

# Strategies of Facebook Users in Offering Congratulations on Crown Prince Al Hussein's Wedding

Mutaz M. Alkhresheh

English Department, Faculty of Art and Science, the World Islamic Sciences and Education University, Amman, Jordan

**Abstract**—This research paper aims to study the strategies of congratulations used at the wedding of His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II and Rajwa Al Saif. The study employs a descriptive-qualitative design concerning positive politeness theory to emphasize the common positive politeness strategies that users use and the dominant and least common types of congratulatory utterances used when commenting on a post about a royal wedding on Facebook. The essential information for this study was gleaned from Facebook comments made in response to a post about Crown Prince Al Hussein's royal wedding on the social media platform Facebook. The data was gathered using the standard approach of user comments in response to Facebook posts. The Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) and the offer of good wishes (OGW) are the most common congratulation strategies, according to a data analysis of the 2479 comments gathered. The least common strategy is overlapping. Results also showed that Facebook users avoided complimenting in their comments, while they tended to offer congratulations and blessing wishes in their comments. These findings were analyzed in light of the theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987). Many basic congratulatory strategies and positive politeness theories have been employed in these comments, and some other linguistic and social factors appeared in this analysis.

**Index Terms**—Al Hussein's wedding, congratulations strategies, Facebook, positive politeness

## I. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the strategies and utterances of congratulations offered by Facebook users to His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, Jordan's Crown Prince, and Rajwa Al Saif on the occasion of their marriage. The term "interaction" describes the dynamic exchanges and interactions between people through social connections. Conversations, dialogues, gestures, and facial expressions are examples of communication that can be used in interactions. According to Philipsen and Katriel (1981), social connection can occur in various circumstances, such as flexible speech, which refers to communication and serves as the "work" required for self-definition and interpersonal ties. It describes the contact between people regarding communication, engagement, and involvement.

Social networks are made up of links between points (such as consumers and potential customers) and points themselves. Numerous distinct manifestations of these relationships are possible (Doyle, 2007). Facebook has made a significant impact in the Arab world and is now widely used as a social media platform in many countries in the area. It has been extremely important in bringing people together, allowing communication, and providing a stage for speech and activism. According to Ziani et al. (2017), Facebook may be utilized for intercultural communication and intercultural relationships, as well as for collaboration and resource sharing. In Jordan, the most popular social network is Facebook, which is widely utilized worldwide. According to a 2016 report from the Jordan Times, the great majority (93%) of Jordanian internet users use Facebook. Around 59.6% of Jordan's population, according to a report by Napoleon Cat in 2020, has Facebook profiles. Additionally, among Jordanians who use Facebook, Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) noted that Facebook's users find it attractive due to the variety of functions it offers.

Most of the time, users who respond to these posts congratulate the person on their new position, marriage, child, etc. Emojis, or written expressive speech acts, are used on social media to convey congratulations in response to posts. Congratulations, greetings, information exchange, thoughts, and emotional expressions are just a few of the many functions of communication. It is the way of sending and receiving messages in the form of written or spoken words, visual images, graphs, charts, body language, gestures, and facial expressions. It can occur through a variety of channels, including in-person meetings, phone conversations, emails, SMS, video conferences, and social media platforms.

According to Marki and Tsilipakon (2001), congratulation is the expression of the speaker's joy and praise for a pleasurable event. It is a crucial talent for teamwork, leadership, negotiation, problem-solving, and decision-making in social, professional, and personal contexts. Bach and Harnish (1979) pointed out that "congratulating expresses gladness for H's having done or received something noteworthy" (p. 51). It is a means of recognizing and honoring an individual's or a group's accomplishments or successful outcomes by sharing your joy with others and sending them your best wishes. When someone receives good news, people tend to express their joy by expressing "congratulations." However, how they show their congratulations can change depending on the circumstances (Elwood, 2004).

This study clarifies Elwood's (2004) suggestions for congratulation strategies in addition to Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategy theory. The data analysis for this study was conducted based on Elwood's (2004) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) theories. In addition to the performative and constative utterances, Austin suggested two categories for possible utterances (Austin, 2000, p. 351). In this term, there are two distinct categories of congratulations. The first kind is congratulations for anything done. This style of congratulations focuses on praising other people for their accomplishments. The second kind is called "ritual congratulations," which are closely associated with happy social occasions. Interlocutors communicate empathetic satisfaction to one another by congratulating one another on their ceremonial occasions (Oraiby, 2018).

#### A. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the strategies of congratulations and utterances used at the wedding and look at how users on Facebook react while responding in the comments. It also highlighted the definition, theory, and various forms of politeness as mentioned in the literature on the subject, noting that various speech acts, including requests, apologies, and refusals, involve politeness strategies.

