

Degree Project

Master's Thesis

Cross-cultural Analysis of Congratulations in American English, Indian English and Peninsular Spanish

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Subject/main field of study: Pragmatics
Course code: EN3077
Credits: 15 HEC
Date of examination: June 3, 2020

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Abstract

To gain a better understanding of intercultural communication, it is relevant to study speech acts not only in different languages but also across different language varieties. Seeing as speech act studies are said to have suffered from Anglocentrism there is a necessity to include non-western cultures (Wierzbicka, 1985:145). The current study seeks to gain an understanding of the understudied speech act of congratulations in two different varieties of English (American and Indian). In addition, to gain further insights and move away from the aforementioned Anglocentrism, Peninsular Spanish will also be investigated. The questions that have guided this research are: 1) What type of congratulation strategies do the respondents report using? 2) To what extent do the variables of power and social distance seem to influence the congratulation performance? 3) To what extent are there similarities and differences between the respondents with respect to the reported congratulation strategies? To identify the strategies, a modified version of Elwood's (2004) taxonomy on congratulations was used. Data was gathered through Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) completed by 90 respondents from North America, India and Spain offering congratulations in nine different situations. The results indicated that different strategies are applied by the groups depending on situation and/or variables. For instance, North Americans and Spaniards are more likely to express happiness and Indians are more likely to offer good wishes.

Keywords: Cross-cultural, speech acts, congratulations, DCTs, Elwood

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1. Introduction

Increasing globalization has led to augmented opportunities in intercultural communication and brought along the awareness that linguistic competence alone is insufficient for mutual understanding. This has in turn led to an increasingly pressing need to explore cultural dimensions in pragmatics. This need has, as a response, led to the emergence of the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, a field which can be seen as having the potential of making a valuable contribution to the practical needs of an increasingly interconnected world (Stadler, 2013:6). The coming together in the workplace of employers and employees of diverse cultural backgrounds is accelerating and in the past decade, people around the world, especially Americans and Europeans, now interact on a daily or weekly basis with colleagues in countries like India (Storti, 2007:xxiv).

Intercultural communication has also been claimed to face some challenges. One of these challenges refers to the need to create an awareness about the importance of understanding speech acts cross-culturally. Speech acts have been defined as what the speaker or writer is doing when uttering or writing a particular form of words, with the focus being on the speaker's intention. It has been observed that "the recognition of the meaning of a particular speech act in a given cultural setting is at the heart of successful intercultural communication" (Palma, 2005:abstract). Research on speech acts is believed to be of great value in intercultural education and professional communication (Cheng, 2012:160, D'Souza, 1991:307). To improve and develop students' and professionals' intercultural communicative competence, it is relevant to have knowledge of the diversity of speech acts in local contexts of interaction but also globally (D'Souza, 1991:307, Cheng, 2012:160).

Wierzbicka observes that the study of speech acts has involved ethnocentric tendencies as many studies have "based their observations on English alone; they take it for granted that what

seems to hold for the speakers of English must hold for ‘people generally’” (1985:145). It has been stated that Anglo-Saxon conversational conventions have mistakenly been seen as human behaviour in general (Wierzbicka, 1985:145-146). In fact, several researchers have shown that the same speech act can manifest differently across languages (Meshtrie & Bhatt, 2008:140, Palma, 2005:abstract, D’Souza, 1991:307). It has been noted that cultures have developed distinct verbal behaviours which vary from one language to another and due to pragmatic and sociolinguistic parameters, verbal behaviours may be used and interpreted differently (Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016:1).

Patterns of expressing politeness, apologies, compliments and face-saving devices are said to be carried over from L1 practices to, for example, World Englishes (Meshtrie & Bhatt, 2008:140). Therefore, cross-cultural differences in language use may be indicative of broader socio-cultural differences that underlie language in use internationally and it is believed, by some, that it is at this level that much intercultural misunderstanding has its origin (Palma, 2005:abstract). In fact, face-threatening speech acts have received significant attention in research as they are often seen as the potential origin of intercultural communication breakdowns (Cheng, 2012:149). Nonetheless, even though there might be differences between two cultural groups in the realization of a speech act or the cultural norms underlying their pragmatic performance, it does not necessarily lead to problematic or flawed communication. This might simply be an indication of differences which may or may not impact communication (Roever, 2010: 242).

Cross-cultural speech act studies have also looked at issues concerning politeness. Early studies in politeness theory have drawn generalizations on presumably universal politeness trends. These trends have, however, been seen as heavily based on Western cultures which might not concur with the realities of many people living in societies which are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse (Wierzbicka, 2003:ix, Stadler, 2013:5). There is an

invaluable importance in identifying and describing culture-specific norms of interpersonal interaction, especially for the field of language teaching (Wierzbicka, 2003:ix). As English is increasingly fulfilling a function as a Lingua Franca and more and more people are learning the language, it is relevant to study different speech acts and how these are performed in different languages (Nasri et al., 2013:67-68). Gaining greater cross-cultural understanding might lead to improving communication between people from different linguistic backgrounds (Hsieh, 2009:93; Nasri et al., 2013:67-68).

To gain a better understanding of intercultural communication, it is relevant to study speech acts not only in different languages but also across different language varieties. D'Souza has observed that the new varieties of English, such as Indian English, differ from the old varieties in the performance of speech acts more than in formal properties and it suggests that a pragmatic approach might capture the uniqueness of these varieties (1991:307). Institutionalized varieties of English are said to choose different, culture-specific strategies to perform speech acts (Meshtrie & Bhatt, 2008:140). D'Souza further notes that the Indian subcontinent shares a grammar of culture and that this might also manifest itself as speech acts common to the indigenous languages of the subcontinent and might also be reflected in the English used by Indians (1991:307).

Seeing as speech act studies are said to have focused on Anglo-Saxon cultures, there is a necessity to study other cultures and languages as well. The present study is a contribution to such a need and the speech act in focus is the speech act of congratulations. Although other speech acts, such as requests, have received significant attention in research, research within the speech act of congratulations is scarce (Ronan 2015:25; Elwood, 2004:357; Gomez, 2016:270; Nasri et al., 2013: 68; Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2016:80; Stadler, 2013:3). Therefore, this study attempts to address this gap.

The current study seeks to gain an understanding for the speech act of congratulations in American English but also, Indian English and Peninsular Spanish in order to gain further insights and move away from the aforementioned Anglo-Saxon focus. Furthermore, the languages analyzed in this study represent different national cultures as defined by Hall (1976) and might thus be expected to use different congratulation strategies (see Section 2.2.1). It has been argued that Indian and North American communication style traditionally fall at opposite ends of Hall's culture theory and that Peninsular Spanish tends to be in the middle (Nishimura et al., 2008:792; Lewis, 2006:150-151; Kim et al., 1998:509-510; Zummo, 2018:60).

The main aim of this research is to examine what the differences and similarities are in American English, Indian English and Peninsular Spanish with respect to congratulation strategies. Data has been gathered through Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) completed by respondents from North America, India and Spain. DCTs are a common method applied in speech act studies (see Section 3.1.1).

The questions that have guided this research are:

- 1) What type of congratulation strategies do the respondents report using?
- 2) To what extent do the variables of power and social distance seem to influence the congratulation performance?
- 3) To what extent are there similarities and differences between the respondents with respect to the reported congratulation strategies?

2. Theoretical Background

The organization of this section has been based on a general to specific pattern. First, pragmatics and two of its subareas will be dealt with in 2.1. Second, cross-cultural pragmatics and a presentation of the different language varieties will be provided in 2.2. Next, we delve into the world of speech acts and the taxonomy used in this study will be presented in 2.3. Following

this is a literature review on congratulations from a cross-cultural perspective (2.4), which is concluded with a discussion on the variables of power and social distance (2.5).

2.1 Pragmatics

Although the scope of pragmatics is not easy to define, the field, roughly speaking, deals with language in use and the contexts in which it is used (Stadler, 2013:1). Yule states that “pragmatics is the study of ‘invisible’ meaning, or how we recognize what is meant even when it isn’t actually said or written” and adds that pragmatics could be said to be the study of intended speaker meaning (Yule, 2016:126). Stadler argues that pragmatics “refers to the study of language in action” and that the focus of the field is to explore the “meaning an utterance acquires on the basis of the social and situational context in which it is embedded (2013:1). One of the concerns of this field, according to Stadler, deals with the fact that linguistic knowledge – such as knowledge of grammar and vocabulary – is not sufficient for interacting across cultures. It is argued that linguistic knowledge alone cannot always provide meaning, but that meaning is context-dependent (2013:1). The following is an example provided by Stadler (2013:1) of a type that is frequently used in order to illustrate the aim of the field of pragmatics:

A: What time is it?

B: The milkman was just here.

Even if B does not say what the exact time is, A can figure out the time within this social context since the milkman delivers the milk every day at approximately the same time. A infers meaning to B’s answer from its contextual embedding (Stadler, 2013:1). These contextual references vary from culture to culture and language to language and differences in pragmatics and conventions on how to behave verbally in specific contexts across cultures are observed to be understudied (Schneider, 2011:25). The study of pragmatics has generally been divided into three areas, namely, ‘general pragmatics’, which deals with conditions in general regarding the communicative use of language; ‘sociopragmatics’, which concerns the impact of local

conditions on language use; and, finally, ‘pragmalinguistics’, concerning the specific resources a language provides for conveying particular illocutions (Leech, 1983 as cited in Culpepper, 2009:153). The two specific aspects of pragmatics are relevant to the current study and will be explained below.

2.1.1 Sociopragmatic and Pragmalinguistic Principles

Sociopragmatics has been described as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983) and relates to having knowledge about the interdependence between linguistic forms and sociocultural contexts (Flores Salgado, 2011:1; Harlow, 1990:328). Sociopragmatics “relates pragmatic meaning to an assessment of participants’ social distance, the language community’s social rules and appropriateness norms, discourse practices, and accepted behaviours” (Marmaridou, 2011:77). Sociopragmatic competence thus refers to having the social knowledge to produce and interpret language in a particular speech community, which, put simply, “refers to knowing what to say and when and to whom to say it” in specific contexts (Flores Salgado, 2011:1-2). This implies that the speaker knows what speech act strategies can be used “according to the situational or social variables present in the act of communication” (Harlow, 1990:328). It has been advocated that students should be sensitized to cross-cultural differences in linguistic realizations of phenomena such as politeness and value judgements in order to help eliminate much of our national and ethnic stereotyping (Harlow, 1990:329).

Broadly speaking, the distinction between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics lies within their foci on two methodological approaches to pragmatic analysis (Marmaridou, 2011:77). Pragmalinguistics generally concerns the particular resources that a given language provides for conveying pragmatic meaning (illocutionary and interpersonal) (Marmaridou, 2011:77). In other words, pragmalinguistics relates to how a given pragmatic meaning is conveyed in a given context (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:42). Pragmalinguistic failure is said to take place when linguistic form does not match the pragmatic meaning that the speaker intends to

convey (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:42). A chief source of pragmalinguistic errors is considered to be pragmalinguistic transfer, where speech-act strategies are inappropriately transferred from first language to second (Harlow, 1990:329). A great deal of cross-cultural pragmatic research has dealt with identifying these pragmalinguistic norms that are connected with the performance of different speech acts in different languages/cultural groups (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:42). Both of these approaches will be relevant to the current study, as the DCTs are constructed to make participants attend to both social variables, above all power and social distance, and the formal realization of speech acts.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Pragmatics

The literal meaning of ‘cross-cultural’ is *between cultures*. In this sense, cross-cultural studies refers to the study of meaning negotiation between different cultures (Stadler, 2013:1). Cross-cultural pragmatics investigates “the speech behavior and norms of different cultures, focusing on contextually derived meaning” (Stadler, 2013:2). This type of research typically “makes membership in a cultural group, usually defined as an L1 group, the independent variable, and compares differences between the groups” (Roever, 2010:241).

Although the terms *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* may be used interchangeably, a distinction is often made between the two (Stadler, 2013:1). The former is “when cultures are compared but are not in contact” and the latter “takes place when cultures are in contact” (Warren, 2012:481). Cross-cultural communication deals with native discourse across cultures, while intercultural communication investigates the discourse of people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds communicating either in a lingua franca or in the native language of one of the participants (Cheng, 2012:148; Holmes, 2012:205; Stadler 2013:1). There is thus a distinction between the two terms and “research that compares communication in one culture

with communication in another culture” can be considered cross-cultural in nature (Corbett, 2011:307). In this study, the term *cross-cultural* is adopted along with the definition provided by Warren and Corbett.

One of the criticisms that cross-cultural pragmatics has received is that it is said to readily jump from language to thought, that is to say that, oftentimes, the presence of a given type of utterance is taken as an indication of the way we think (Kristiansen & Geeraerts, 2007:268). However, it is important to take into consideration that the relationship between language and thought might not always be as straightforward as that (Kristiansen & Geeraerts, 2007:268).

Studies of speech acts across cultures have shown that there is cultural variability in the manifestations of speech act performance (Cheng, 2012:152). As mentioned above, Wierzbicka has argued that there has been widespread ethnocentrism within this field of study as many studies have drawn conclusions of a universal nature based on observations on English alone (1985:145). It should, however, be mentioned that Wierzbicka has received criticism on the validity of her conclusions especially since her methodology only includes pilot studies which “are empirically weakly substantiated” (Kristiansen & Geeraerts, 2007:266).

The current study adopts a cross-cultural approach, which, as was indicated in the Introduction, has the potential of also informing intercultural pragmatic approaches. To avoid an Anglocentric perspective, the study includes data from three different language varieties. Even if two of these are in fact English, they are diverse in the sense that one is an inner circle English and the other an outer circle English (Kachru, 1985 cited in Meshtrie & Bhatt, 2008:28).

2.2.1 Conceptualizing Culture

The term *culture* is notoriously problematic. One issue is that there does not seem to be a concrete definition of the term (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:3). However, recognizing the complexity of the concept of culture, this study has adopted Spencer-Oatey’s definition (2008:3):

“Culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member’s behaviour and each member’s interpretation of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour”

Stadler argues that it is these cross-cultural differences in meaning transfer and interpretation that makes this line of inquiry particularly interesting and attractive within the field of cross-cultural pragmatics (2013:5).

Edward T. Hall, who is one of the most widely cited researchers in the field of intercultural communication, proposed the concept of high versus low context as a way of understanding different cultural orientations (Warren, 2012:481; Thijs, 2003:197; Kim et al., 1998:508). According to his theory, there is one main cultural dimension which has low-context (LC) cultures at one extreme and high-context (HC) cultures at the other (Warren, 2012:481). According to Hall, “a high-context communication or message is one which *most* of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message” and he adds that “a low-context communication is just the opposite; that is, the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code” (Hall, 1990:6 as cited in Lewis, 2006:150). Thus, HC cultures might leave a great deal unsaid and although HC participants may speak more, they say less (Lewis 2006:150). In these contexts, the message tends to be embedded in the information, therefore not everything is explicitly stated (Nishimura et al., 2008:785). In such contexts, reading between the lines is expected of the listener in order to understand the unsaid (Nishimura et al., 2008:785; Zummo, 2018:60). Furthermore, HC communication is not context-free and the messages have to be placed within the appropriate context in order to understand the meanings conveyed in the messages (Kim, 1998:512). HC cultures are generally collectivist, stable and slow to change. Reliance on their history, status, relationships and religion is considered commonplace to assign meaning to an event (Nishimura et al., 2008:785).

