في اللغة الإنجليزية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** فعل الكلام، التهاني، الوعي، التحدث

### 1.0 Introduction

Congratulation is one part of Austin's expressive speech acts and is related to Searle's behabitives illocutionary act. Although a theoretically sound issue in pragmatics, congratulation has not been investigated as much as other speech acts in discourse related studies. This

study aims at investigating EFL graduates' awareness of utilizing English speech act of congratulation in oral discourse. There are many in this study, relevant literature, previous study, materials and methods, results and discussion, conclusion and recommendation, and references.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study arises from the observation that most EFL graduates' are not aware of utilizing English speech acts of *congratulation* in particular. They only use functional expressions such as *congratulation!*. Thus, the researcher intends to investigate to what extent EFL graduate students are aware of utilizing speech acts of *congratulation*.

### 1.2 Objectives

- 1) To find out to what extent EFL graduates are familiar with utilizing the expressions related to the speech acts of congratulations when speaking English.
- 2) To investigate if EFL graduates are acquainted with of the situations which demand the usage of the social expressions of congratulations.
- 3) To explore if EFL graduates are conscious of the special cases which require the usage of the specific social expressions and avoid some of them concerning speech act of *congratulations*.

### 1.3 Questions of the Study

- 4) To what extent are EFL graduate students familiar with utilizing the expressions related to *congratulation* when speaking English?
- 5) To what extent are EFL graduates acquainted with the situations which demand the usage of *congratulation* in oral discourse?
- 6) To what extent are EFL graduates conscious of the special situations which require the usage of the specific social expressions and avoiding some of them related to speech act of *congratulation* in oral discourse?

### 1.4 Hypotheses of the study

1. Most EFL graduates are not familiar with utilizing the social expressions related to *congratulation* in oral discourse.

2. A great number of EFL graduates are not acquainted with the various situations which demand the usage of *congratulation*.

3. More than half of EFL graduates are unconscious of the special situations which require the usage of the specific social expressions and avoiding some of them related to speech act of *congratulation*.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study stems from the fact that speech acts are very essential in oral discourse. The findings of the study are expected to benefit EFL teachers, EFL learners through their teachers, EFL lecturers, interpreters, syllabus designers, and those who are concerned with oral discourse. It will also add to the body of knowledge.

### 1.6 Limits of the Study

The topic of the study is limited to *EFL Graduates' Awareness of Utilizing the English Speech Acts of congratulation in Oral Discourse*. The sample consists of two groups: one contains (40), (27) PhD EFL students from Sudan University of Science and Technology. The College of Languages. Department of English, and (13) PhD EFL students from University of Neelain. College of Arts. Department of English, and the other group consists of (10) EFL teachers at University of Gezira, University of Neelain and Wed Medani Ahlia University.

### 2.0 Relevant Literature

This section includes of the theoretical part and previous studies.

#### 2.1 Identifying of Congratulation

Congratulation is one of speech acts. Searle and Vanderveken, (1985: 212) define congratulation as "expression pleasure at good fortune of other".

According to Bach and Harnish (1979:51); congratulations as one's having done something good. Austin (1975) classifies congratulation under "behabitives" in term of the verbs of speech acts, which is to express reaction to other people's behaviour and fortune. Whereas Searle, (1976:12) classifies the speech act of congratulation as an expressive speech act that is "to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affaire specified in the propositional content" base on its function. According to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003:262), congratulation as a word has three different meanings: firstly, "to express pleasure to *a person* on the occasion of success or good fortune; secondly, "to express sympathetic pleasure at *an event*; while the third means: to express salute or greet. These three senses can be illustrated by the following examples:

1. I congratulate you for winning the election.
  2. I congratulated them all on their results.
  3. Happy Christmas!
- Thus , congratulation could be for any person or occasion that people feel happy and pleased in it. Because the verb *congratulate* not only contains a component of expressing pleasure, but it also tells them merely that the occasion is something pleasant for speaker/hearer and the exact nature of occasion has to be made explicit. For example:
4. Ahmed greeted Osama.
  5. Ahmed congratulated Osama on winning the race.