#### B. Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study rests in its ability to draw attention to how Facebook users celebrated the royal wedding. In light of the theories and prior research employed in the data collection process, this study also assesses several commonly used strategies of congratulations. Many studies on congratulatory speeches that are referenced in the literature have some connection, either directly or indirectly, to the aim of this study. Facebook users' comments served as the foundation for the data collection.

#### C. Questions of the Study

This study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. What common positive politeness strategies do users use to react to a post about a royal wedding on Facebook?
2. What are the dominant and less common types of congratulatory utterances used in responding to the royal wedding?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on studies on speech acts of congratulation that are relevant to the topic of this study, either directly or indirectly. Brown and Levinson (1987) pointed out that one of the positive politeness strategies is the speech act of congratulation. Yule (1985) defined "expressive" speech acts as those that express the speaker's feelings, such as thankfulness, pleasure, displeasure, apologies, condolences, pain, likeness, dislike, or sorrow. According to Searle (1969), congratulation is a type of expressive speech act in which the speaker conveys his or her feelings and emotions to the listener.

The current study clarifies the Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Elwood's (2004) suggestion of congratulation strategies. Being polite is essential for promoting effective communication, upholding strong relationships, and fostering a happy social environment. It encourages mutual respect between people and groups. "Please, thank you, excuse me," and other polite expressions are examples of how to speak nicely while making requests, expressing gratitude, or requesting attention. Polite language shows care and recognizes the importance and existence of other people.

Brown and Levinson (1978) highlighted the term "face" to show politeness. According to Coates (2004), a person's face is their outer appearance; hence, acknowledging someone else's face in a conversation might be understood as a sign of politeness. Congratulations, as an expressive speech act, are closely linked to positive politeness and are a face-saving act because they are intended to enhance the addressee's positive face (Orecchioni, 2004). Many studies have looked at how people use social media and the spoken act of congratulation in the Arab world.

A study was recently completed by Al-Shboul et al. (2022). They studied how Jordanians used Facebook statuses to celebrate a royal birthday. To look into the congratulatory speech act by Jordanian Facebook users in line with the theories of speech act and politeness, they analyzed patterns and linguistic forms. Several positive politeness strategies were tested based on the congratulation strategies adopted for responses to a Facebook status posted in honour of His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al-Hussein's birthday. The least popular means of expressing congratulations among Jordanian Facebook users in this study were proverbs and sayings when compared to illocutionary force-indicating devices, which dominated. The most widely observed type of politeness in congratulatory forms was giving gifts to the listener, while exaggerating and seeking agreement were the least common.

Alghazo et al. (2021) also conducted another study examining pragmatic-linguistic realizations of the speech act of congratulating with a keen focus on Kabyle and Jordanian Arabic (JA) by comparing the techniques employed by Kabyle and JA-speaking students. They employed a mixed-methods design that incorporated both quantitative as well as qualitative analysis and frequency of strategies. The results reveal slight variations in how congratulation strategies were used between the two groups. These differences were due to sociopragmatic and sociocultural dimensions of pragmatic variation.

Wardat and Alkhateeb (2020), on the other hand, conducted a follow-up study that examined Syrian wedding party congratulations strategies within Jordan. The respondents were Syrians living in northern Jordan who are refugees, which was the sample size for this research. The participants were divided into equal halves of males and females. They made a test with 14 questions, which they administered to their subjects. From these findings, it was evident that Syrians want to give their two brides exaggerated congratulations, while this is also an indication that Syrians are not fond of making fun of or joking about personal issues at wedding ceremonies in front of guests. According to the study's findings, there is no difference in how men and women behave at Syrian wedding receptions.

Al-Hour (2019) explored the link between gender and politeness in the Palestinian context using the speech act of congratulations. This study was aimed at Palestinian congratulations strategies. The sample included 60 people, who were divided equally according to gender. Out of these methods, six were used by participants: the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), Expression of Validation, Offer of Best Wishes, Encouragement, Joking, and Thanking God; the other eight methods were never employed by the respondents. Both men and women were more likely to utilize IFID in comparison with other types of strategies, while validation expressions, encouragement appeals, jokes, and thanks to God were not frequently applied. For positive politeness techniques across all contexts and genders, gift-giving was observed as being the most frequent technique employed to show positive politeness across all contexts.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016) used DCT to study the congratulatory strategies used by postgraduate EFL students in Jordan. They determined the positive politeness practices and ways in which Jordanian postgraduate English as Foreign Language (EFL) students reacted to compliments. They used Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework and Elwood's (2004) taxonomy of congratulatory strategies. The research revealed that the students most commonly employed the illocutionary force-indicating device, the offer of good wishes, and the expression of happiness. The researchers of the study urged more studies on the speech act of congratulations, both within the Jordanian speech community and more specifically across cultures. In answer to their inquiry, this research examines cultural differences in how the speech act of congratulating is used in JA and Kabyle.