On the other hand, LC participants may speak less, but every word counts (Lewis, 2006:151). In LC cultures, messages tend to be less dependent on context as they rely on contextual inference to a minimal degree (Stadler, 2013:3; Kim, 1998:512). In such cultures, what is important is what is said and not so much how it is said or the environment that it is said in (Kim, 1998:512). Therefore, inference making, or educated guesses, are less problematic in communication with LC cultures as thoughts are relatively clearly expressed and meaning is conveyed by the speaker (Stadler, 2013:3).

Although Hall's model is considered to render interesting results, it is also regarded as leaving an important issue unresolved; namely that what constitutes a HC or LC culture is based on personal observations and interpretations. Therefore, where a country can be placed on the continuum should be empirically investigated (Kim et al., 1998:509). Hall's categorization should be "seen as a continuum rather than a clear-cut distinction" (Zummo, 2018:60).

In Lewis' tripartite model, cultures are seen as 'reactive', 'multi-active' and 'linear-active'. HC cultures are similar to 'reactive cultures' which are sometimes also called 'listening cultures' (Lewis, 2006:32). Reactive cultures are seen as being accommodating, polite and indirect especially when compared to the 'multi-active' type (e.g. Spain) "that show emotionally-charged reactions and impatience". Lewis considers Indian culture as part reactive and part multi-active. Communication patterns in India are considered to be abundant in praise, and show an unwillingness to criticism nor concealing feelings such as joy, disappointment and grief (Lewis, 2006:435-436). Lewis also states that "Indian English excels in ambiguity" and that Indians emanate and expect respect and properness (2006:436, 439).

People from the multi-active culture type are not very interested in schedules or punctuality and they consider reality to be more important than man-made appointments. Thus, in such cultures, if circumstances have changed, previously agreed plans might not be followed. In addition, for Spaniards it has been said to be important to protect face and oftentimes social and

professional situations are interweaved (Lewis, 2006:271, 34). In linear active cultures, (e.g. North Americans), tasks are carried out one by one and within a scheduled time period (Lewis, 2006:29-30; Zummo, 2018:60). Furthermore, people from the USA are thought to know very little about saving face and formalities (Lewis, 2006:182).

Having reported on previous research on cultural patterns, again, it is crucial to remember that cultures are complex and not monoliths. This model might prove useful in explaining why certain cultures value certain behaviors, generally speaking. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that it may be overambitious to predict how a group of people from a particular culture might react to a given situation and a general model may not at all be able to predict how an individual from a given culture reacts verbally in a given situation.

Yet another perspective has been offered by Hooker (2008) who highlights differences between rule-based and relationship-based culture practices. These two categories are said to regulate interpersonal relations. Rule-based cultures trust rules and norms whereas relationship-based cultures rely on individuals and are therefore more interested in establishing and maintaining good connections (Zummo, 2018:60). This distinction has been regarded as relevant in cross-cultural communication since it also has an effect on power distance. Relationship-based cultures might rely more on courtesy and face-saving exchanges such as the use of formality (the use of greetings and repeating the word ‘sir’) (Zummo, 2018:70-71).

Thus, in the wake of these studies, the languages analyzed in this study and representing different national cultures might be expected to use different congratulation strategies since they seem to fall on different points of the HC-LC continuum. It has been argued that Indian communication style traditionally falls at the HC end, Peninsular Spanish in the middle, and North American at the LC end (Nishimura et al., 2008:792; Lewis, 2006:150-151; Kim et al., 1998:509-510; Zummo, 2018:60). Regarding Lewis’s model, Hispanic populations tend to be considered multi-active and Indians fall somewhere between multi-active and reactive. People

from the USA have been classified as more linear-active than their northern neighbor, Canada, which has been positioned between linear-active and reactive. In the case of congratulations, it might thus be expected that Indians are more reliant on the contextual variables, and might pay more attention to the variables *power* and *social distance* (see Section 2.5), and might also be more courteous by referring to honorifics. The North Americans, on the other hand, might not be as dependent on these variables when choosing congratulation strategies. Furthermore, seeing as North Americans and Indians tend to fall on different extremes with regards to Hall's theory in particular, one possible expectation is that these two groups employ very different strategies. Therefore, it might also be expected that the Spaniards might sometimes fall closer to one end and other times closer to the other.

2.2.2 Cross-Linguistic Comparison

Seeing as this study is a cross-linguistic one, in this section, a brief discussion on the different languages and language varieties analyzed in this study will be provided.

2.2.2.1 North American English

English in the USA and Canada belong to the "Inner-circle" variety (Kachru, 1985, as cited in Schneider, 2006:58). Traditionally, American English has been perceived as relatively homogenous, at least when compared with the British dialects (Schneider, 2006:65). It is also the variety of English that is often seen as against British English and their differences are often juxtaposed in list form in textbooks and other sources (Schneider, 2006:63). Recent research, however, indicates that American English is, in fact, anything but homogenous as there are regional forms, social variations and ethnic varieties "shaped by effects of language contact and differential degrees of integration of generations of immigrants into the American mainstream culture" (Schneider, 2006:63).

Historically speaking, Canadian English has been influenced by both British and American English and is sometimes described as a mix of both. The balance of these is said to vary by

region, generation (ongoing Americanization amongst the youth) and language level (pronunciation is strongly American, but vocabulary and spelling tend to be more influenced by British) (Schneider, 2006:66). In this study, however, cultural homogeneity is assumed regarding Canadian and American speakers of English in the sense that respondents to the DCTs have been recruited from both cultures.

2.2.2.2 Indian English

India is a multilingual society where English serves as a link between people from different regions and of different mother-tongue backgrounds. According to some estimates, there are 333 million speakers of English in India (Gargesh, 2006:90). Since 1967, English has been an Associate Official Language and rather than being considered a “colonial liability, it is now accepted as an asset in the form of a national and international language representing educational and economic progress (Gargesh, 2006:91, 94). There is at present no defined standard of Indian English (IE), although scholars such as Braj Kachru have defined ‘standard’ IE as the English used by educated Indians (Gargesh, 2006:96). Indian English, which belongs to Kachru’s outer circle (Kachru, 1985), has been adopted in this study to refer to people from India who speak English. Therefore, the Indian speakers recruited for the study are assumed to speak the variety of Indian English.

2.2.2.3 Peninsular Spanish

The variety of Spanish that has been analyzed in this study is Peninsular Spanish. Seeing as a Spanish DCT was sent to the participants, the English DCT situations had to be translated into Spanish. It is important to acknowledge and be aware of cross-linguistic differences in grammatical structures since these can lead to inaccuracies in interpretations (Hafner, 2012:528). This was given extra attention especially since Spanish nouns, determiners and

adjectives have gender (see Section 3.1.1.4). Therefore, the English DCT situations were written so as to match the gender of the participants in the Spanish DCT situations.

2.3 Speech Acts

Speech act theory is said to form the main platform for cross-cultural pragmatics. Speech act theory, in contrast to conversational inference, pays exclusive attention to specific speech events, known as “speech acts”. Research in cross-cultural pragmatics aims to explore the ways in which certain cultures typically express a certain speech act (Stadler, 2013:3-4). Since categorically comparing the entire speech behavior of one culture to that of another is practically impossible, pragmatics studies generally study very specific communicative situations (Stadler, 2013:2). The application of this pragmatic inquiry can be made with the help of speech act theory which is one way of studying these communicative situations (ibid.).

The term ‘speech act’ refers to Austin’s (1962) notion that “language is as much a mode of action as it is a means of conveying information” (Stadler, 2013:3). Historically speaking, this area has had a strong tie to philosophy in its infancy in the 1950s even if it is now said to be firmly anchored in linguistics (Stadler, 2013:3; Gass, 1996:1). According to Stadler, speech act theory is nowadays considered to be “a valuable platform for many different types of investigation”, nonetheless, no examples are provided as to what specifically these types are (2013:3).

According to speech act theory, most of the time, when we speak or write, we are performing speech (or illocutionary) acts such as giving commands, requesting, apologizing and congratulating (Kissine, 2012:169; Gass, 1996:1; Palma Fahey, 2005:n/a, apologies as speech acts). Austin identified three levels of action involved in speech acts (Bach 2006:150):

- a) the act of saying something, the meaning of what has been said (locutionary)
- b) what one does in saying it, that is, the intention of the utterance (illocutionary)

- c) and what one does by saying it, therefore the effect it has on the part of the audience (perlocutionary)

Thus, Austin indicated that speech acts were formed by the locutionary and illocutionary acts. These will be in focus in the current study as it is concerned with the linguistic form (locution) of the speech act of congratulation (illocution). This study is thus not concerned with the perlocution of congratulations, that is, how they are interpreted and what their effects are on the interlocutors.

Cross-cultural speech act studies are said to be based on the assumption that speech acts may be realized differently from culture to culture and these differences may result in communication difficulties “that range from the humorous to the serious” (Gass, 1996:1). Gass has observed that not only does the linguistic realization potentially differ among different cultures, but the force of a speech act might also differ. She demonstrates this by providing the example of insistent hedging in some cultures before being able to refuse an offer of something, and contrasts this with other cultures where refusals might not require as much mitigation (1996:1).

Speech acts are typically divided into five subcategories and this division goes back to the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) (Ronan, 2015:25, see Table 1). Austin classified illocutionary acts under five generic categories which were later developed further by Searle as the following:

Table 1. *Searle’s Speech Act Categories*

Categories	Examples of speech acts
1. Representatives	Asserting, concluding
2. Directives	Requesting, ordering
3. Commissives	Promising, threatening
4. Expressives	Congratulating, thanking
5. Declaratives	Declaring war, marrying

It is in the category of Expressives that we find the speech act of congratulations, which are in focus in the current study. Expressives have the function of expressing, or making known, the speaker's psychological attitude towards a state of affairs which the illocution presupposes (Leech, 1983:106). This category tends to be convivial rather than competitive; in other words, it is performed in the interest of someone other than the speaker (Leech, 1983:106).

Of these five categories, Ronan observes that the first three have received significant attention in research, while the latter two are less well researched (2015:25). She further notes that within the expressive speech act, only select categories such as thanking and general politeness have been studied to some extent (2015:25). There has thus not been much research on the speech act of congratulations (Ronan, 2015:25; Elwood, 2004:357; Gomez, 2016:270; Nasri et al., 2013:68; Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2016:80; see Section 2.4).

According to Flores Salgado, the most important and widely studied act in speech act theory is the illocutionary act; therefore, the term 'speech act' is often used as a synonym of illocutionary act (2011:9). The illocutionary force corresponds roughly to the intent of the speaker and there are different devices that indicate how these should be interpreted. An example of two instances, "open the door" and "could you open the door?", both of these have the same propositional content of 'open the door'; however, they represent different illocutionary acts - an order and a request respectively (Flores Salgado, 2011:9). The linguistic devices that help with the interpretation of these illocutionary forces are known as Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs). Performative verbs, mood, word order, intonation and stress are examples of IFIDs (Flores Salgado, 2011:9). This device is the most basic formulation of a given speech act, in which the illocutionary force is entirely explicit and unambiguous, also known as direct speech acts (Elwood, 2004:359; Yule, 2014:131-132). When it comes to the speech act of congratulations, the IFID, or the most direct way of realizing the speech act, would

be “congratulations” or “congrats” in English. It has been argued that very little attention has been given to how these illocutionary forces are interpreted as speech acts and how they are assigned an illocutionary force in the main contemporary pragmatic theories of utterance interpretation (Kissine, 2012:169). Nonetheless, certain speech acts have received more attention in research than others; these include compliments, apologies, refusals, requests, greetings, complaints, and disagreements (Stadler, 2013:3).

One way of analyzing speech acts is to examine their semantic components (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:22). Speech acts typically have a range of semantic formulae or components associated with them known as ‘Speech act sets’. As is to be expected, the components of these speech act sets are different for each of the speech acts. However, the main illocutionary force of the set of utterances is normally conveyed by the head act and before or after the head act there may be additional components. Nevertheless, according to Spencer-Oatey, these additional components are often not essential (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:22). The following (Table 2) is an example provided by Spencer-Oatey of how an ‘expression of gratitude’ is analyzed following the above description:

Table 2. *Expression of Gratitude* (from Spencer-Oatey, 2008:22)

Gratitude expressions	Examples
Head act	“Thanks ever so much for lending me your car”
Complimenting of other person	“It was really extremely kind of you”
Expression of appreciation	“And I very much appreciate it”
Promise of repayment/reciprocation	“If I can ever help you out like that, be sure and let me know”

Speech act performance may be rather complex, involving a head act accompanied by other types of speech acts. This is reflected in the taxonomy adopted for congratulations for this study, as illustrated in Table 4 below (see Section 2.3.2.1).

2.3.1 Politeness and Face

The literature has illustrated that while speech acts are universal across languages, the realization of these may vary greatly among cultures and languages. In the literature on speech acts, politeness is considered to be inherent in some speech acts (Cheng, 2012:148). The illocutionary goals of congratulation are said to coincide with the social goal and the speech act has been considered within classical politeness models as being “intrinsically courteous” (Leech, 1983:104). However, since the term ‘politeness’ has been deemed rather confusing, in this study, it has been used only on a few occasions to refer to relatively formal and deferential language (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:2). Recent work has stressed that politeness is a contextual judgement, as there are few sentences that are inherently polite or impolite. When expressions are thought to be impolite or polite, it is not the expressions themselves but the contexts and conditions they are used in that determine the judgement of politeness (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:2). Politeness is thus a social judgement, and, in this sense, it is oftentimes a question of appropriateness (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:2).

Brown and Levinson proposed that the key motivating force for politeness is *face* (Brown & Levinson as cited in Spencer-Oatey, 2008:12). Brown and Levinson’s notion of face derives from Goffman (1967) and from the “English folk term, which ties face up with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or ‘losing face’” (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61). The authors further argue that face can be seen as something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced (ibid.). It is also something that must be constantly attended to in interaction. Generally speaking, everybody’s face depends on everyone else’s being maintained. Therefore, according to Brown and Levinson, it is in each participant’s best interest to maintain each other’s face (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61). Brown and Levinson’s model on politeness has, however, received criticism for its universal claims (Leech, 2014:81). It has especially been seen as having a Western, or Anglophone, bias and can therefore not be applied to all languages and cultures (Leech, 2014:81). In particular, Brown and Levinson’s (1987)

definition of negative and positive face has received criticism since it seems to reflect an Anglo-Western individualist and egalitarian focus on the supremacy of the individual's desires and right to freedom (Leech, 2014:81). Their definition of negative and positive face has been provided below (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61):

negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition

positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants

It has been argued that in individualistic societies such as in the West, these definitions might be applicable whereas in collectivistic or group-oriented societies, such as India, these definitions might prove inappropriate (Leech, 2014:81; see Section 2.2.1 on Culture). Thus, although face is a concept that is considered to be intuitively meaningful to people, it is another problematic concept to define (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:14). In broad terms, face involves both self and other, and self and other's behavior (Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2019:424). Face can be regarded as the way in which we want other people to see us and treat us, and how we actually treat others in association with their self-conception expectations in social situations (Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2019:424). Spencer-Oatey explains that face is related to a person's sense of identity. The self can be seen as the individual identity, a collective identity (part of a group) and a relational identity (the self in relationship with others) (2008:14).