The verb greet in example (4) includes a component of expressing pleasure in an occasion just as (5) does. With greet, though, the sense of *expressing pleasure*

in meeting the hearer is all part of the meaning of the verb, while with congratulate, the verb tells people merely that the occasion *winning the race* is something pleasant for the hearer and the exact nature of *winning the race* has to be made explicit. In addition to that, the act of congratulating is one of the performative verbs as Austin refers to because the speakers perform the action denoted by the verb, in contrasts to those verbs called constative, where the speaker does describe an event or state. For example:

6. I congratulate you on your promotion.

In such occasion *get promotion* the speaker is not asking about the truth of occurring promotion or not. In fact, it is presumed to be true that the promotion has a taken place, but rather speaker is performing an act of congratulating.

Leech (1983 : 104) notes that congratulating and other speech acts such as parsing, thanking, greeting, offering, etc, whose illocutionary force coincides with social goals are intrinsically polite and take the form of positive politeness such speech acts as are termed *convivial*. This *convivial* class relates to Austin's class of behabitives and Searle's expressives. She also (1983: 132) proposes that congratulation is associated with them approbation and modesty maxims. According to approbation maxims, the speaker should minimize dispraise of the addressee and maximize the praise of addressee while the modesty maxim requires that the speaker minimizes the praise of himself and maximizes the dispraise of himself. Thus by congratulating the speaker maximizes the praise of the addressee.

Austin (1975: 159) states that behabitives have to do with attitudes and social behaviour, they include the notion of reaction expressions to other people's behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct. Whereas Searle (1979:15) in his classification of speech acts employs *expressive* term to express feelings and attitudes. Expressive has the function of expressing the speaker's psychological attitude specified in sincerity condition (i.e. the speaker/writer that the future state of fairs will indeed be described) about state of affairs specified in prepositional content which the illocutionary presupposes. Examples are congratulating, thanking, apologizing, blaming, condoling, welcoming and greeting. Searle (1969: 67) laid out the preparatory conditions for the speech act of congratulations:

1. There is some event that is related to the hearer.
2. The event is in the hearer's interest and the speaker believes the event is in the hearer's interest.
3. The speaker pleased at the event.
4. It counts as an expression of pleasure at the event.

### 2.3 Syntactic Structure of Congratulation

There is infinite number of words that could be chosen in congratulations. The set of lexical items and grammatical structures people use in our daily discourse are very restricted. First of all, the act of congratulation is one of the performative verb so the grammatical structure of such explicit performative contains the first person singular "I" plus a verb in simple present indicative with or without an indirect you.

1. I congratulate you on your marriage.  
But the speech act of congratulating can be uttered by some group or someone else other than the first person singular as illustrated in:
2. He never even stopped to congratulate me. (Longman Dictionary (2006: 307)).
3. The authors are to be congratulated on producing such a clear and authoritative work. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010: 305)).
4. You can congratulate yourself on having done excellent job.  
Moreover, the act of congratulating can be expressed differently by progressive aspect, past tense:
5. I was congratulating myself on my lucky escape when disaster struck.
6. Your secretary is to be congratulated for his prompt actions.

On the other hand, there are certain grammatical structures which can be used in expressions congratulations. The following syntactic structures are used:

**S + Verb +indirect object + preposition object**

Quirk (1985: 1211) classifies the congratulate verb as one of the intransitive verbs which is required to the two objects function as its complement one of them is indirect object, the other is preposition object.