Emery (2000) examined how older and younger Arab speakers of Omani Arabic express their congratulations on marriage, childbirth, and religious Eves. The research revealed variations in how old and young people congratulate them on wedding celebrations. More thorough research showed that the expressions of men and women differed.

In summary, this study is the first investigation that looks at how Facebook users used congratulations strategies in response to posts on social media, primarily Facebook, regarding Crown Prince Al Hussein's wedding, which was a royal and not an ordinary wedding.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Design of the Study*

To accomplish the study goal, the researcher employs a descriptive-qualitative design concerning positive politeness. Facebook comments posted in response to a post regarding Crown Prince Al Hussein's royal wedding provided the key data for the current study. The standard method of gathering data from user comments on Facebook postings was employed. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method helps in the classification and analysis of the gathered data to explore the strategies and utterances of congratulations used in Facebook comments.

#### B. *Data Collection and Classification*

Previous statistics and studies demonstrate the significance of this platform in Jordan as well as the Arab world. The researcher uses his Facebook account to gather data. On this occasion, four posts on the Royal Hashemite Court's official Facebook page drew responses from the respondents, who are Facebook users. This method was utilized to collect natural data that depicts the congratulations strategies and utterances employed in the wedding of the Crown Prince of Jordan, His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, and Rajwa Al Saif. A total of 2479 comments representing congratulations were gathered from male and female users of various ages and social backgrounds.

After the researcher finished the first analysis, he contacted two specialists to verify the data and make sure the congratulation expressions matched the categories proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Elwood (2004). Following the completion of the classifications by the two independent experts, the researchers found many variations in the coding scheme. As a result, further conversations were conducted until a consensus was reached, and as a result, more changes were made. Finally, the researchers modified just slightly Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of politeness strategies and Elwood's (2004) classification of congratulation strategies. These adjustments have been made to remove methods that were not included in the data and to conform to commonly used strategies.

#### C. *Data Analysis*

The technique used to analyze the congratulations was based on Elwood's (2004) proposed taxonomy of the congratulation strategy classification, with slight modifications to adjust to the data gathered. Only 1679 congratulatory utterances matched Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of politeness strategies. Because of this, many comments may contain many congrats utterances and politeness strategies. The following are some examples of Facebook user comments with English translations and several types of congratulatory utterances:

TABLE 1  
EXAMPLES IN ARABIC WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND TYPES OF CONGRATULATORY UTTERANCES

Arabic comments	English translation	Type of utterance
الف الف مبارك سمو الأمير	Congratulations, Your Royal Highness	Offering Congratulation
الأردن اليوم تحتفل بفارسها	Jordan today celebrates its knight	Mentioning The Occasion
اللهم بارك لهما وبارك عليهما واجمع بينهما على خير	May Allah bless them and shower His blessings upon them, and may He unite them both in goodness	Blessing Wish

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Elwood's taxonomy and a new model for identifying new congratulations are used in theory, in addition to Brown and Levinson's theory regarding politeness strategies. The first table shows the frequencies and percentages of the modified taxonomy of congratulation strategies used in the comments of Facebook users. The researcher identified evidence that supports the congratulation utterances theory, including the frequencies and percentages of the types of congratulation utterances used in order to answer the research questions, such as offering congratulations, blessing wishes, expressing feelings, mentioning the occasion, and complimenting.

##### A. Results of the First Question

TABLE 2  
MODIFIED TAXONOMY OF CONGRATULATION STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN FACEBOOK COMMENTS

No	Congratulation strategies	Frequencies	Percentages%
1.	Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)	1590	64.13%
2.	The offer of good wish (OoGW)	587	23.67%
3.	Expression of happiness (EoH)	109	4.39%
4.	*Praying for God's blessing and protection for his Royal Highness	104	4.19%
5.	The Suggestion of Celebration (SoC)	65	2.62%
6.	Overlapped	33	1.33%
	TOTAL	2479	100.00