Within pragmatics, culture can also serve as an explanatory variable to face needs/sensitivities. This variable has, however, not been given as much attention as within other fields of study, such as communication studies (Spencer-Oatey & Wang 2019:426). Ting-

Toomey (2005, 2017, as cited in Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2019:426-427) proposes a number of core assumptions that relate to the interconnections between culture and face:

1. People in all cultures try to maintain and negotiate face in all communication situations
2. Cultural individualism-collectivism (I-C) value patterns shape members' preferences for self-oriented face concern versus other-oriented or mutual oriented concern
3. Small and large power distance value patterns shape members' preferences for horizontal-based facework versus vertical-based facework
4. The value dimensions, in conjunction with individual, and situational factors, influence the use of particular facework behaviors in particular cultural scenes.

Therefore, although Ting-Toomey argues that face is a universal need and concern, two fundamental culture-level values, cultural I-C and small/large power distance, have a particular impact of the nature of those concerns and how they are dealt with (Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2019:427). Ting-Toomey further maintains that individualists tend to prioritize self-face needs while collectivists tend to orient toward other- and mutual-face needs and that people with small power distance values typically minimize status differences in interaction, while the opposite seems to be true to those who hold high power distance values (Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2019:427). In the case of congratulations, this will be tested, as the two contextual variables of power and social distance have been included in the discourse completion tasks (see Section 2.5 on Power and Social Distance).

2.3.2 The Speech Act of Congratulations

As mentioned above, Searle (1976) categorized the speech act of congratulation within the expressive speech acts (see 2.3 Speech Acts and Politeness). When congratulating, the speaker transmits their joy or satisfaction which has resulted from an event that is favourable for the addressee (Gomez, 2016:269). This particular event can, for instance, be an achievement or a

certain kind of positive circumstance. According to Searle (1969:67), a congratulation is governed by the following rules:

Propositional content: Some event, act, etc., E[vent] related to H[earer].
Preparatory: E is in H's interest and S[peaker] believes E is in H's interest.
Sincerity: S is pleased at E.
Essential: Counts as an expression of pleasure at E.
Comment: "Congratulate" is similar to "thank" in that it is an expression of its sincerity condition.

As is suggested by the first two conditions above, the act of congratulating presupposes some event or action that is favorable to the hearer (Leech, 2014:208). The most obvious way of congratulating somebody in English is through the IFID *congratulations*. Leech (2014:209), provides the following as an example:

- 1) A: And, I got the great accolade the following season when he said, well you're not as bad as I thought you would be!
B: <laugh>
C: *Congratulations Beth!* [BNC FL5]

In this case, Beth is giving an account of becoming a football referee, an achievement which was unexpected by her male colleagues. There can also be propositional phrase additions to the single word IFID, to say to whom the congratulations go and why:

- 2) Last year branch income was on target at seven point eight million pounds, a massive increase on the plateau of five to five and half million pounds we were on before Skip Lunch. *Congratulations to you all.* [BNC JNF]
- 3) *Many congratulations on a well deserved win.* [BNC HPK—i.e., on winning the competition for the best-kept village]

The act of congratulating enables the speaker to take part in the experience and feelings of the hearer (Norrick, 1978:286 as cited in Gomez, 2006:269). In this sense, congratulating seems to be an altruistic polite gesture which makes the bond between individuals stronger (ibid.). Nonetheless, it might not always be an easy task to distinguish between congratulations and other communicative intentions as there seems to be an overlap with other illocutionary

functions such as compliments, praise and thanks (Gomez, 2016:272). In an attempt to establish the difference between compliments and congratulations, Leech states the following:

They are both examples of pos[itive]-politeness, but a theoretical, rather than practical, distinction can be drawn between them. One of them, a compliment, is a manifestation of the Approbation Maxim (praising some estimable property of O[ther person], or of someone or something associated with O). Congratulations, on the other hand, are a manifestation of the Sympathy Maxim, expressing common feeling over some favorable action or event associated with O. The one speech event focuses on high evaluation of something connected with the addressee; the other focuses on the favorable emotion S[peaker] feels in sympathy with the addressee. In practice, the same example may illustrate both. (Leech, 2014:10)

Furthermore, Makri-Tsilipakou highlights another feature to take into account, as “complimenting requires the physical presence of the recipient but not his/her responsibility for the ‘good thing’ (2001:143). To interpret an utterance as a congratulation, the person who is being congratulated must be involved in the communicative act; it is thus not possible to congratulate someone who is not present (Gomez, 2016:273).

There has been very little research into the verbal strategies used beyond the IFIDs to fulfill the function of congratulations in English or other languages (Elwood, 2004:357). Elwood has observed that most studies have mainly focused on what constitutes an act of congratulation and its function in society (Elwood, 2004:357). For instance, many studies have focused on the IFIDs, such as “congrats” or “congratulations” but very little research has been carried out regarding how congratulations are realized (ibid.). There is need for more research within this area as culturally inappropriate acts of congratulating might conversely suggest resentment or

a lack of respect, failing to fulfill the act's jovial function (Elwood, 2004:357). What follows is a description of Elwood's taxonomy of congratulations and the taxonomy adopted in this study.

2.3.2.1 A Taxonomy of Congratulations

The semantic components of the speech act of congratulation will be analyzed in this study by using a modified version of Elwood's (2004) taxonomy of congratulations (Table 3). In her cross-cultural study comparing Japanese speakers with American English speakers, Elwood gathered data through a discourse completion test (DCT) and established the following list of strategies typically employed when congratulating (Elwood, 2004:358-359). The examples provided are from Elwood's study. For some strategies no examples are provided as none were given in Elwood's study.

Table 3. *Elwood's Taxonomy of Congratulations*

Strategies	Examples
1. Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)	<i>Congrats!/Congratulations!</i>
2. Expression of happiness	
a) Expressions of personal happiness	<i>a) I'm happy for you!</i>
b) Statements assessing the situation positively	<i>b) That's great!</i>
3. Request for information	
a) Specific questions	<i>a) Who's the lucky guy/girl?</i>
b) General requests for information	<i>b) So tell me about it</i>
4. Expression of validation	
a) Statements indicating the situation was warranted	<i>a) You really deserved the position</i>
b) Praise	<i>b) Great job!/You've done a good job</i>
c) Statements of prior certainty	<i>c) I knew that you would get it</i>
5. Self-related comment	
a) Expression of envy, longing, or chagrin	<i>a) Hopefully I'll be next</i>
b) Comment of one's future effort	<i>b) I'll do my best</i>
c) Prediction of one's own future success	<i>c) The next promotion is my turn</i>

6. Exclamation/expression of surprise	<i>Wow! Really?</i>
7. Other types	
a) A prediction regarding the promoted person's future	<i>a) I think you'll do an excellent job</i>
b) A request for advice	<i>b) Any advice for a slacker like me?</i>
c) An offer of good luck	<i>c) Good luck</i>
d) A related comment	<i>d) I think promotion in three years is really fast</i>
e) A suggestion to celebrate	<i>e) Let's go out for drinks/have a party</i>
f) An expression of surprise	<i>f) ..</i>
g) An expression of pride	<i>g) ..</i>
h) A joke	<i>h) And if you would be much higher position, please buy house for me (sic)</i>
i) An offer of help	<i>i) So do you need any research assistants?</i>
j) A request for continuing friendliness	<i>j) ..</i>
k) A request to improve the company	<i>k) ..</i>
l) Offer of good wishes/encouragement	<i>l) Good wishes for the couple's happiness</i>

Although some studies have used Elwood's model (Allami & Nekouzadeh, 2011; Dastjerdi, 2012; Nasri et al., 2013), it should be mentioned that the strategies employed when congratulating someone might vary depending on the context in that situation. In fact, Elwood argues that the types of events that warrant the speech act and how the speech act is realized might be different in cross-cultural contexts (2004:356). Therefore, it is to be expected that some type of variation might arise in this study, especially since two of the languages and language varieties examined are different from the ones analyzed in Elwood's (Indian English and Peninsular Spanish). However, this is something which could possibly be examined in this study; to see whether there are strategies that Elwood did not identify or whether some strategies that were identified were not employed and to provide a discussion as to why that might be the case. In addition, some strategies that have been identified by Elwood seem to overlap, for instance strategy 6 (exclamation/expression of surprise) and 7F (an expression of surprise). Furthermore, it was decided that strategy 7C, "an offer of good luck" and 7L (an offer of good wishes) might also overlap since an offer of good luck could also be considered a wish since the phrase "good luck" is a wish for success. Moreover, in some situations in the current study, the respondents chose to congratulate by referring to the occasion and other times only the

IFIDs “congrats” and “congratulations” were used. For instance, in a DCT situation regarding the significant other’s sister’s engagement (for DCT situations see Section 3.1.1.4) some respondents used the IFID along with an expression of happiness:

- 1) Congrats, I’m so happy for you!

Other respondents have, however, mentioned the occasion as in:

- 2) Congratulations on your engagement! (FA14)

Therefore, a strategy that was added was ‘mentioning occasion’ (MO) in order to examine when and how these two strategies are adopted.

As mentioned earlier, the strategies that are used might be dependent on the situation and/or the level of the contextual variables, power and social distance (see Section 2.5 below). For instance, if a situation involves people meeting for the first time, i.e. high social distance (+SD), the situations prompt people to include statements that express joy regarding the encounter, such as:

- 3) Great to meet you (FA7) (North American respondent)
- 4) Glad to meet you (FI8, MI17) (Indian respondents)
- 5) Encantada de conocerte (FS30) (Spanish respondent)

These responses have not been regarded as a congratulation strategy but they have rather been seen as conversational routine strategy. They have been commented on in the results whenever they have been used.

Furthermore, in strategy 7, ‘other types’, depending on the situation in the DCT, sometimes strategies were applied that do not seem to have been identified by Elwood. An example of this are divine remarks such as “god bless you”. In addition, in some situations, participants stated that they would not say anything; therefore, this has also been reflected in the table as ‘nothing’. Also, some respondents told the addressee to be careful, and this has thus been included as another strategy whenever applied. To sum up, in this study, a modified version of Elwood’s

taxonomy has been adopted (see Table 4 below). Elwood's taxonomy was created based on responses from the participants who were reacting to three situations dealing with happy news. These situations have been outlined in Section 2.5.1 along with a brief discussion.

Table 4. *Taxonomy of Congratulations Adopted in the Current Study*

Strategies	Examples
1. Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)	<i>Congrats!/Congratulations!</i>
2. Mentioning occasion (MO)	<i>Congratulations on winning the marathon!</i>
3. Expression of happiness	
a) Expressions of personal happiness	<i>a) I'm happy for you!</i>
b) Statements assessing the situation positively	<i>b) That's great!</i>
4. Request for information	
a) Specific questions	<i>a) Who's the lucky guy/girl?</i>
b) General requests for information	<i>b) So tell me about it</i>
5. Expression of validation	
a) Statements indicating the situation was warranted	<i>a) You really deserved the position</i>
b) Praise	<i>b) Great job!/You've done a good job</i>
c) Statements of prior certainty	<i>c) I knew that you would get it</i>
6. Self-related comment	
a) Expression of envy, longing, or chagrin	<i>a) Hopefully I'll be next</i>
b) Comment of one's future effort	<i>b) I'll do my best</i>
c) Prediction of one's own future success	<i>c) The next promotion is my turn</i>
7. Exclamation/expression of surprise	<i>Wow! Really?</i>
8. Other types	
a) A prediction regarding the promoted person's future	<i>a) I think you'll do an excellent job</i>
b) A request for advice	<i>b) Any advice for a slacker like me?</i>
c) A related comment	<i>c) I think promotion in three years is really fast</i>
d) A suggestion to celebrate	<i>d) Let's go out for drinks/have a party</i>
e) An expression of pride	<i>e) ..</i>
f) A joke	<i>f) And if you would be much higher position, please buy house for me (sic)</i>
g) An offer of help	<i>g) So do you need any research assistants?</i>
h) A request for continuing friendliness	<i>h) ..</i>
i) A request to improve the company	

j) Offer of good wishes/encouragement	i) ..
k) Divine remarks	j) <i>Good wishes for the couple's happiness</i>
l) Nothing	k) <i>May god bless you!</i>
m) Be careful	l) Ø
	m) <i>Be careful/take care of yourself</i>

2.4 Findings on Congratulations from a Cross-Cultural Perspective

Although there has been little research on the cross-cultural use of the speech act of congratulations, in this section a brief summary of some of the relevant studies will be presented. There have been some studies carried out in English on this topic; however, to the best of the author's knowledge, no studies seem to have been conducted on the speech act of congratulations in Indian English. In addition, there have not been many cross-cultural studies carried out on congratulations regarding Peninsular Spanish. Nonetheless, there have been studies regarding other speech acts within the expressives category, such as thanking (Velez, 2011:16-17, see Hickey, 2005). In other varieties of Spanish, Garcia (2009) conducted a case study with 20 participants and used Spencer-Oatey's (2005) rapport management theoretical framework to examine Peruvian Spanish speaker's behavioral expectations, types of face respected/threatened and interactional wants when congratulation. Moreover, another case study was carried out by Velez (2011) in Columbian Spanish examining the different strategies the respondents employ when congratulating by using different models from the literature, such as Brown and Levinson's politeness model. It was found that congratulations are expressed explicitly and that strategies such as pride, approval and expressions of gratitude and support are used (Velez, 2011).

One of the first studies to have been carried out on congratulations in English was by Coulmas (1979). This was a comparative cross-cultural study which examined the situational frames for when participants use congratulations. The study looked at the English word *congratulations* and the Japanese *o-medetō gozaimasu*. In his examinations, Coulmas found that there were differences in what types of events warranted the speech act and how the speech

act was realized. Some differences in the conditions of use of both were found, for example that the Japanese formulation might be used for seasonal holidays while *congratulations* cannot be used in similar contexts. Therefore, the Japanese, *o-medetō gozaimasu*, can be employed for events that are happy not only for the receiver of the congratulations, but for others as well.

Elwood (2004) compared the strategies US-Americans use for offering congratulations in English in three different situations with the ones used by the Japanese in English and in Japanese. The situations were related to reacting to good news such as grants, promotions and weddings. Data was collected with the use of a written DCT. She found that Japanese speakers were not as likely as Americans to use expressions of happiness and make requests for information and used more self-related comments, and that the Americans used fewer offers of good wishes (Elwood, 2004).

Studies in other languages have also been conducted. In an Iranian context, Allami and Nekouzadeh (2011) combined the taxonomy proposed by Elwood (2004) with Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies and they investigated the speech act of congratulation used by Persian speakers. It was found that the most common strategies were IFIDs, "offer of good wishes" and "expression of happiness". The 50 participants provided data by using a written DCT which consisted of nine situations related to good news.

Emery (2000) studied expressions of greeting, congratulating and commiserating in Omani Arabic. Data was collected by means of questionnaires and introspection. The linguistic formulas used in weddings, births, religious festivals, and the arrival of rain were examined. It was concluded that there is a noticeable generational difference in the use of these kind of formulas. The elderly, especially old women, tend to be more conservative, while the young, mainly young women, are more open to standard and pan-Arabic norms. Thus, this is an indication that age is an important factor. In this study, due to the chosen data collection strategy (see Section 3.1.1.2), it was difficult to have any control over the different age groups. Thus the

participants in the current study belong to various age groups; however, they are not equally represented across the cultures (see Appendix IV). This is limitation of this study which has been explained in Section 3.4.

There have been other studies carried out on the speech act of congratulations. Further descriptions of these have, however, not been provided since the language investigated has not been one that this study is concerned with and/or the data collection has not been through DCTs. One such study is Gomez's (2016) study which looked at congratulations in the Latin language and gathered its data from the comedies of Plautus and Terence.