For examples:

7. I congratulate you on your success.
8. May we congratulate you on your recent appointment.

**S + verb (prep) + O (prep) + NX**

Leech (1983: 206) explains that expressive verbs normally occur in construction: **S + verb (prep) + O (prep) + NX**, where (prep) is an optional preposition, and **NX** is an abstract noun phrase or a gerundive phrase. For examples:

9. I congratulate her on her success in the exam.

10. I congratulated Liz on getting new job.

11. I was delighted to hear about your success.

In addition to that, exclamative; according to Venderveken (1999:141), the illocutionary force of expressive, in which congratulation is one of their performative verbs is realized syntactically by exclamatory sentences. Exclamatory sentences in Searle's system of speech act are expressive. Quirk (1985:852) calls non-sentence (formulae expressions)

12. Congratulation! = (He congratulated me)

13. Happy birthday! = (He wished me a happy)

14. Happy Christmas! = (He wished me a Christmas)

15. Well done!

16. Congratulation on your great accomplishment!

17. All right you did it!

18. Bravo!

Above all, Palmer (1995: 13) adds other grammatical forms can be used to express congratulations:

**Best wishes on/for + your + noun**

19. Best wishes on your birthday.

20. Best wishes for your exams.

**I hope + you + verb**

21. I hope you have wonderful day.

22. I hope you do well in your exam.

23. I hope you feel better soon

**Wishing you a + adjective + noun**

24. Wishing you a happy Christmas.

25. Wishing you a successful driving test.

26. Wishing you a quick recovery.

**Happy + name of occasion**

27. Happy New Year.

28. Happy Anniversary.

29. Happy Christmas

30. Happy birthday.

**Good luck + with/in + your + noun**

31. Good luck in your new home.

32. Good luck with your exam.

Quirk, et al. (1985: 301) consider that congratulation as a noun used usually in plural form as "pluraliatantum" (i.e. nouns that, in a given sense, occur only in the plural end in -s ).

33. Congratulations and best wishes always!

34. Many congratulations on your birthday!

**2.5 Main Occasions for Congratulations**

There are several situations in our daily life which call for the display of approval/approbation. Congratulation is one of these expressive speech acts, so called because uttered in the context of happy occasions. According to Maggio (2001: 108), mentions that there are several situations for congratulations as in:

1. Achievements/ awards/ honors/ prizes/ speeches/ publications/ recognition

2. Adoption or birth of child

3. Anniversaries: business/ years of service/ wedding

4. Birthday

5. Business: good business year, new store, new account, new contract, merger, opening own business, securing a franchise

6. Changes: new car/ home/ job

7. Customers: good news, major life events

8. Election to office: public/ organization or club/ professional society/ social group

9. Engagement

10. Graduation
11. Jobs: new job, promotion, new title
12. Loan payment
13. Religious milestones: christening/ circumcision/ bar mitzvah/ bat mitzvah/ first communication/ confirmation/ ordination/ taking of religious vows
14. Retirement

### 2.6 Way of Saying Congratulation

On some social occasions people celebrate special events. There is a specific way that should be followed. Maggio (2001: 109), states the steps in the following:

1. Use the word "congratulations" early in your speech.
2. Mention the reason (graduation, promotion, honour, baby).
3. Tell how happy, pleased, proud, or impressed you are-and why.
4. If appropriate, telling how people learned about the good news. If they read it in the newspaper, enclose the clipping or photocopy of it.
5. Relate an anecdote, shared memory, or reflection that has some bearing on occasions.
6. In closing, wish the person continued success and happiness; people should express their confidence in a bright future; assure them of your affection, love, admiration, warmth, interest, delight, pleasure, or continued business support.

### 2.7 Impoliteness in Congratulation

There are some points should be avoided incongratulating someone. According to Maggio, (2001: 109), summarizes these points as bellow:

1. Don't including in excessive flattery ("watch out, corporate America-here she comes," "I can see that I'll soon be writing to congratulate you on the Noble Prize"). It makes people uncomfortable.

A simple "congratulations!" and a few personal remarks bring quite enough joy.

2. People don't make their congratulatory speech do double duty: don't include question, information, sales messages, or work matters that aren't relevant to the good news.

3. Don't compare the recipient's news to something people once did or to something people read in the paper; let the person enjoy a moment in the sun-alone.