According to a general analysis of the first table, when congratulating others in Facebook comments, the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) predominates, while the Suggestion of Celebration (SoC) and overlaps are the least common strategies. Based on the findings in Table 2, a thorough analysis of these findings answered the first study question, which sought to determine the basic strategies used by Facebook users to express congratulations on a royal wedding post. The data analysis revealed that, in 64.13% of the comments (n = 1590), Facebook users tended to adopt the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) strategy. The usage of the comment "زواج مبارك سمو الأمير" "Blessed marriage, Your Royal Highness" serves as an illustrative example of this strategy. The offer of good wishes (OoGW) was the second most popular strategy, accounting for 23.67% of the comments (n = 587). The second tactic is exemplified by the sentence, "امنياتي لكما بالحياة السعيدة" "I wish you both a happy life," which is used frequently. Expression of happiness (EoH) occupied the third percentage point in the rank. It crystallized in 4.39% of the comments (n = 109). An example of this strategy is the phrase "فرحتنا اليوم لا توصف" "Our joy today is indescribable". With 4.19% of the comments (n = 104), praying for God to bless and protect His Royal Highness came in fourth among the most popular techniques. The phrase "حماكم الله اميرنا الغالي" "God protect you, our dear prince") is used as an illustration of this strategy.

The fifth one is the Suggestion of Celebration (SoC). 2.62% (n = 47) of the comments displayed it. The phrase "احتفالنا اليوم للصبح" ("Our celebration today to the morning") is frequently used to describe this strategy. With roughly 1.33% of the comments (n = 33), overlapping was the least prevalent strategy. This is an example. "تهانينا.... أتمنى لكم حظا سعيدا أنا سعيدة" "Congratulations... I wish you good luck. I am so happy on this occasion." The results of various studies cited in the literature, like Wardat and Alkhateeb (2020), Al-Shboul et al. (2022), Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016), Al-Hour (2019), and Alghazo et al. (2021), are somewhat consistent with the prior findings. Al-Hour (2019) used the participants' use of six of the 14 methods described in the taxonomy as an illustration, with the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) being the most common strategy among Palestinians. Al-Shboul et al. (2022) reported the same result, but for a royal birthday and not a marriage celebration. They found that the illocutionary force indicator device is the most popular congratulation strategy among Jordanian Facebook users.

##### B. Results of the Second Question

TABLE 3  
THE DOMINANT AND LEAST COMMON TYPES OF CONGRATULATORY UTTERANCES

No.	Types of Congratulation Utterances	Frequencies	Percentages %
1.	Offering Congratulation	1098	65.39%
2.	Blessing Wish	387	23.04%
3.	Expressing Feeling	109	6.49%
4.	Mentioning The Occasion	53	3.15%
5.	Complimenting	32	1.90 %
	TOTAL	1679	100.00

According to the third table, which displays the percentages of all the types of congratulatory utterances used by Facebook users in their comments, offering congratulations is the dominant congratulation utterance in the comments, whereas complimenting is the least utilized one.

This section discusses the findings in light of the theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and speech act (Austin, 1962) regarding the frequencies and percentages of the types of congratulations utterances employed by Facebook users. The percentages of various congratulations utterances used by Facebook users are shown in the table. According to Table 3, offering congratulations has a percentage of 65.39%, blessing wishes have a proportion of 23.04%, expressing feelings has a percentage of 6.49%, mentioning the occasion has a percentage of 3.15%, and complimenting has a percentage of 1.90%. This makes it evident that, with only 1.90% of all congratulatory utterances, compliments are the least common kind. In contrast, offering congratulations comes in first with 65.39% of the comments.

Setyorini and Maryadi (2020) used Elwood's taxonomy with a new model for the identification of new congratulations and Brown and Levinson's theory for politeness strategies to identify the different forms of congratulations. It demonstrated how Facebook users express their feelings, compliment others, make divine statements, bless wishes, mention the occasion, and offer congratulations. The previous studies focused on a different event; the results of the current study vary in the percentages and frequency of the congratulatory utterances employed and the discussed topic.

The previous findings are rather different from those of the research cited in the literature, such as the one by Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016), which looked at the postgraduate EFL students in Jordan using several congratulation strategies. The study's researchers explicitly urged people from different cultural backgrounds to express their congratulations. It looked at the cultural differences in how the speech act of congratulating is used in JA and Kabyle. The investigation conducted by Al-Hour (2019) looked at the relationship between gender and politeness when employing the speech act of congratulations in a Palestinian setting. The results showed that participants used six of them. In comparison with other strategies, IFID was found to be the most commonly used by males and females. Other infrequent expressions were thanking God, encouragement, jokes, and validation. In gift-giving situations, it has been found that this is the most commonly used positive politeness method by both men and women, while the least common are joking, exaggerating, and seeking agreement.