2.5 Contextual Variables: Power and Distance

A variable has been defined as a characteristic that varies (Gass, 2010:11). There are essentially two primary variables: independent variables and dependent variables. Independent variables are those that the researcher is investigating in order to determine their effect on something else, i.e. the dependent variable (ibid.) In this study, the dependent variable is the use of congratulation strategies and the independent variables investigated are the context variables *power* and *social distance*.

A large number of empirical studies have found that there seems to be an association between language use and the variables of *power* and *social distance* (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:34). These context variables were identified by Brown and Levinson (1987) as influencing politeness in conversation (Roever, 2010:243). Since the participants in this study have been asked to react to situations where levels of power and distance differed, it is relevant to have a discussion on what is meant by these terms in this study. Nonetheless, it should be mentioned that these variable are measured on a continuum, therefore, they are not "all-or-nothing propositions" (Roever, 2010:244).

Defining the variable *power* might not always be a straightforward task as it is sometimes defined differently by different sources. Not only does this variable have different definitions,

but it has also been given several labels, for instance: social power, status, dominance, and authority (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:34). Power is typically operationalized in terms of unequal role relations, such as teacher-student, employer-employee. However, this distinction might not always be an easy one to make since, for example, ‘driver and passenger’ relationship has by some authors been described as unequal and by others as equal (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:34). Power is said to concern the relative power difference between the imaginary interlocutor and the participant and can have three basic levels: high, equal, and low (Roever, 2010:243). Examples of high power participants are: professors, landlords, employers or police officers (Roever, 2010:243). French and Raven (1959) have characterized the five main bases of power which have been listed below (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:34, referencing French & Raven, 1959).

1. Reward power: if a person, A, has control over positive outcomes (such as bonus payments, improved job conditions) that another person, B, desires, A can be said to have reward power over B;
2. Coercive power: if a person, A, has control over negative outcomes (such as demotion, allocation of undesirable tasks) that another person, B, wants to avoid, A can be said to have coercive power over B;
3. Expert power: if a person, A, has some special knowledge or expertise that another person, B, wants or needs, A can be said to have expert power over B;
4. Legitimate power: if a person, A, has the right (because of his/her role, status, or situational circumstances) to prescribe or expect certain things of another person, B, A can be said to have legitimate power over B;
5. Referent power: if a person, B, admires another person, A, and wants to be like him/her in some respect, A can be said to have referent power over B.

Teachers are said to typically have the first four of these types of power, and may in some cases also have referent power in relation to their students. The same applies to employers in relation

to their employees (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:35). Concerning the taxi driver/passenger role relations, the passenger can be said to have reward and coercive power since they can choose whether or not to use the taxi company again in the future which, in turn, might motivate the driver to provide good service. However, when looked at from a different perspective, taxi drivers have legitimate and coercive power since they decide whether people should wait to be seated, the number of passengers that can ride in the taxi, where the luggage should be placed, and so on (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:35).

The second variable that has been taken into account in this study concerns distance and much like power, it is a variable that has been given not only a number of different definitions, but also several different labels such as: social distance, solidarity, closeness, familiarity, and relational intimacy (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:35). Although most people might have a notion of what close and distant relationships entail, it might not always be easy to define this. Sometimes, the length of a relationship is important to define closeness such as a childhood friend as opposed to a stranger. However, length does not always imply closeness as we may have worked with someone for many years, but still feel distant from them (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:35). Roever argues that social distance is the “degree of shared group membership and/or acquaintanceship” (2010:244). In the following DCT prompt provided by Roever (Figure 1 below), social distance would be considered low since roommates tend to know each other fairly well and power would be equal (2010:243-244).

Figure 1. Example of DCT item

<p>You need to print out a letter but your printer is not working. You decide to ask your housemate Jack if you can use his printer. Jack is in his room reading a book as you walk in.</p> <p>Jack: Hey, how are you?</p> <p>You: _____</p> <p>Jack: Sure, go for it.</p>

High social distance (or distant) applies to situations where one of the participants does not know the other one and has little in common with them, for instance, strangers on the bus, customers in a shop, and a professor they do not know. Medium social distance (acquaintance) pertains to participants who are vaguely but not well known or who share group membership with the participant but do not have much personal knowledge. Examples of this includes a fellow student of the same age that the participant has never talked to or a distant relative (Roever, 2010:244). Low social distance (or close) refers to participants that know each other well, such as friends, family members and so forth.

The following list, which has been compiled after a review of a range of pragmatic studies, has been provided by Spencer-Oatey and it lists the possible components of distance (1996:7, quoted in Spencer-Oatey, 2008:36).

1. Social similarity/difference
2. Frequency of contact
3. Length of acquaintance
4. Familiarity, or how well people know each other
5. Sense of like-mindedness
6. Positive/negative affect

Spencer-Oatey mentions that it has been suggested that *distance* and *affect* should be treated as separate parameters since some research has indicated that affect “has a separate and differential effect on language use from the influence of distance” (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:36). It should also be mentioned that *imposition* is another context variable which is brought up by Brown and Levinson (1987). However, in the context of congratulations this variable might not be as relevant as the other two and was therefore not included.

Furthermore, another important factor which relates to participants is the number of people taking part. Spencer-Oatey argues that face-management norms appear to be number-sensitive.

In other words, what we say and how we say it is often influenced by the number of people present and if they are listening to what we are saying. These norms might also be influenced by culture since, in some cultures, it is more embarrassing and face-threatening to be criticized in front of other people than to be criticized privately (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:36). However, in this study, the variable of number has been kept constant and the DCT situations involve two participants, the speaker and the addressee. This has been done intentionally since it has been argued that combining more than two variables in a set of DCTs is not possible since it generates many situations which the participants need to react to. This might, in turn, lead to fatigue and inauthentic responses (Roever, 2010:245). It is recommended that each combination of context variables should be represented by at least two DCT items and that participants should not be expected to complete more than 20 DCT situations, preferably no more than 12 (Roever 2010:245). In the current study, the variables of power and social distance have been tested according to the three levels mentioned above. DCTs have been dealt with further in section 3.1.1.

2.5.1 Variable Combinations

Seeing as this study is employing Elwood's taxonomy, it is useful to provide some background on how this taxonomy came about and the DCT situations employed in her study. The taxonomy was based on participants who were reacting to happy news. Elwood mentions that the response types that led to the creation of the taxonomy occurred in at least 20% of at least one group of responses in at least two of the situations. The situations used in Elwood's study (2004:358) were the following:

Situation 1: You've been working for a company for three years. It is announced that a colleague with the same level of experience has just been promoted. You say to the colleague:

Situation 2: While shopping at a department store you run into someone you used to live near two years ago.

You: How have you been doing?

Former neighbor: Well, my big news is that I got married last month.

You say:

Situation 3: Your professor has won a prestigious research grant.

You say:

Elwood states that each of these situations has “its particular characteristics, resulting in a wide variety of pattern of responses across the situations” (2004:358). Although it is not clear what these characteristics are, from a contextual variable perspective, where the variables power and social distance might play a role in how respondents react, it could be said that the variables have been incorporated according to the following table.

Table 5. *Variable distribution in Elwood’s DCT situations*

	Addressee Power	Social Distance
Situation 1	Equal	Low
Situation 2	Equal	Low
Situation 3	High	Medium

Elwood has therefore not tested for low addressee power nor high social distance. It should also be mentioned that it could be debated whether three situations suffice to create a taxonomy.

In the current study, there were different possible outcomes concerning the number of situations that could have been included in the DCT. This number depended mostly on the levels of each variable that is included. For instance, by carrying out the test dichotomously (i.e. divided into two levels) and only taking into account high-low levels, it would lead to four possible variable combinations (see Table 6).

Table 6. *Combination of addressee power and social distance if varied dichotomously*

Addressee Power	Social Distance
------------------------	------------------------

1. High	1. High
2. High	2. Low
3. Low	3. High
4. Low	4. Low

Since it is recommended that each combination should be represented at least twice (Roever 2010:245, this would provide eight different DCT situations. However, in this scenario, situations involving acquaintances (medium social distance, MSD) with high, equal or low power would not be included. An example of a DCT situation involving low addressee power and medium social distance would be:

Figure 2. DCT item involving low addressee power and medium social distance

<p><i>You work in an office. Leaving your office to fetch some printouts, you run into the janitor of the office.</i></p> <p><i>You: Hey, haven't seen you around much lately. How have you been?</i></p> <p><i>Janitor: Well, my child was born three days ago!</i></p> <p><i>What do you say?</i></p> <p>Addressee power: low</p> <p>MSD</p>
--

Another option would be to test one of the variables dichotomously, and the other one with three levels as shown in the table below (see Table 7).

Table 7. *Combination of addressee power varied non-dichotomously along with social distance varied dichotomously*

Addressee Power	Social Distance
1. High	1. Medium
2. High	2. Low
3. Medium	3. Medium
4. Medium	4. Low
5. Low	5. Medium
6. Low	6. Low

On the other hand, if the tests were not carried out dichotomously, it would lead to nine possible variable combinations (see Table 8).

Table 8. *Combination of addressee power and social distance if varied for three levels*

Addressee Power		Social Distance	
1.	High	1.	High
2.	High	2.	Medium
3.	High	3.	Low
4.	Equal	4.	High
5.	Equal	5.	Medium
6.	Equal	6.	Low
7.	Low	7.	High
8.	Low	8.	Medium
9.	Low	9.	Low

This is what has been selected for the current study. Nonetheless, the situations were not tested twice as it would have led to 18 situations, a number which is well beyond the number of recommended situations (12).

3. Material and Method

This section reports on the research design of the study: the data collection procedures, material, and respondents.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection in this study has been done through a discourse completion task. Although the results from questionnaire surveys are typically quantitative, this instrument has also been used for open-ended questions which will require a qualitative analysis (Dörnyei, 2007:101). The data in this study has thus been analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, and in this sense it is a mixed-method study. Elwood's taxonomy of congratulations (2004, see Section 2.3.2.1) has been used in the coding and analysis of the data.

There are different approaches to collecting data on speech act performance and each of these has strengths and weaknesses (Beebe & Cummings, 1996:67; Ronan, 2015:39). Some of

the methods which are typically applied to gather data in pragmatics research are: finding relevant structures by introspection, also known as the “armchair method”, or various ethnographic methods such as field notes, investigating in literary texts, corpora and last but not least, laboratory based methods such as DCTs or role-plays (Ronan, 2015:39). In cross-cultural studies DCT is a research method which has been commonly used, and it has also been the research instrument chosen to collect data in this study (Hsieh, 2009:92). The DCTs were created on SurveyMonkey.com and were emailed to participants from North America, India and Spain. The following provides a discussion on the chosen research tool and the pros and cons of applying this method.

3.1.1 Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs)

Sweeney and Hua (2015) provide the following definition for DCTs: “Discourse completion tasks (DCTs) are a type of production questionnaire in which speech acts are elicited in the written form by some kind of situational description” (2015:212). This research instrument was first used to collect data by Blum Kulka (1982) and then in the CCSARP (Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns) project, “which sought to compare how two specific speech acts, requests and apologies, were realized across eight languages, according to different conditions of social distance, and, in addition, to compare realization by native speakers and non-native speakers of the languages in question” (Sweeney & Hua, 2015:212-213). In addition, Iwai and Rinnert (2001) carried out a DCT study examining requests and apologies in different countries and Ohlstein (1989) used DCT to investigate the use of four different languages (English, French, German and Hebrew). DCTs have thus widely been used as a data collection method for research in cross-cultural pragmatics (Hsieh, 2009:92; Sweeney & Hua, 2015:212-213). An example of a DCT in which a respondent is asked to complete a speech act is given below (Elwood, 2004:358):

Figure 3. Example of DCT item

You've been working for a company for three years. It is announced that a colleague with the same level of experience has just been promoted.

You say to the colleague: _____

3.1.1.1 DCTs – Strengths and Weaknesses

DCTs are known to have several advantages among which are that they yield a large number of responses, are easy to assess and do not need to be transcribed (Roever, 2010:242; Nurani, 2009:669). Moreover, with DCTs it is possible to check for many different variables such as gender, age and nationality, which might not be as easy to achieve when analyzing authentic data (Beebe & Cummings, 1996:66-67).

It has also been observed that one of the main reasons why “natural data and DCT are different is the psychological element” (Nurani, 2009:670). As a DCT is a written hypothetical exercise, Beebe and Cummings claim that it “does not bring out the ‘psycho-social’ dynamics of an interaction between members of a group”(1996:77). In fact, Hsieh (2009) discarded DCT as a research tool from the analysis of her PhD since the research instrument did not add sufficient data to answer the research questions (Hsieh, 2009:92). Nonetheless, Beebe and Cummings conclude that DCTs are a highly effective research tool especially when “creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will likely occur in natural speech” (Beebe & Cummings, 1996:80).

Another argument in favor of the DCTs is that the respondents can freely express themselves without the intervention of the researcher (Nurani, 2009:669-670). However, DCTs also have some disadvantages which include a lack of contextual variation, a simplification of complex interactions and the hypothetical and artificial nature of the situation (D’Souza, 1991: 307). Nevertheless, although authentic data might circumvent the aforementioned limitations, it does not come without limitations as there are problems of comparability, note-taking that relies on the researcher’s memory, time-consuming nature of data collection, and ethical issues

related to recording in naturalistic situations (Beebe & Cummings, 1996:68). Kasper writes that “as long as there is a clear understanding of what DCT data can and cannot deliver, DCTs remain a valuable instrument in the researcher's toolkit (Kasper, 2008:292-294)

Although the information in this study is based on elicited data, Dastjerdi & Nasri mention that this still represents certain patterns of similarity and differences and thus agree with Wierzbicka's position that speech acts are not language-independent natural kind “but culture specific communicative routines” (2012:112).

3.1.1.2 Snowball Sampling

The sampling method that was used in this study was snowball sampling which is also known as chain or network sampling (Riazi, 2016:298). This sampling procedure, which is a form of purposive sampling, involves asking participants that have already been selected to introduce new participants (Riazi, 2016:253, 298; Dörnyei, 2007:129). Riazi explains that the researcher starts “with one or two potential *participants* who he or she knows belong to the target group and then asks them to nominate other potential cases. When some of other potential cases are contacted and included in the study, they will be asked to introduce other informants they are aware of” (2016:298). Seeing as this is a cross-cultural study with participants from four different countries, in three different continents, this sampling procedure was chosen as it made it possible to obtain data from several countries without having to know all the participants. Since there is a limit to how many respondents that could be contacted or how many sites that could be visited, this sampling procedure was chosen (Dörnyei, 2007:126). As mentioned earlier, the starting point of snowball sampling is having a list of key respondents who are then asked to recruit participants who are similar to them in some respect central to the investigation (Dörnyei, 2007:129). In this study, what was sought was native speakers of the languages studied in the study (American English, Indian English and Peninsular Spanish). This sampling

procedure might also have the advantage of getting participants who are more likely to take part since a friend has requested them to do so rather than an unknown person/entity.

Another sampling method which could have been used instead of the chosen one is convenience sampling. This sampling strategy is very common especially in postgraduate research where time and finances are constrained. Although it might be a practical sampling strategy, it is also considered to be one of the least desirable sampling strategies since the researcher uses those who are available (Dörnyei, 2007:129). In this study, this sampling method was discarded since not many available subjects were known and snowball sampling enabled a chain reaction that led to the inclusion of more participants.