4. Beware of inadvertently putting a negative spin on congratulations. Instead of "I never would have thought you could do it" or "After all this time, you finally did it," say "I'm so impressed with your energy and determination" or "Congratulations on your hard work and perseverance."

### 2.8 Special Situations of Congratulation

There are special situations that people should focus on when they congratulate someone. Maggio, (2001: 110-111) illustrates these special situations in the following points:

1. offering of congratulations to customer, clients, colleagues, and other business associates about their good news (births, weddings, promotions, new business) is a thoughtful goodwill gesture.

2. People's response to news of an engagement is pleasant and congratulatory. If they have reservations about the relationship, deal with them in personal or don't write at all; cautionary or qualified congratulations are worse than none. Traditionally "congratulations" were offered to the engaged man and "best wishes" to engaged woman; people may properly use either expression for women or men.

3. The news of a divorce can elicit a simple acknowledgement, a kind of sympathy, or a kind of congratulations. The latter is sent rarely, and the only to someone people know well. People might, however, want to congratulate someone not on the divorce itself but on surviving the upheaval of difficult period.

4. Baby announcements inspire some of the happiest congratulations. When baby is premature, send congratulations, gifts, and good wishes in normal way; do not wait to see how the baby does. In the event of multi births, don't ask if woman took fertility pills and don't say or imply, "You poor things!" Just say "Congratulations!" when child is born with medical problems or disability, people write that they've heard they have a new little one, that they are thinking of them. Avoid commercial "new baby" cards and conventional congratulations on the one hand, and expressions of sympathy on the other. Some of unfortunate remarks that these new parents hear include: "you're not going to keep it, are you?" "I think you should sue the hospital." "Is one of you a carrier for this?" "May be the baby won't live: that would be best all around." "Whose fault was it?" "Did you drink while you were pregnant?" "I guess it could have been worse." "God only sends burdens to those who can bear them." Until you know how the parents are feeling (devastated, concerned but optimistic, happy to have the child at any price), don't reveal feelings-they may be wide of the mark. Later, when people know how the parents are feeling, they can respond on a more emotional level. When congratulating someone on an adoption, do not write, "I'll bet you get pregnant now." People adopt for reasons other than fertility and adoption is not, in any case, a cure for

infertility (pregnancies occur after adoption at approximately the same rates as they occur in couples dealing with problems of infertility). People should don't ask about the child's background or biological/birth parents (never write "real parents"; you are writing to the real parents). Don't say that they "admire" their friends for adopting any more than you would "admire" a biological parent for having a child and the great arrival day. People say that they can't wait to come visit, and wish them much happiness.

### 2.9 Previous Studies

in Iran Dastjerdi and Nasri (2012) published a research paper ; under the title **Congratulation Speech Acts Across Cultures: The Case of English, Persian, and Arabic in Journal of Language, Culture, and Translation (LCT), VOL (1), No (2), PP.(97-116).** The main objective of the study was to investigate the cross-culture differences with regards to the production of a relatively understudied speech act, namely, congratulation, among American English, Syrian Arabic and Persian speakers. The main findings are: several similarities and differences among the three groups, which will have implications for researchers as well as language teachers. In addition, all the three groups were shown to be sensitive to the status of the hearer since their semantic formulas were differently represented based on the hearer's status. Arab speakers used more *offers of good wishes* for the lower status which can show their sympathy with the hearers of lower social status. The opposite was true for the other two groups, i.e. the frequency of *offers of good wishes* was lower among these respondents.

Moreover, the point of similarity among the three groups with respect to the shift of semantic formulas is related to the *request for information*. The main recommendation of the study is: It is crucial for second language teachers to help learners enhance their knowledge and competence of appropriate use of speech acts in the target language. Also, in Iraq Oraiby (2011) published a research paper; under the title **Iraqi EFL Learners' Ability in Using congratulations in Journal of Education for Pure Science VOL (1) ISSN (20736592) Issue (5) PP (40-64)**. The main objective of the study was to investigate the ability of Iraqi undergraduate learners in recognizing and producing "congratulation" as on expressive speech acts. The main finding is: Iraqi EFL learners do not master all grammatical structures and forms that realize the speech act of congratulating. The main recommendation a is: this study suggests that it's not enough to build learner's linguistic competences and that it might be necessary also to develop their sociocultural, which will develop their understanding of the frames of interaction and rules of politeness within the target culture.