## V. CONCLUSION

This present paper illustrates different congratulatory utterances and the several strategies of positive politeness that Facebook users used in their comments in response to a wedding announcement that was posted on the Facebook page regarding the royal wedding event. The data used for the current research has been extracted from Facebook comments in response to a status posted at Crown Prince Al Hussein's royal wedding on the social media platform. It was derived from four posts made on the Royal Hashemite Court's official Facebook page on this occasion, in which, according to this study, the IFID is the most common way of congratulation used in Facebook comments, while the SoC and the overlapped are the less commonly used. The results also shed light on some of the congratulations that Facebook users use in their remarks. It was discovered that offering congratulations is the most common way to express congratulations in the comments, while complimenting is the least common. Tables 2 and 3's results discussed the frequencies and percentages in relation to Austin's (1962) theory of speech act and Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness.

In conclusion, although congratulation strategies and utterances have been the subject of many studies, the results of this one are the first to particularly address the most common types of congratulation strategies and utterances for this important event. The findings may offer valuable information to scholars on the same subject regarding how to conduct these kinds of studies.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is suggested that more research be done in different contexts to determine whether the findings are broadly applicable. It suggests further research on this social practice and other social behaviours at different times. It is also recommended to examine the relationship between some other social variables and common sorts of congratulations to have a better understanding of the influence of factors such as age and gender. Additionally, the current study has produced key results for examining this important event that could be applied to research in related fields. Lastly, this study material might be unique and may open the way for more investigation into Jordan's royal celebrations and other related events in different countries by investigating different social factors.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Alghazo, S., Zemmour, S., Al Salem, M. N., & Alrashdan, I. (2021). A cross-cultural analysis of the speech act of congratulating in Kabyle and Jordanian Arabic. *Ampersand*, 8, 100075. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2021.100075>
- [2] Al-Hour, I. I. (2019). *The speech act of congratulation in Palestinian Society: Positive politeness and gender differences*. Hebron University.
- [3] Al-Shboul, Y., & Huwari, I. F. (2016). Congratulation strategies of Jordanian EFL postgraduate students. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), 79-87.

- [4] Al-Shboul, Y., & Maros, M. (2013). Condolences Strategies by Jordanians to an Obituary Status Update on Facebook. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 13(3), 151-162.
- [5] Al-Shboul, Y., Al-Daher, Z., Al-Dala'ien, O. A., & Abu-Snoubar, T. K. (2022). Congratulation Strategies by Jordanians on a Royal Birthday Facebook Status. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(5), 1097-1104.
- [6] Austin, J. (2000). *Performance analysis and performance diagnostics*. Context Press/New Harbinger Publications.
- [7] Bach, K., & Harnish, R. M. (1979). *Communication and speech acts*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard.
- [8] Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (Vol. 4). Cambridge university press.
- [9] Coates, J. (2004). *Women, Men and Language: A sociolinguistic account of gender differences in communication*. J. Coates—Harlow England, New York: Longman, 254.
- [10] Crystal, D. (1985). *Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Vol. 6th). Blackwell.
- [11] Doyle, J. (2007). Picturing the clima (c) tic: Greenpeace and the representational politics of climate change communication. *Science as culture*, 16(2), 129-150.
- [12] Elwood, K. (2004). *Congratulations: A cross-cultural analysis of responses to another's happy news*, (25), 355-386.
- [13] Katriel, T., & Philipsen, G. (1981). "What we need is communication": "Communication" as a cultural category in some American speech. *Communication Monographs*, 48(4), 301-317.
- [14] Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (2004). Introducing polylogue. *Journal of pragmatics*, 36(1), 1-24.
- [15] Makri-Tsilipakou, M. (2001). Congratulations and bravo! *Pragmatics And Beyond New Series*, 137-176.
- [16] Oraiby, H. (2011). Iraqi EFL Learners' Ability in Using Congratulations. *Journal of College of Education for Pure Science*, 1(5), 40-64.
- [17] Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language* (Vol. 626). Cambridge university press.
- [18] Setyorini, D. A., & Maryadi, M. A. (2020). *Congratulation Expressions Addressed to Arya Permana Given by Facebookers* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).
- [19] Wardat, M., & Alkhateeb, O. M. (2020). Congratulation strategies in Syrians' wedding parties in Jordan. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 7(2), 87-109.
- [20] Ziani, A. K., Elareshi, M., & Alrashid, M. (2017). Social impact of digital media: Growth pattern of Facebook in the Arab world. *Media Watch*, 8(2), 177-191.



**Mutaz M Alkhreshah** currently teaches English in the English department at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University. Alkhreshah has previously taught in Saudi Arabia. He has a PhD in linguistics, a Master's in linguistics, and a Bachelor in European Languages. His professional interests include Linguistics, education, sociolinguistics and second language acquisition.