Snowball sampling is said to be popular in qualitative research when the intention is not to generalize the findings of the sample to the target population, but rather, to select cases that are highly informative (Riazi, 2016:252-253). In studies that use purposive sampling, such as snowball sampling, it is important to remember that the level of generalizations should be cautious since the selected samples are not random and representative of the target population (Riazi, 2016:286). Thus, in order to contribute to the reliability of the research as well as the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data and analysis, it is important to include a detailed description of the sampling procedure.

3.1.1.3 Participants

The sampling started with a small pool of participants living in the USA, Canada, Spain and India. The procedure was expanded through a networking procedure where the participants were asked to spread the DCT among their family and friends (see Section 3.1.1.2 Snowball Sampling). The DCTs were both in Spanish and English to avoid any language barriers (see Appendix I & II) and they were created electronically on SurveyMonkey.com which provides a link that can be copied and sent to the participants. The platform collects the information and notifies the researcher when participants take the survey. One of the advantages of using an

electronic survey is that it is less time-consuming since the data that is provided has already been transcribed for searching and analysis (Wray & Bloomer, 2006:160).

Apart from collecting data, the platform also provides the user with several useful tools and actions. For instance, upon survey completion, the participants were shown a custom thank you message which encouraged them to share the survey with their friends and family. Furthermore, Surveymonkey.com allows participants to edit their responses, this editing option was, however, toggled off. Another useful feature is that the questions on the survey can be made mandatory, so that participants cannot skip any questions. This proved useful since in the pilot study (see Section 3.2), some participants skipped some questions. Finally, as mentioned earlier, one of the advantages of using electronic surveys is that the results are transcribed and on Surveymonkey.com they can be saved as Excel or PDF documents.

The Peninsular Spanish participants answered the Spanish DCT and the Indians and North Americans the English one. Nonetheless, in order to make the data analysis easier, three surveys were created and named survey A, B and C. Survey A was sent out to the Indians, B to the North Americans and C to the Spaniards. The DCTs were sent electronically, via e-mail or messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and iMessage.

90 subjects participated in this study: 30 North Americans (Canada & the United States), 30 from India and 30 from Spain. The corpus that was analyzed consisted of a total of 6689 words, the North Americans used the most number of words (2299), followed by the Spaniards (2292) and the Indians (2098). The gender and number of respondents have been displayed in Table 9 below. The North American respondents were between the ages of 20-60 or over, Indians 20-59 and the Spaniards 20-60 or over (for age distribution see Appendix IV).

Table 9. *Gender and number of participants*

	Male	Female	Total
North American	13	17	30
Indian	16	14	30

Spanish	11	19	30
Total	40	50	90

The metadata that was included in the DCTs were age, gender, native languages, nationality and daily use of English/Spanish (see Appendix I&II). Native language was defined as “language of the area you grew up in, could be plural”, this piece of information was added in the surveys to clarify what is meant by native language as it might also be confused with mother tongue, or L1, the language the respondents speak at home and/or learnt first. Nonetheless, it cannot be guaranteed that the respondents have understood native language in the way it was defined since it is a term that might be used interchangeably with mother tongue.

In total there were 33 Indian respondents. All but three answered that they do not use English on a daily basis and were not included in this study. Out of the 30 respondents, three listed English as a native language. Many Indians listed that they were either bilingual or trilingual. Native languages that were listed by the Indians were Kannada (16), Tamil (15), English (3), Hindi (3), Telugu (3), and Bengali (1). Based on this, it can be assumed that the majority of the participants were from the south of India as this is where Kannada and Tamil are most commonly spoken.

Ten of the Spanish respondents listed that they are bilingual. Basque and Spanish were the languages that were mentioned. These two languages are official languages in the north of Spain. Thus, it can be assumed that one third of the respondents are from the north of Spain. In total, there were 32 Spanish respondents. However, one listed Italian as her native language and nationality and was therefore removed along with another Spanish respondent who seem to have misunderstood the instructions and answered in English. All of the Spanish respondents stated that they use Spanish on a daily basis.

30 North Americans took the survey and all of them responded that they use English on a daily basis. 16 of the respondents were from the USA and 14 from Canada. Some of the North Americans listed other languages apart from English as their native languages, among these were Persian, Arabic, and Spanish, which might be a reflection of our increasingly multilingual world. Nonetheless, all of these indicated that their nationality was American or Canadian and were therefore kept in the study. It might be a somewhat difficult task to determine who is a native speaker when carrying out surveys, nevertheless, the respondents were considered native North American speakers unless stated otherwise in the nationality question or if they did not state English as a native language.

The participants were asked to provide congratulations in nine situations dealing with, among other things, weddings and newborns. Some of these situations have been taken from previous research (see Dastjerdi & Nasri, 2012) and what they have in common is the variables of *power* and *social distance* (see Section 2.5). The DCT situations have been provided in the following section.

3.1.1.4 DCT Situations

Seeing as the recommended number of situations is 12 (see Section 2.5), this study tested for the two variables, power and social distance at three levels. However, the situations were not tested twice due to time constraints but also in order to not fatigue the respondents with 18 situations and ending up well over the recommended number. The researcher is aware of the implications this might have on the conclusions that can be drawn, however, practicality was favored over external validity. Nonetheless, this seems to be a trade-off that is common and unavoidable (Roever, 2010:245). Therefore, there were nine different combinations of variables that were each be represented by one DCT item (see Table 10).

Table 10. *Combination of addressee power and social distance varied for three levels in the Current Study*

Addressee Power	Social Distance (SD)
1. High	1. High
2. High	2. Medium
3. High	3. Low
4. Equal	4. High
5. Equal	5. Medium
6. Equal	6. Low
7. Low	7. High
8. Low	8. Medium
9. Low	9. Low

The situational prompts in a DCT provide background information on the setting that the imaginary interaction occurs in as well as the imaginary interlocutor (Roever, 2010:243). These prompts can be more or less detailed and this level of detail, according to previous research, has been found to have an impact on participants' responses (see Billmyer & Varghese, 2000). DCTs tend to be systematically designed so as to incorporate combinations of contextual variables and other variables where applicable (Roever, 2010:244). However, it might not always be possible to include all variables in a DCT and researchers might have to exclude some variables in order to make the research viable (ibid.).

Some DCT situations in this study have been inspired by already existing research; situations two and five have partly been adapted from Dastjerdi (2012) (see Table 11 below, also see Section 3.2 for modifications & see Appendix V for the DCT prompts). The DCT items represent different social events where congratulations would be expected – e.g. newborns, promotions and weddings. All contexts in the test have been designed to test the two contextual variables, *power* and *social distance*. Three degrees of social distance were used to roughly represent degrees of familiarity. This variable was not measured dichotomously (e.g. high/low) even though the pilot study might have indicated that in one of the situations, which tested for a medium level social distance (MSD), not many responses were obtained (see Section 3.2 below). This preliminary indication will be tested in the current study. Therefore, three levels of social distance were included (high, medium, low, also see Section 2.5.1). A summary of the

situations can be seen below in Table 11 (see Appendix V for the DCT prompts). Closeness, or low social distance, was represented by the relationship between friends (Situations 3, 6 & 9, see Appendix V), a middle status of social distance was represented by acquaintances (Situations 2, 5 & 8, see Appendix V), and distant relationship, or high social distance, was represented by situations where participants do not know each other (Situations 1, 4 & 7, see Appendix V).

There were also three levels of addressee power represented by *high* (Situations 1-3) that is, the addressee has higher power than the speaker, *low* power, in other words, the addressee has lower power than the speaker (Situations 7-9), and for situations where participants did not have power over the other, the label *equal* was used (Situations 4-6). Table 11 illustrates the underlying variables of each DCT situation.

Table 11. *The variables underlying the construction of situations for the current study*

Situations	Addressee Power	Social Distance (SD)
1. New CEO wins amateur golf tournament	High (+P)	High (+SD)
2. Employer's wedding (Dastjerdi)	High (+P)	Medium (MSD)
3. Boss-friend promoted	High (+P)	Low (-SD)
4. Significant other's sister's engagement	Equal (=P)	High (+SD)
5. Mr. X's newborn (Dastjerdi)	Equal (=P)	Medium (MSD)
6. Sister pregnant	Equal (=P)	Low (-SD)
7. Candidate wins marathon	Low (-P)	High (+SD)
8. Student's wedding	Low (-P)	Medium (MSD)
9. Employee-friend's new house	Low (-P)	Low (-SD)

3.1.1.4.1 Cross-Linguistic Considerations

When translating the English DCT into Spanish, gender was given some weight since grammatical gender is found in Spanish where nouns, determiners and adjectives have gender. Although previous research has indicated that sex does not seem to influence the degree of deference used by English speakers, research in Spanish seem to indicate that sex could matter

(Harlow 1990:329). Therefore, this was taken into consideration as writing a gender-neutral DCT prompt in Spanish was not as straightforward as the English one. For instance, a DCT situation such as the first one (see A below), can be made gender neutral in English by referring to, for example, titles.

A) Situation 1 (English)

You are the Chief Financial Officer at a multinational and have just been informed that you are having a one-on-one meeting with the new CEO, whom you've never met before.

This is, however, not as easily done in Spanish (See B below).

B) Situation 1 (Spanish)

Eres Director/a Financiero/a en una multinacional y acabas de ser informado/a de que tendrás una reunión a solas con ella nuevo/a Director/a General, alla la que no conoces.

Therefore, to keep the translations as similar as possible and to make the Spanish DCT prompts more reader-friendly, the addressee in the situations was either given a gender or made neutral whenever possible (situation 7). The speaker was kept neutral in all situations and have been marked 'X' in the table below. Male addressees have been marked as M, and females as F. Gender is not something that is tested in the current study; however, efforts were made to represent women and men equally in the situations. Table 12 below shows the gender distribution among the DCT participants.

Table 12. Gender distribution among DCT participants

Situations	Speaker	Addressee
Situation 1	X	F
Situation 2	X	M
Situation 3	X	F
Situation 4	X	F
Situation 5	X	M

Situation 6	X	F
Situation 7	X	X
Situation 8	X	M
Situation 9	X	M

3.2 Pilot Study and Modifications

By running a pilot study it is possible for the researcher to take a small piece of suitable data and analyze it in order to examine whether the objectives are achievable (Wray & Bloomer, 2006:12). Therefore, the feasibility of this project was tested by running a pilot study. In other words, the pilot was mainly carried out to test if DCTs could provide sufficient information in order to be able to draw some conclusions and answer the study's questions. The pilot was carried out with participants from the same countries as in the current study, USA, Canada, India and Spain and the questions guiding the pilot were the following:

1. What type of congratulation strategies are used by Indians, Spaniards and North Americans?
2. Are there any similarities and differences among North American English, Indian English and Spanish in terms of the realization of the speech act of congratulations?

The data collection was done by emailing DCTs (see Appendix III) to the participants who were then asked to forward the DCTs to their family and friends who were also native speakers of those languages, that is, a snowball sampling procedure was followed. This required having a great deal of trust in the participants since they were the ones who were forwarding the surveys. A total of 38 subjects participated in the pilot: 14 from the USA and Canada and 12 each from India and Spain. There were four situations on the DCTs that the participants were asked to respond to. These situations were adapted from Dastjerdi (2012) and were tested for the variables social distance and power. However, the levels of the social distance variable were tested dichotomously (low/medium) and three levels of power were included; high, equal and low (see Table 13 below). This is another modification in the current study since three levels social distance are tested.

Table 13. *Pilot study variables underlying the construction of situations*

Situations	Addressee power	Social distance (SD)
1. Old friend, wedding	Equal	Low
2. Employer, wedding	High	Medium
3. Janitor, newborn	Low	Medium
4. Mr. X, newborn	Equal	Medium

From the pilot study, one of the results seemed to indicate that one of the medium social distance situations might not yield many responses. This was the only situation where respondents said that they would not say anything to congratulate the addressee. This DCT item from the pilot can be seen below:

Figure 4. DCT item from pilot study

While working in your office Mr. X, with whom you are not close, enters and wants to speak with your colleague at the same office. Your colleague tells you: Mr. X's child was born yesterday. What do you say to Mr. X?

Addressee power: equal
MSD

Here are some of the participants' responses from the pilot study:

- 1) I would not speak to Mr. X about this until he told this directly to me. (MI27)
- 2) Nothing (MI27B)
- 3) Nothing (MI35)
- 4) I say nothing to Mr. X because I don't care. (MC49)
- 5) Tell Mr. X I said congratulations (FA26)
- 6) If it comes up in conversation I would congratulate Mr. X. Otherwise, I would not bring it up. (FA32)

Although some of the respondents answered that they would not say anything to Mr. X, this level of social distance, and this situation in particular, will be tested again in the current study. However, the situation has been framed differently as it was not controlled for number of participants, since there were three people involved (Mr. X, the respondent and the respondent's

colleague). Since the situation was not one-on-one and, in addition, it did not directly encourage the respondent to congratulate the addressee, it has been rephrased as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Rephrasing of a DCT Situation

<p><i>While working in your office Mr. X, with whom you are not close, enters and wants to speak with your colleague who is currently away on business. You say: he's away on business, can I take a message?</i></p> <p><i>Mr. X: I wanted to tell him my son was just born!</i></p> <p><i>You want to congratulate him, what do you say to Mr. X? (Addressee power: equal, MSD)</i></p>

Furthermore, in the pilot, none of the situations tested for high social distance. Although this level of the variable might be deemed unrealistic since there might not be many situations where a stranger (high social distance) is congratulated on something, this will be tested in the current study.

Since the method for data collection was snowball sampling, not much was known regarding the participants in the pilot study. Therefore, more metadata was included in order to obtain more information (See Appendix I).

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Social research and research in education, due to their inherent interest in the human private sphere, is inevitably concerned with ethical issues (Dörnyei, 2007:63-64). In particular, qualitative research, more so than quantitative research, concerns people's private lives since it is often interested in people's personal views and often target sensitive or intimate matters (Dörnyei, 2007:64). Therefore, attempts should be made to ensure that ethical issues are observed in dealing with participants (Riazi, 2016:233). This involves providing adequate information to the participants regarding the research project and to obtain their informed consent to participate in the research project (ibid.). Confidentiality and anonymity should be assured for all participants at all stages of the project (Wray & Bloomer, 2006: 174). With anonymous data, even the researcher does not know who has provided what. An example of this would be a survey questionnaire that does not request subjects to give their name, but to

only provide information about age, gender, language proficiency etc. In addition, there is no way to trace back a specific response to an individual, for example due to handwriting or linguistic styles (Wray & Bloomer, 2006:174). Due to the nature of the platform used (SurveyMonkey.com) the only information that is provided is the IP address of the respondents. Although the researcher does not have information on how this could be used to potentially trace the respondents, confidentiality has been provided by not providing or mentioning the IP address anywhere in the study or elsewhere. Furthermore, in the instructions of the survey that was distributed electronically, it was stated that “the data will be used for research purposes only and in ways that will not reveal who you are” (see Appendix I&II). The term anonymous has not been included, since the participants were not entirely anonymous due to the fact that their IPs were registered by the site.