### 3.0 Materials and Methods

This section comprises sampling, tools of collecting data, and tools for data analysis .The descriptive analytical method will be adopted for conducting the study. This research method does suit the nature of the topic.

#### 3.1 Sampling

The sample includes two groups: the first group consists of (10) experienced EFL university teachers, who are chosen purposively from University of Gezira, University of Neelain and Alahlia University. Whereas the second group is

composed (40) EFL graduates, (27) PhD EFL students from Sudan University of Science and Technology. The College of Languages. Department of English, and (13) PhD EFL students from University of Neelain. College of Arts. Department of English.

#### 3.2 Tools of Collecting Data

Two tools are used for gathering data: a diagnostic test for EFL graduates and a questionnaire for EFL university teachers. The questionnaire and the test are designed for the purpose of eliciting the data that serve the topic of the study. The diagnostic test comprises (4) sections: section one; choose the option for the suitable response. Section two; matching the situations with their suitable responses while section three; tick the appropriate response and cross inappropriate one. Finally, Section four; What would you say in the following situations. Whereas, the questionnaire includes (30) statements.

#### 3.3 Tool for Data Analysis

The collected data are analyzed manually, using percentages and means. The collected data are presented in tables, analyzed, discussed and interpreted.

#### 4.0 Results and Discussion

This section is limited to the analysis and discussion of the data collected with the test for students and questionnaire for EFL teachers.

##### (4.1) Result of the Diagnostic Test

The tables from (1-3) summarize the results of EFL graduates responses to the (27) twenty seven questions of the test. The tables below are classified according to the various topics and special cases of speech act of congratulation. Hence, the results will be analyzed, discussed and interpreted accordingly.



**Table (4.1.1) Awareness of EFL Graduates of Various Situations Demanding the Use of Speech Act of Congratulation**

Option	Correct	Incorrect	Total
Achievements	17.5%	82.5%	100%
Adoption	57.5%	42.5%	100%
Birth of Child	30%	70%	100%
Wedding Anniversary	15%	85%	100%
Birthdays	75%	25%	100%
Business	10%	90%	100%
Changes	90%	10%	100%
Customers	30%	70%	100%
Election	7.5%	92.5%	100%
Wedding	30%	70%	100%
Engagement	36.25%	63.75%	100%
Graduation	7.5%	92.5%	100%
Jobs	32.5%	67.5%	100%
Loan Payment	65%	35%	100%
Religious Milestone	25.8%	74.2%	100%
Retirement	62.5%	37.5%	100%
Mean	37%	63%	100%

Table (4.1.1) evinces that (37%) of EFL graduates answer correctly, whereas (63%) of EFL graduates answer incorrectly. This result discloses most EFL graduates are not aware of various situations demanding the use of speech act of *congratulation*.

**Table (4.1.2) Understanding of Graduates of Special Cases of Speech Act of Congratulation**

Option	Correct	Incorrect	Total
English tradition of speech act congratulation related to engagement	36.25%	63.75%	100%
Baby with medical problem or disability	37.5%	62.5%	100%
Premature baby	30%	70%	100%
Multi births .	42.55%	57.5%	100%
divorce of intimate friends and relative.	5%	95%	100%
Mean	30.25%	69.75%	100%

Table (4.1.2) explicates that (30.25%) of EFL graduates answer correctly, whereas (69.75%) of EFL graduates answer incorrectly. This result detects that most of EFL graduates do not understand of special cases of speech act of congratulation

**Table (4.1.3) Using of Formulaic Expressions Related to Speech Act of Congratulation**

Questions	Items	Frequency	Correct	Incorrect	Total
Four	Item2	40	3	37	40
	Percent		7.5%	92.5%	100%

Table (4.1.3) denotes that (7.5%) of EFL graduates do not use formulaic expressions, whereas (92.5%) of EFL graduates use formulaic expressions. This explores that the majority of EFL graduates tend to use formulaic expressions related to speech act of congratulation.