3.4 Limitations

This research deals with the national varieties of American English, Indian English and Peninsular Spanish. It has been said that “it is unquestionably easier to work around ‘a language’ as if it formed a homogenous unit” (Kristiansen & Geeraerts, 2007:279). Nevertheless, dealing with national varieties is considered a high level of abstraction as it implies that rich and complex patterns of structured language-internal and culture-internal variations are not taken into consideration and languages and cultures are presented as internally uniform and homogenous entities (Kristiansen & Geeraerts, 2007:270). As a consequence, the use of languages as monolithic wholes does not correspond to the variability that is known to exist within language communities (Kristiansen & Geeraerts, 2007:271). This is thus one of the limitations of this study since national varieties have been studied.

One of the major limitations of this study is the representativity of the participants. Applying random assignment of participants means that every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Wagner, 2010:24). This was, however, not carried out

in the current study which has consequences for the generalizability of the results since it will not be possible to generalize the results to a larger population (Wagner, 2010:25, see Section 3.1.1.2). In addition to this, another limitation which is related to the representativity of the study, is how different age groups have been represented. Previous studies indicate that there might be noticeable generational differences in the use of congratulation strategies (Emery, 2000, see Section 2.4). This has not been taken into consideration in the current study as the age distribution of the participants varied and different age groups were not represented with equal number of participants (see Appendix IV).

4. Results

The results have been presented according to the order of the research questions. Section 4.1 provides the overall results and is followed by section 4.2 where the results concerning the respondents' congratulation strategies have been presented. In section 4.2, whenever relevant, the second research question regarding the variables power and social distance will be commented on. Finally, section 4.3 deals with the second and third research questions regarding the variables and the similarities and differences of the respondents' congratulation strategies.

In each subsection the DCT situations have been mentioned. Whenever example sentences have been provided, the following codes have been provided to indicate the nationality of the respondent: 'NR' for North American respondent; 'IR' for Indian respondent, and 'SR' for Spanish respondent. At the top left-hand corner of each table, the different levels of addressee power and social distance have been mentioned. '+SD' stands for high social distance, '-SD' for low and 'MSD' for medium. Strategies that have only been used by one respondent have not been mentioned in the text; they are, however, accounted for in the tables provided for each strategy. All of the main strategies along with the sub-strategies have been mentioned in all of the tables. However, for strategy number 8, 'Other types', only the sub-strategies employed by the respondents have been mentioned in order to save space as there were twelve sub-strategies

in strategy number eight. The data in the tables have been presented in raw frequency (RF) and percentages (%). The percentages provided have been rounded up whenever relevant, thus no decimals are listed. As mentioned in section 3.4, the variable of age has not been tested in this study as the age distribution among the respondents has not been equal among the groups (see Appendix IV).

4.1 Overall Results

In Table 14, the overall results have been presented. This table provides a quick overview of the most frequently used strategies by the participants. The numbers show the overall times the different strategies have been employed in all of the nine DCT situations combined. As mentioned earlier, in the tables ‘NR’ stands for North American respondent; ‘IR’ for Indian respondent, and ‘SR’ for Spanish respondent.

Table 14. Overall Results

Strategies		NR	IR	SR	Total
1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)		112	138	125	375
2. Mentioning occasion (MO)		95	64	72	231
3. Expr. of happiness	a) personal happiness	29	26	49	104
	b) Assessing situation positively	74	31	37	142
4. Request for info.	a) Specific	25	4	9	38
	b) General	11	0	1	12
5. Expr. of validation	a) Indicating situation was warranted	10	4	11	25
	b) Praise	25	14	7	46
	c) Statements of prior certainty	2	2	2	6
6. Self-related comment	a) Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	4	5	10	19
	b) One’s future effort	0	0	0	0
	c) Prediction of one’s future success	0	0	0	0
7. Excl./expr. of surprise		33	16	19	68
8. Other types	a) Prediction	3	3	3	9
	b) Req. for advice	0	0	0	0
	c) Related comment	0	0	0	0
	d) Suggestion to celebrate	3	5	13	21
	e) Expr. of pride	2	0	0	2
	f) Joke	4	0	2	6
	g) Offer of help	1	0	4	5

	h) Req. for continuing friendliness	0	0	1	1
	i) Req. to improve the company	0	0	0	0
	j) Offer of good wishes/encouragement	19	80	48	147
	k) Divine remarks	0	10	0	10
	l) Nothing	0	2	8	10
	m) Be careful	0	5	0	5
Total number of strategies used		452	409	421	

As can be observed by Table 14, the four most used strategies are IFID, MO, *offer of good wishes* and *assessing situation positively*. Since the taxonomy is fine-grained, many of the categories are not used at all, or used very rarely. North Americans and Indians seem to be the most different in terms of employed strategies. For almost all the strategies where Indians have employed a certain strategy the most frequently out of the three groups, North Americans tend to have used it the least, and vice versa (exceptions are 3a, 5a, 5b, 6a, 8d, 8g, 8l). Only a few strategies were employed almost equally frequently by the North Americans and the Indians. For instance, both groups seem to be equally likely to express personal happiness, statements of prior certainty and suggestions to celebrate. The Spaniards' chosen strategies seem to indicate that they fall somewhere in the middle between the North Americans and the Indians. This might thus be an initial confirmation regarding Hall's HC and LC communication styles which places India at one end, North America at the other end and the Spaniards in the middle (see Section 2.2.1).

Within the groups there some differences with regards to the most used strategies in all of the situations combined. The following figures (Figures 6-8) present the top five most used strategies for each group. As can be seen, the IFID is the most popular among all the groups. For the North Americans and the Spaniards, the second most used strategy is 'MO' or 'mentioning occasion' whereas for the Indians 'offer of good wishes' came in as second most popular. For the Indians, MO is the third most used strategy, for the North Americans it is *assessing situation positively* and for the Spaniards *expression of personal happiness*.

exclamation of surprise was fourth for the North Americans, and it was not a strategy that was part of the top five for the other groups. The forth most used strategies for the Indians and Spaniards were *assessing situation positively* and *offer of good wishes* respectively. Finally, the fifth most used strategy for the North Americans and the Indians was *expression of personal happiness*, and *assessing situation positively* for the Spaniards.

Figure 6. *Top Five Most Used Strategies by the North Americans*

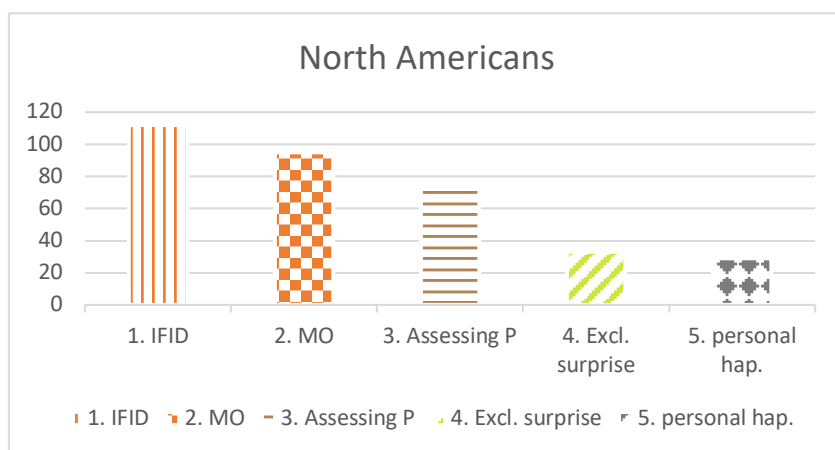


Figure 7. *Top Five Most Used Strategies by the Indians*

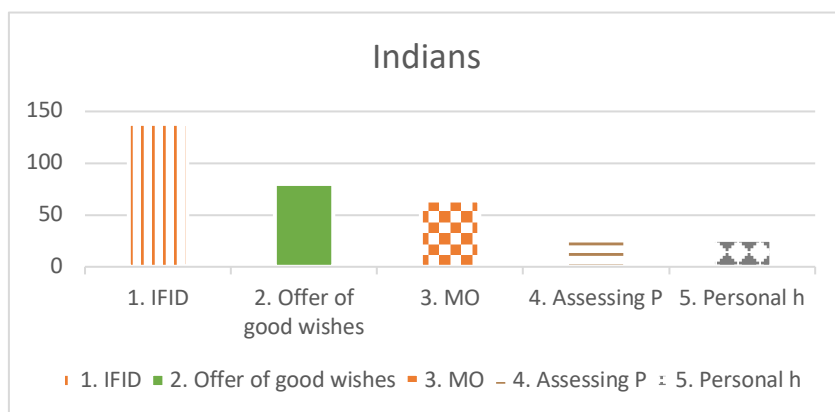


Figure 8. *Top Five Most Used Strategies by the Spaniards*



4.2 Respondents' Congratulations Strategies

The specific congratulation strategies used by the respondents for each DCT situation will be presented in the following sections.

4.2.1 Situation 1 – New CEO Wins Amateur Golf Tournament

You are the Chief Financial Officer at a multinational and have just been informed that you are having a one-on-one meeting with the new CEO, whom you've never met before. You have just been told that she won a golf tournament for amateurs over the weekend. What do you say to congratulate her?

Table 15. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 1 'New CEO wins amateur golf tournament'

Addressee power: high +SD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	6/30	20%	8/30	27%	3/30	10%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	20/30	67%	17/30	57%	23/30	77%
3.	Personal happiness	1/30	3%	4/30	13%	0/30	0%
	Assessing situation positively	7/30	23%	2/30	7%	1/30	3%
4.	Request for info.	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Situation warranted	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
	Praise	7/30	23%	3/30	10%	1/30	3%
	Prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
6.	Longing	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
	One's future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Prediction of one's future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Exclamation/expr. of surprise	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
8.	Joke	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	0/30	0%	5/30	17%	0/30	0%

	Nothing	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	3/30	10%
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IFID

20% of the North Americans used the IFID *congratulations* or *congrats*, as did 26% of the Indians and 10% of the Spaniards who either said *enhorabuena* (2) or *felicidades* (1). Two Indians added the modifiers *warmest* and *heartly* before the IFID congratulations (example 1).

- 1) Heartly congratulations to you (MI27) IR

Mentioning occasion

The most common strategy among all the groups was mentioning the occasion. 67% of the North Americans, 57% of the Indians and 77% of the Spaniards mentioned the occasion of winning the golf tournament as can be seen in sentences 2-4 below:

- 2) Congratulations on your golf tournament win.(FA4) NR
- 3) Congrats on your victory in the Golf tournament. (MI23) IR
- 4) Enhorabuena por el torneo. (MS27) SR

When mentioning the occasion, the most common formulation of congratulating among the English speakers was *congratulations*, only one North American and one Indian used the IFID *congrats*. In addition, seven North Americans (35%) and three Indians (18%) used the formulation *I heard* (example 5 below). Thus, indicating that a source has provided the information without mentioning the source.

- 5) I heard about your success at the golf tournament, congratulations! (FA10) NR

13 Spanish respondents (43%) used the word *enhorabuena*, and ten (33%) used a variety of the word *felicitar* either as a noun (*felicidades/felicitaciones*) or as a conjugated verb (*le felicito*). Nine of these responses (39%) marked evidentiality just like the North Americans and the Indians. Some phrases used for evidentiality were in the passive such as: *me han comentado* (3), *he sido informada* (1), or *me han dicho* (1), which translates into *I was told/informed*. Others used a similar phrase as the one used by the English speakers by saying *I heard* (*me he enterado*,

3). The other 14 (61%) approached the situation by directly mentioning the occasion and congratulating the hearer (example 6 below)

6) Le felicito por su victoria en el torneo de golf. (MS2) SR

Expression of Happiness

Expression of personal happiness was rare in this situation. One North American and four Indians expressed personal happiness (example 7 below). The Spaniards did not use this strategy.

7) I am happy you are won golf tournament (MI16) IR

Seven North Americans (23%) did, however, assess the situation positively and they did so by using a wide range of adjectives as seen in examples 8-11 below.

8) Good for you!(FA3) NR

9) That's phenomenal (FA6) NR

10) That's awesome (FA13) NR

11) I'm sure it was a great experience!(MA21) NR

12) me parece muy importante disfrutar del deporte y si encima se gana es un plus. (MS12)

SR

The Indians used this strategy twice (6%) and one Spaniard (example 12) used this response (3%).

Expression of Validation

This strategy was not very popular for this situation and only praise was used on some occasions. It was most frequently used by the North Americans (23%), followed by 10% of the Indians (examples 13 & 14) and 3% of the Spaniards.

13) Nicely done! (MA30) NR

14) Good job! (FI3) IR

Other Types

Offer of good wishes was a strategy that was employed by five Indian respondents (17%, examples 15-17 below). This strategy was not employed by the other two groups.

15) Wish you all the very best in the future (MI28) IR

16) My best wishes mam (FI5) IR

17) Good luck (FI10) IR

Furthermore, since the situation was a high social distance one, five North Americans, four Indians and two Spaniards included the conversational routine greeting of *nice to meet you* or *encantada de conocerte* in Spanish. In addition, three Spaniards (10%) responded Ø; that is, they mentioned that they would probably not say anything. This response was not recorded in the other two groups.

18) No le diría nada probablemente (FS6) SR

19) Nada, no lo haría (FS9) SR

20) Nada (FS23) SR

None of the North American or Spaniards used titles, in fact, one North American wrote that they would use the addressee's first name. In this situation the power of the addressee is high and this might have influenced the Indians who used the formal title *mam* in three cases. As we have seen in the theoretical background, this is to be expected among cultures closer to the HC end (see Section 2.2.1).

4.2.2 Situation 2 – Employer's wedding

You are an employee at a company and you have been informed that your employer got married recently. In the corridor at work, you see your employer and you want to congratulate him. What do you say?

Table 16. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 2 'Employer's wedding'

Addressee power: high MSD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	14/30	47%	13/30	43%	13/30	43%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	16/30	53%	3/30	10%	17/30	57%
3.	Expr. of happiness	4/30	13%	0/30	0%	2/30	6.7%
	Assessing situation positively	5/30	17%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
4.	Request for info.	5/30	17%	1/30	3%	2/30	7 %
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%	0/30
5.	Expr. of validation	Indicating situation was warranted	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%
		Praise	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%
		Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%
		One's future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%
		Prediction of one's future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./Expr. of surprise	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
8.	Other types	Suggestion to celebrate	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	0/30
		Offer of good wishes/encourage	3/30	10%	22/30	73%	9/30
		Divine remarks	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	0/30

IFID

47% of the North Americans used the IFID and the Indians and Spaniards used it 43% of the time. The most common formulation among the North Americans was *congratulations* (78.5%) followed by *congrats* which was used twice (14%). One respondent provided a glimpse of inter-group variation by writing *mazel tov* along with the explanation that she is from Brooklyn. Eleven Indians (85%) used *congratulations* and three of these mentioned the word *journey* as a metaphor together with the IFID (examples 21-22). This was not considered as the strategy *mentioning occasion* since journey does not directly refer to getting married as it could also be used when starting a new job or graduating. The remaining two Indians (15%) used *congrats*.

21) Congratulations on entering into new journey of life.(FI1) IR

22) Congratulations for the beginning of new journey of life (MI22) IR

Seven of the Spanish respondents (54%) used the word *felicidades* and six (46%) chose *enhorabuena*. One North American and one Spaniard mentioned the word *boss* or *jefe* together with the IFID. One Indian used the word *sir* and another one used the less formal word *buddy*

to congratulate his boss. This might be an indication that terms of address or titles are likely relevant as markers of power relations and social distance.

Mentioning Occasion

This strategy was common among the North Americans and Spaniards who used it 53% and 57% respectively. The Indians, on the other hand, only used this strategy three times (10%). Nine North Americans (56%) used the formulation *I heard* and seven (44%) congratulated the person directly. The use of evidentiality markers was not as frequent among the Spaniards who used this formulation six times (35%) by saying *me han dicho* (I've been told) and *me he enterado* (I've heard/found out). The other eleven (65%) went straight to congratulating without using evidentiality markers.

Expression of Happiness

This strategy was not used by the Indians and it was rare among the Spaniards who only used it twice (example 23). It was more common among the North Americans who expressed personal happiness four times and the adjective that was used in all four responses was *happy* (example 24).

23) alegre mucho por tu matrimonio! (FS11) SR

24) I am really happy for you. (FA13) NR

The North Americans also assessed the situation positively five times (17%).

Request for Information

Five North Americans asked specific questions, and three of these asked about the honeymoon. This strategy was less common among the Indians and the Spaniards who used it once and twice respectively.

Other Types

By far, the most used strategy by the Indians in this situation was offer of good wishes which was striking since it was even more common than the IFID or MO. Twenty-two Indians (73%)

employed this strategy. Out of these 22, 19 used a variety of what seems to be a formulaic phrase in Indian English, namely, *happy married life*. On two occasions, *wedding* was used instead of *married* (examples 25-27). This phrase was sometimes also used with other adjectives than just *happy*, for instance the adjective *healthy* was also used once (example 26). This phrase was also used by a respondent who had listed English as one of her native languages.

25) Wishing you a happy married life (MI21) IR

26) Wish you a happy and healthy married life (FI10) IR

27) Best wishes for a happy wedding life (MI24) IR

The strategy of *offer of good wishes* was not as common among the other two groups although it was slightly more frequent among the Spaniards than the North Americans (30% and 10% respectively). The most common word used by the Spaniards was *espero* (I hope), which was used five times, and *deseo* (I wish), which was used twice. All three North Americans used the word *wish*.

Once again, no titles were used by the Spaniards. Two North Americans indicated that they would use the addressee's first name and another used *boss*. Five Indians used *sir* and another two used *dude* and *buddy*. The use of *sir* might have been expected while the use of *dude* and *buddy* was quite a surprise given how informal these words are and the high addressee power. The age of the respondents who wrote *sir* was mixed, three of them were in the 20-29 age group, one 30-39 and another one 40-49. The one Indian who wrote *buddy* was between 30-39 years old and *dude* between 40-49 (see brief discussion on age in section 3.1.1.3 and 3.4).

4.2.3 Situation 3 – Boss-friend Promoted

Your boss, who is also your friend, calls you into her office and tells you that she's just been promoted. What do you say to congratulate her?

Table 17. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 3 'Boss-friend promoted'

Addressee power: high -SD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	13/30	43%	19/30	63%	22/30	73%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	4/30	13%	8/30	27%	3/30	10%
3.	Expression of happiness	6/30	20%	4/30	13%	12/30	40%
	Assessing situation positively	12/30	40%	5/30	17%	8/30	27%
4.	Request for info.	2/30	7%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Expression of validation	9/30	30%	3/30	10%	10/30	33%
	Praise	4/30	13%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
	Statements of prior certainty	2/30	7%	2/30	7%	2/30	7%
6.	Self-related comment	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
		One's future effort	0/30	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
		Prediction of one's future success	0/30	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./expr. of surprise	5/30	17%	5/30	17%	3/30	10%
8.	Other types	Prediction	1/30	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
		Suggestion to celebrate	0/30	3/30	10%	4/30	13%
		Pride	1/30	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
		Offer of help	0/30	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
		Offer of good wishes/encourage	2/30	6/30	20%	2/30	7%

IFID

This strategy was most frequently used by the Spaniards (73%) followed by the Indians (63%) and the North Americans (43%). The two IFIDs used by the North Americans were *congratulations* (8) and *congrats* (5). Twelve Indians used *congratulations* and seven used *congrats*. The two IFIDs used by the Spaniards were *enhorabuena* (12) and *felicidades* (10).

Mentioning Occasion

This strategy was not very common in this situation. Five North Americans, eight Indians and three Spaniards used the strategy. None of the respondents marked evidentiality.

Expression of Happiness

Six North Americans and four Indians used the strategy for expressing personal happiness. This strategy was more frequent among the Spaniards who used it 12 times (40%). The most common adjective was *happy* which was used by five North Americans and four Indians (examples 28-29). All 12 Spanish respondents used *me alegro* which translates into *I'm happy* (example 30).

28) I'm so happy for you! (FA3) NR

29) I'm happy for you (FI3) IR

30) Me alegro mucho. (FS1) SR

Assessing the situation positively was more common among the North Americans who employed the strategy 12 times (40%). The Indians used it five times (17%) and the Spaniards eight times (27%). The most frequent adjectives in this strategy for the North Americans were *wonderful* (5), *awesome* (2), *good* (2), *amazing* (2) and *great* (1). Three Indians used *great*, one used *amazing* and another *superb*. The Spaniards used *que bien* (3) followed by *estupendo*, *genial*, *magnifica* and *buena*, which were all used once. One respondent used a more informal expression *de puta madre*, which roughly translates into *awesome*.

Request for Information

This was not a common strategy in this strategy and was employed by two Americans and one Indian. The American questions were asking whether the hearer would be getting a new office and when they will start the new position. The Indian wondered where the party would be. This might also be seen as a suggestion to celebrate. However, since it has been posed as a question, it has not been considered a suggestion (example 31).

31) Where's the party (MI26) IR

Expression of Validation

Statements indicating the situations was warranted was a common strategy for the North Americans and the Spaniards (30% and 33%, respectively). The Indians, however, did not use this strategy as frequently as only three respondents employed it (10%). Eight Americans (89%), three Indians (100%) and nine Spaniards (90%) used the word *deserve* in English and *merecer* in Spanish.

32) You deserve it (FA2) NR

33) You certainly deserve it.(MA20) NR

34) You deserve it (Mi28) IR

35) te lo mereces! (MS10) SR

Four North Americans (13%) also employed the strategy *praise* and so did one (3%) Indian. Statements of prior certainty were twice by all three groups (examples 36-38).

36) I knew you could do it (FA12) NR

37) I'm not surprised (MI29) IR

38) Ya te dije que te iban a ascender a ti (FS7) SR

Exclamation/Expression of Surprise

Really and *wow* were used twice each by the North Americans. *Wow* was also used three times by the Indians and once by a Spaniard, which is surprising since it is not a common exclamation used in Spanish. This respondent, however, belongs to the 20-29 age group which might explain why it was used. One American and one Indian also employed *OMG* and *oh my god* respectively.

Other Types

None of the North Americans suggested to celebrate, but three Indians (10%) and four Spaniards (13%) did. Once again, the strategy to offer good wishes was employed and it was most frequent among the Indians who used it 6 times (20%). The North Americans and Spaniards used this strategy twice each (7%).

No titles or terms of endearment were used by the North Americans. Six Indians used titles or words of endearment. The words that were used were *mam/ma'am* (3), *babe* (1), *Ms* (1) and *boss* (1). Five of these were between the ages of 20-29, the one who used *Ms*. belonged to the 30-39 age group. Two Spaniards used *chica* (girl) and *tía* (literally *aunt*), which are informal words of endearment.

4.2.4 Situation 4 – Significant Other’s Sister’s Engagement

Your significant other’s sister is throwing an engagement party. It’s the first time you’re meeting her. What do you say to congratulate her?

Table 18. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 4 ‘Significant other’s sister’s engagement

Addressee power: equal +SD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	13/30	43%	18/30	60%	20/30	67%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	14/30	47%	3/30	10%	6/30	20%
3.	Expr. of happiness						
	Personal happiness	3/30	10%	3/30	10%	1/30	3%
4.	Request for info.						
	Assessing situation positively	1/30	3%	1/30	3%	2/30	7%
	Specific questions	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	Indicating situation was warranted	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Praise	0/30	0%	2/30	7%	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment						
	Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	One’s future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Prediction of one’s future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./expr. of surprise	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
8.	Other types						
	Prediction	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
	Offer of help	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	0
	Req. for continuing friendliness	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	3/30	10%	9/30	30%	11/30	37%
	Divine remarks	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%

IFID

Thirteen North Americans (43%) used the IFIDs *congratulations* (11) and *congrats* (2). This strategy was more common among the Indians and Spaniards, however, who used it 60% and 67% respectively. 13 Indians used the IFID *congratulations* and five *congrats*. The Spaniards used the IFIDs *felicidades* (11) and *enhorabuena* (9).

Mentioning Occasion

This strategy was slightly more common among the North Americans than the IFIDs as it was used 14 times (47%). It was not as common a strategy for the Indians and the Spaniards who used it three (10%) and six times (20%), respectively. None of the respondents used

evidentiality markers. This might be due to the fact that they were at a party celebrating the event they were congratulating on, thus, phrases such as ‘I heard’ might be unnecessary.

Expression of Happiness

Expressions of happiness were not very popular in this situation. Three North Americans and Indians (10%) expressed personal happiness together with one Spaniard (3%). Once again the most common adjective used was *happy* (examples 39-40) or *feliz* in Spanish.

39) I’m very happy for you (MA21) NR

40) So happy for you (FI13) IR

Likewise, *assessing the situation positively* was not common as it was used once by the North Americans and the Indians (3%) and twice by the Spaniards (7%).

Other Types

26 of the respondents (29%) made another type of response. 23 of these (88%) were *offers of good wishes*. This strategy was not as common among the North Americans who employed it three times (10%). The Indians made offers of good wishes three times more than the Americans (30%) but the Spaniards were the ones who most frequently offered good wishes (37%). All three North Americans used the verb *wish*. The Indian formulaic phrase *happy married life* was not used as frequently in this situation as it was only used twice. The most common Spanish verbs were *espero* (I hope) which was used five times and *deseo* (I wish) which was used three times.

41) I wish you two a lifetime of happiness together (FA2) NR

42) I wish you the best in your future (Fi7) IR

43) Espero que seas muy feliz! (MS13) SR

In addition, since the situation was a high social distance one, ten North Americans (33%), three Indians (10%) and seven Spaniards (23%) included the conversational routine greeting of *nice*

to meet you or *encantada de conocerte* in Spanish. In addition, no terms of endearment or titles were used by the North Americans and Spaniards, one Indian used *dear*.

4.2.5 Situation 5 – Mr. X’s Newborn

While working in your office Mr. X, with whom you are not close, enters and wants to speak with your colleague who is currently away on business.

You say: He’s away on business, can I take a message?

Mr. X: I wanted to tell him my son was just born!

You want to congratulate Mr. X, what do you say to him?

Table 19. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 5 ‘Mr. X’s newborn’

Addressee power: equal MSD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	19/30	63%	21/30	70%	28/30	93%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	5/30	17%	7/30	23%	2/30	7%
3.	Expr. of happiness						
	personal happiness	0/30	0%	3/30	10%	4/30	13%
	Assessing situation positively	15/30	50%	11/30	37%	4/30	13%
4.	Request for info.						
	Specific questions	4/30	13%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
	General questions	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	Indicating situation was warranted	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Praise	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment						
	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	One’s future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Prediction of one’s future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./expr. of surprise	11/30	37%	3/30	10%	6/30	20%
8.	Other types						
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	1/30	3%	4/30	13%	3/30	10%
	Divine remarks	0/30	0%	2/30	7%	0/30	0%

IFID

16 North Americans and 17 Indians used the IFID *congratulations*. *Congrats* was used by three North Americans and four Indians. One Indian regarded the birth of a child as a *personal promotion* and another one referred to it as a *new chapter*. 16 Spaniards used *enhorabuena* and 12 used *felicidades*. This strategy was the most frequent one used by all the groups.

Mention Occasion

Five North Americans (17%) used this strategy. It was a more popular strategy among the Indians who used it seven times (23%) and the least frequent among the Spaniards who used it twice (7%). As the situation was phrased in such a way that the respondents had to congratulate Mr. X on the spot, none of the respondents used markers of evidentiality.

Expression of Happiness

No personal expressions of happiness were expressed by the North Americans, however, they did assess the situation positively 15 times (50%). *That's great news* was used by three respondents. The Indians and the Spaniards expressed personal happiness three and four times respectively. The adjective *happy* was used by all three Indians and *me alegre* by all the Spaniards. Just like the North Americans, the Indians seemed to prefer assessing the situation positively more than expressing personal happiness. This strategy was used eleven times (37%) by the Indians. *That's good news* was the most common way of assessing the situation and it was used by four Indians. The Spaniards used the strategy four times (13%).

Request for Information

Four North Americans asked specific questions and one Spaniard employed this strategy. None of the Indians asked any questions.

Exclamation/Expression of Surprise

37% of the North Americans made an exclamation or expression of surprise. Of these almost half (45%) were *wow* and 36% were *oh*. Only three Indians used this strategy; two Indians used *wow* and one used *oh*. Six Spaniards (20%) employed this strategy and out of these six, half used *oh* and two used *vaya*.

Other Types

Only one American (3%) respondent made another type of response, namely, offer of good wishes. Six Indians made another type of response, out of these four were offers of good wishes

and two were divine remarks (examples 44-45). Three Spaniards used offers of good wishes (example 46).

44) God bless both mom n baby (Fi6) IR

45) May god bless him with health and happiness (Fi11) IR

46) Espero que los dos estén bien. (MS29) SR

Regarding titles or words of endearment, one of the North Americans used *Mr. X* and one Spaniard used *Señor X*. Three Indians used the title *sir* and one Indian *man*. Furthermore, eleven North Americans, five Indians and ten Spaniards mentioned that they will make sure to pass on the message for Mr. X.

It should also be mentioned that this DCT situation was modified for this study since many of the respondents in the pilot study (see Section 3.2) answered that they would not tell Mr. X anything. This time, however, none of the respondents gave this response.

4.2.6 Situation 6 – Sister Pregnant

Your sister tells you that she is going to have a baby for the first time. The baby is due this summer! What do you say to congratulate her?

Table 20. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 6 ‘Sister pregnant’

Addressee power: equal -SD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	11/30	37%	15/30	50%	17/30	57%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	4/30	13%	3/30	10%	0/30	0%
3.	Expr. of happiness						
	personal happiness	13/30	43%	6/30	20%	13/30	43%
4.	Request for info.						
	Assessing situation positively	9/30	30%	4/30	13%	12/30	40%
4.	Request for info.						
	Specific questions	2/30	6%	0/30	0%	3/30	10%
4.	Request for info.						
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	Indicating situation was warranted	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Praise	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment						
	Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	4/30	13%	5/30	17%	8/30	27%
6.	Self-related comment						
	One’s future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./expr. of surprise						
	Prediction of one’s future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./expr. of surprise	11/30	37%	5/30	17%	5/30	17%

8. Other types	Prediction	2/30	7%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
	Suggestion to celebrate	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	0/30	0%	7/30	23%	2/30	7%
	Divine remarks	0/30	0%	3/30	10%	0/30	0%
	Be careful	0/30	0%	5/30	17%	0/30	0%

IFID

This was the most common strategy for all the groups. Out of the three groups, the IFID strategy was not as common among the North Americans who used it eleven times (37%). It was more popular among the other groups as half of the Indians (50%) and 17 Spaniards (57%) employed this strategy. The most frequent IFID was ‘congratulations’ (8 North Americans & 10 Indians). The use of *felicidades* (15) for the Spaniards was significantly higher than *enhorabuena* (2).