(4.2) Result of the Questionnaire

Table (1-4) below shows the teachers' responses to the questions of the questionnaire.

**Table (4.2.1) Unawareness of EFL Graduates of Utilizing the Social Expressions Related to Speech Act of Congratulation**

Option	Frequency	Percent
Agree	5	50%
Not sure	2	20%
Disagree	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Table (3.2.1) illustrates that (50%) of the teachers agree that EFL graduates are unaware of the utilizing the social expressions related to speech act of congratulation, (20%) of the teachers are not sure about the statement, whereas (30%) of the teachers disagree with the statement. This indicates that most EFL graduates are unaware of the utilizing the social expressions related to speech act of congratulation.

**Table (4.2.2) Awareness of EFL Graduates of Various Situations Demanding the Use of Speech Act of Congratulation**

Situations	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Total
Achievements	70%	30%	0%	100%
Adoption	80%	20%	0%	100%
Birth of Child	70%	20%	10%	100%
Wedding Anniversary	80%	10%	10%	100%
Birthdays	60%	20%	20%	100%
Business	60%	40%	0%	100%
Changes	50%	20%	30%	100%
Customers	70%	20%	10%	100%
Election	60%	40%	0%	100%
Engagement	50%	20%	30%	100%
Graduation	70%	10%	20%	100%
Jobs	60%	30%	10%	100%
Loan Payment	80%	20%	0%	100%
Religious Milestone	60%	20%	20%	100%
Retirement	70%	30%	0%	100%
Mean	66%	23.3%	10.7%	100%

Table (4.2.2) evinces that (66%) of the teachers agree that EFL graduates are not aware of various situations demanding the use of speech act of congratulation, whereas (23.3%) of the teachers are not sure about the statement, while (10.7%) of the teachers disagree with the statement. This result discloses most of EFL graduates are not aware of various situations demanding the use of speech act of *congratulation*.

**Table (4.2.3) Understanding of Graduates of Special Cases of Speech Act of Congratulation**

Situations	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Total
English tradition of speech act congratulation related to engagement	70%	20%	10%	100%
Baby with medical problem or disability	80%	20%	0%	100%
Premature baby	50%	40%	10%	100%
Multi births .	50%	50%	0%	100%
divorce of intimate friends and relative.	50%	40%	10%	100%
Mean	60%	34%	6%	

Table (4.2.3) shows that (60%) of the teachers agree that EFL graduates do not understand special cases of speech act of congratulation, whereas (34%) of the teachers are not sure about the statement, while (6%) of the teachers disagree with the statement. This result reveals most of EFL graduates do not have deep understanding of special cases of speech act of *congratulation*

**Table (4.2.4) Utilizing of Formulaic Expressions Concerning Speech Act of Congratulation by EFL Graduates**

Option	Frequency	Percent
Agree	9	90%
Not sure	1	10%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.4) states that (90%) of the teachers agree that EFL graduates tend to use formulaic expressions concerning *speech act of congratulation*, while (10%) of the teachers are not sure about the statement, whereas (0%) of the teachers disagree with the statement. This formulates that EFL graduates tend to use formulaic expressions concerning *speech act of congratulation*.

#### 4.3 Discussion of Results in Relation to Study Hypotheses

In this section the results of the questionnaire and the test are discussed in relation to hypotheses of the study.

##### 4.3.1 The first Hypothesis

*"Most EFL graduates are not aware of utilizing the social expressions related to congratulation in oral discourse."*

This hypothesis is supported by the result to the test where table (4.1.1) presents that most of respondents (63%) answer incorrectly. This hypothesis is also verified by the response to statement in the teacher questionnaire:

table (4.2.1), (50%) of teachers agree that EFL graduates do not have full realization of utilizing the social expressions related to speech act of congratulation.

##### 4.3.2 The Second Hypothesis

*"A great number of EFL graduates are not aware of the various situations which demand the usage of congratulation."*

This hypothesis is supported by the results of the test where table (4.1.1) evinces that (63%) of respondents answer incorrectly.

This hypothesis is also verified by the response to ten statements in the teacher questionnaire table (4.2.2) shows that (66%) of the teachers agree that EFL graduates are not fully aware of situations which demand the usage of social expressions of speech act of congratulation. Last but not least, the open ended questions reveal that the majority of the teachers (90%) insure that EFL graduates are not fully aware of various situations of speech acts of congratulation.

#### 4.3.3 The Third Hypothesis

*"More than half of EFL graduates are unconscious of the special cases which require the usage of specific social expressions and avoiding some of them related to speech act of commiseration and congratulation."*

This hypothesis is supported by the results of the test where test table (4.1.2) evinces that (69.75%) of respondents answer incorrectly. This hypothesis is also verified by the response to five statements in the teacher questionnaire Table (4.2.3) shows that (60%) of the teachers agree that EFL graduates have basic familiarity with special cases which demand the usage of social expressions and avoiding some of them concerning speech act of congratulation. Finally, the open ended questions reveal that the majority of the teachers (90%) insure that EFL graduates are not fully aware of special cases of speech acts of congratulation.

#### 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This section discusses the conclusion and recommendations and provides for suggestions for further studies concerning the same field.

##### 5.1 Conclusion

The study aimed at revealing EFL Graduates' Awareness of Utilizing the English Speech Act of Congratulation in Oral Discourse. The researcher used the

descriptive analytical method for conducting the study. Two tools for collecting data were used; a diagnostic test for EFL graduates; (27) EFL PhD students from Sudan University of Science and Technology. The College of Language. Department of English, (13) EFL PhD students from University of Neelain. College of Arts. Department of English. And a questionnaire for (10) ELT teachers from University of Gezira, University of Neelain, and Ahlia University. The study has reached the following finding:

##### 5.1.1 Findings

5. The majority EFL graduates are not aware of utilizing the social expression concerning to congratulation in oral discourse {(63%); table (4.1.1) and (50%); table (4.2.1)}.

6. A great number of EFL graduates are unaware of the various situations which demand the usage of congratulation {(63%); table (4.1.1) and (66%); table (4.2.2)}.

7. More than half of EFL graduates are unconscious of the special cases which require the usage of specific social expressions and avoiding some of them related to speech act of congratulation. {(69.75%); table (4.1.2) and (60%); table (4.2.3)}

8. EFL graduates tend to use formulaic expressions related to speech act of congratulation. {(92.5%); table (4.1.3) and (90%); table (4.2.4)}.

##### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of the present study, several recommendations have been made. The following are the main ones which the researcher recommends:

7. It is strongly recommended that teaching English speech act of congratulation should be started from basic school.

8. Giving more attention to English speech acts by focusing on different types in designing the courses of spoken language in EFL university syllabus.

9. It is also advised that great consideration should be placed on teaching all topics and special cases of English speech act of congratulation with equal emphasis.

10. Teachers should employ various techniques that help in motivating EFL graduates when teaching English speech act of congratulation.

11. It is recommended that EFL learners should be given adequate exercises for practicing and consolidating the English speech act of congratulation. This means that the syllabus should provide intensive exercises of different situations and various special cases concerning English speech act of congratulation.

12. Teachers should draw the EFL learners' attention to the special cases of commiseration.

### 5.3 Suggestion for Further Studies

Several topics and problems in field of English language learning and teaching remain un-discussed. The researcher suggests the following related studies:

4. Congratulation and Positive Politeness Strategies in Sudanese Context.

5. Linguistic Politeness in expressing Congratulation.

6. Speech Act of Congratulation in Sudanese and English: Across-Cultural Study

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