Mentioning Occasion

This strategy was not very popular in this situation. Only four North Americans (13%) and three Indians (10%) employed this strategy. None of the Spaniards mentioned the occasion.

Expression of Happiness

Many of the respondents expressed happiness when given the news about their sister’s pregnancy. In total there were 33 responses expressing personal happiness. 13 of these were expressed by the North Americans, six by the Indians and another 13 by the Spaniards. The adjective *happy* was once again the most frequent and was used by 12 North Americans and five Indians. More than half of the Spaniards (6) used the words *me alegro* another four used *que ilusión*.

Assessing the situation positively was also common in this situation. The North Americans used this strategy nine times (30%), the Indians four times (13%) and the Spaniards 12 times (40%). *Amazing* and *exciting* were the two adjectives that were most frequently used by the North Americans (twice each). The four Indians all used different adjectives among which were

amazing and *happy* as in *happy news*. The most common Spanish formulations were *que bien* (4) and *que buena noticia* (3).

Request for Information

This was not a popular strategy among the groups, only two North Americans (6%) and three Spaniards (10%) requested specific information. Questions concerned, among other things, the name of the baby, how the sister was feeling and when she was due.

Self-related Comment

The self-related comments in this situation concerned the fact that the respondents were expressing excitement and longing about the fact that they were becoming aunts or uncles. This excitement and longing was frequently expressed with the help of numerous exclamation marks and/or using the phrase *I can't wait* as shown in examples 47-49 below.

47) I can't wait to meet the newest family member (FA5) NR

48) Can't wait for the baby to come (Fi13) IR

49) Tenia muchas ganas de ser tia!(FS11) SR

In total there were 17 responses concerning longing across the groups and 12 of these were expressed by women. The distribution among the languages were: four North Americans (13%), five Indians (17%) and eight Spaniards (27%).

Exclamation/Expression of Surprise

37% of the North Americans expressed surprise by using exclamations such as *oh my god* (4), or *wow* (2). Others expressed surprise by using more words, such as:

50) I don't even know what to say.. I'm speechless! (FA6) NR

Another North American respondent expressed surprise especially since her sister is younger than her and is also a teenager still (example 51 below):

51) Bruhhh how are you having a baby before me haha. (My sister is 19) (FA13) NR

Thus, it was interesting to see that the respondents reacted to these situations as if they were really experiencing them in person.

17% of the Indian respondents used this strategy, among the words used were *omg* and ‘oh’ which were used twice each. The Spaniards also used this strategy 17% and the five expressions used were all different. *Oh, ay, en serio?* and the more informal *no jodas!!!* were some of the expressions used.

Other Types

There were 20 other responses made in this sub-strategy. Out of these 20, 15 were expressed by the Indians. Three of the responses were in the ‘future prediction’ strategy. These responses related to the fact that the addressee was going to be a great mother and was expressed by two Americans (7%) and one Indian mentioned that wonderful times are awaiting the couple:

52) wonderful times awaiting for you both (Fi3) IR

The strategy which was used most frequently was *offer of good wishes/encourage* which was used by seven Indians (23%) and two Spaniards (7%). Wishes related to happiness, good luck, a safe delivery for the baby and general well-being.

53) Will wish and pray for the baby to reach earth safely. Be safe and happy (Mi21) IR

54) Wish you all the best (MI17) IR

Three Indians also mentioned ‘god’ as in:

55) God may bless you and with you always [*sic*] (Mi17) IR

Furthermore, a new strategy was used by the Indians which had not been observed in the other situations. Five Indians (17%) seemed to express a concern regarding the pregnancy and expressed caution such as:

56) Take care and be more careful (Fi14) IR

57) stay calm and careful (Fi7) IR

58) take care (Fi1) IR

59) take care of yourself (Mi30) IR

According to UNICEF, the moment of birth in India is often frightening for women as maternal mortality is high. Although more and more mothers are saved every year, every 20 minutes an Indian mother dies due to pregnancy or childbirth related issues (UNICEF, n.d.). This thus provides a sociopragmatic context, since local conditions seem to be having an impact on language use and it might explain the use of these structures.

Regarding terms of endearment, two North Americans used *bruhhh* and *sis*. Three Indians used the word *sister*, others used *dear* (2), *sis* (2) and *sissy* (1). Four Spaniards used either *hermana* or *hermanita* (sister and sissy).

Finally, exclamations of happiness were also used by one North American who said *yay* and two Indians who said *yippiee* and *hurray*.

4.2.7 Situation 7 – Candidate Wins Marathon

You are the CEO of a company. You are about to hire an employee and it is the final stage of the recruiting process where two candidates get to have a one-on-one meeting with you. You are about to interview one of them and your secretary tells you that the candidate won a marathon the other day. What do you say to congratulate the candidate?

Table 21. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 7 ‘Candidate wins marathon’

Addressee power: low +SD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	9/30	30%	14/30	47%	2/30	7%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	15/30	50%	13/30	43%	21/30	70%
3.	Expr. of happiness						
	personal happiness	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Assessing situation positively	3/30	10%	4/30	13%	2/30	7%
4.	Request for info.						
	Specific questions	1/30	3%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
	General questions	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	Indicating situation was warranted	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Praise	12/30	40%	5/30	17%	6/30	20%
	Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%

6. Self-related comment	One's future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Prediction of one's future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7. Excl./expr. of surprise		1/30	3%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
8. Other types	A joke	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	1/30	3%	6/30	20%	0/30	0%
	Nothing	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	4/30	13%

IFID

This strategy was more common among the Indians than the other groups. It was used by nine Americans (30%), 14 Indians (47%) and two Spaniards (7%). *Congratulations* was the IFID that was most commonly used by the English speakers. Eight out of nine North Americans (89%) used this word and eleven out of 14 (76%) Indians. One North American and two Indians used *congrats* and one Indian used the verb as in *I congratulate you*. This strategy was not very popular among the Spaniards who used the IFIDs *enhorabuena* (1) and *felicidades*(1).

Mentioning Occasion

This strategy was the most frequent one among the North Americans who used it 15 times (50%). 13 of these 15 (87%) were used with the evidentiality markers *I heard* (10), *I hear* (2) and *I was informed* (1). The Indians used this strategy 13 times (43%) and three of these responses (23%) used the evidentiality marker *I heard*, and one Indian used *I am said* (examples 60-61).

The *mentioning occasion* strategy was by far the most employed strategy by the Spaniards who used it 21 times (70%). Seven of these 21 responses were marked by evidentiality and the most common phrases were *me he enterado* (2) and *me han comentado* (2). The other 14 responses directly congratulated the addressee (examples 62).

60) I heard that you won a marathon. Congrats!(FA10) NR

61) I am said that you won a marathon, Congratulations.(Fi10) IR

62) Felicidades por la victoria en la maratón (FS4) SR

Expression of Happiness

Expression of personal happiness was not recorded in the data; however, the participants did assess the situation positively. This was slightly more popular among the Indians who employed the strategy four times followed by the North Americans (3) and the Spaniards (2).

Expression of Validation

Only *praise* was used in this strategy and it was the second most frequent strategy employed by the North Americans who used it 12 times (40%). Five of these mentioned the word *impressed* or *impressive*, three respondents used *accomplishment* and *achievement* was used twice (examples 63-64).

63) That's very impressive (FA17, MA18) NR

64) That is quite an accomplishment.(FA16) NR

The Indians used this strategy five times and the Spaniards six (examples 65-66).

65) Great achievement (MI27) IR

66) Me admiran [sic] la gente que es capaz de correr largas distancias.(MS26) SR

Other Types

Twelve other responses were recorded as strategies in *other types*. Six of these were made by Indians offering good luck wishes or good wishes in general (examples 67-68).

67) Wish all the success for your future (Mi17) IR

68) all the very success for your future (Fi8) IR

In addition one Indian (3%) and four Spaniards (13%) mentioned that they would not congratulate the candidate. No titles or terms of endearment were used.

4.2.8 Situation 8 - Student's Wedding

You are a teacher and you've just found out that one of your students is getting married this summer. You run into him in the corridor. What do you say to congratulate him?

Table 22. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 8 ‘Student’s wedding’

Addressee power: low MSD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	12/30	40%	12/30	40%	9/30	30%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	13/30	43%	7/30	23%	16/30	53%
3.	Expr. of happiness						
	personal happiness	0/30	0%	2/30	7%	2/30	7%
4.	Request for info.						
	Assessing situation positively	7/30	23%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	Specific questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment						
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Expr. of surprise						
	Indicating situation was warranted	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Praise	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
8.	Other types						
	Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
9.	Expr. of surprise						
	One’s future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Prediction of one’s future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
10.	Other types						
	Prediction	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	2/30	7%
	Joke	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	7/30	23%	14/30	47%	12/30	40%
	Divine remarks	0/30	0%	3/30	10%	0/30	0%
11.	Other types						
	Nothing	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	1/30	3%

IFID

This strategy was employed by 12 North Americans and 12 Indians (40%). The most frequent IFID was *congratulations*, eleven Americans (92%) and six Indians (50%) used this word. Nine Spaniards used the IFIDs, six (67%) used *enhorabuena* and three (33%) used *felicidades*.

Mentioning Occasion

Out of the 13 (43%) Americans that employed this strategy, six (46%) used the evidentiality marker *I heard*. Seven Indians employed this strategy and three (43%) of these used the marker *I heard* (examples 69-70). This strategy was the most frequently used by the Spaniards who used it 16 times (53%). Nine (56%) of these used evidentiality markers, five *me han dicho* (I’ve been told) and four *me he enterado* (I’ve heard/found out) (example 71).

69) I heard you are getting married, congratulations(FA4) NR

70) Congratulations heard that you are getting married. (Fi12) IR

71) Me han dicho que te casas. Enhorabuena. (MS29) SR

Expression of Happiness

Personal happiness was not expressed by the North Americans. It was, however, used by two Indians and two Spaniards who once again used the adjective *happy* in English and the phrase *me alegro* in Spanish. The North Americans did, however, assess the situation positively seven times (23%) and they did so by referring to the news as *exciting*, *good* or *big*.

Exclamation/Expression of Surprise

None of the North Americans used this strategy and it was only used once by an Indian and twice by the Spaniards.

Other Types

There were 42 responses in this strategy and 33 (79%) of these were offers of good wishes. This strategy was predominantly used by the Indians who used it 14 (47%) times followed by the Spaniards who used it 12 (40%) times and finally the North Americans who used it seven (23%) times. Three (43%) of the North Americans wished their student luck in their marriage and two wished the student happiness (example 72). Among the Indians, the most common phrases were *happy married life*, which was used four times (29%), and *all the best* or *best wishes* which were used twice each (examples 73-74). Half of the Spaniards' wishes were about happiness, and four were about enjoying the wedding (examples 75-76).

72) best of luck in your marriage (FA14) NR

73) All the best for your future (Fi7) IR

74) Happy married life (Mi18). IR

75) Espero que paséis un buen día.(MS29) SR

76) que seáis muy felices. (MS2) SR

Another strategy that was used by the Indians was *divine remarks* (examples 77-78). This strategy was not used by the other groups.

77) God bless you (Fi6) IR

78) May the almighty bless both of you (Fi11) IR

In addition, four North Americans mentioned the first name of the student either by inventing a name (*John* and *Sam*) or referring to the person as *X* or simply writing *insert name*. None of the Indians used the first name of their, so-called, student. They did, however, use the endearment *dear* twice and *dude* and *man* once each. One Spaniard used the first name *María*.

4.2.9 Situation 9 – Employee-friend’s New House

You are the CEO of a small family business. Your employee, who is also your friend, has just told you they have bought a new house. What do you say to congratulate him?

Table 23. Frequency of semantic strategies: DCT 9 ‘Employee-friend’s new house’

Addressee power: low -SD		NR RF	%	IR RF	%	SR RF	%
1.	IFID	15/30	50%	18/30	60%	11/30	37%
2.	Mentioning occasion (MO)	4/30	13%	6/30	20%	1/30	3%
3.	Expr. of happiness						
	personal happiness	2/30	7%	4/30	13%	15/30	50%
4.	Request for info.						
	Assessing situation positively	15/30	50%	4/30	13%	8/30	27%
4.	Request for info.						
	Specific questions	9/30	30%	1/30	3%	2/30	7%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	General questions	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
5.	Expr. of validation						
	Indicating situation was warranted	0/30	0%	1/30	3%	0/30	0%
	Praise	2/30	7%	2/30	7%	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment						
	Statements of prior certainty	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Expr. of longing/envy/chagrin	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
6.	Self-related comment						
	One’s future effort	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Prediction of one’s future success	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
7.	Excl./expr. of surprise	4/30	13%	1/30	3%	2/30	7%
8.	Other types						
	Prediction	0/30	0%	0/30	0%	1/30	3%
	Suggestion to celebrate	2/30	7%	1/30	3%	9/30	30%
	Expr. of pride	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	0/30	0%
	Joke	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	2/30	7%
	Offer of help	1/30	3%	0/30	0%	2/30	7%
	Offer of good wishes/encourage	2/30	7%	7/30	23%	9/30	30%

IFID

The North Americans used the IFIDs 50% and the Indians 60%. *Congratulations* was used 17 times by the English speakers, eight times (53%) by the North Americans and nine (50%) by

the Indians. The North Americans used *Congrats* seven times and the Indians nine times. The Spaniards used *felicidades* seven (64%) times and *enhorabuena* four (37%) times.

Mentioning Occasion

This was not a popular strategy among the North Americans who used it four (13%) times only. The Indians used it six (20%) times and the Spaniards only once (3%).

Expression of Happiness

Personal happiness was not expressed by many North Americans or Indians as only two (7%) and four (13%) respectively used this strategy. All of the English speakers used the adjective *happy*. 50% of the Spaniards, on the other hand, expressed personal happiness and 14 (93%) of these used the phrase *me alegro*.

50% of the North Americans assessed the situation positively and they did so by using a great deal of adjectives such as *exciting* (3), *wonderful* (2), *nice* (2) *fantastic* (1), *awesome* (1) and *amazing* (1). The Indians used this strategy far less (13%) and the Spaniards used it eight times (27%).

Request for Information

The North Americans were more interested in asking specific questions than the other groups. This strategy was used nine (30%) times by the North Americans, only once (3%) by an Indian and twice (10%) by the Spaniards. The specific questions the North Americans asked related to the location of the house (4) and when there would be a housewarming party (4) (examples 79-80). Although the latter question could also relate to strategy E) in *Other Types* (suggestion to celebrate) it was classified as a specific question since it was not really a suggestion.

79) Where in town are you? (FA11) NR

80) When's the house warming party?(MA19) NR

Expression of Validation

The strategy of *praise* was only used twice by the North Americans and the Indians and phrases that were used were *way to go* (NR), *good going* (IR) and *well done* (IR).

Exclamation/Expression of Surprise

Wow was the exclamation that was used by the English speakers; three North Americans and one Indian. *Oh really* was also used by one North American. In total, four (13%) North Americans used this strategy and only one (3%) Indian. The Spaniards used it twice (7%) and they used *¡Qué me dices!* and *vaya*.

Other Types

There were 38 responses in *other types*, 23 (61%) of these were made by the Spaniards, eight (21%) by the Indians and seven (18%) by the North Americans. Twelve respondents had suggested to celebrate the occasion, out of these, nine (75%) were Spanish (examples 81-82). The North Americans used this strategy twice and only one Indian suggested to have a party (examples 83-84).

81) Tendremos que organizar algo!! Yo llevo el postre y el vino 😊(FS19) SR

82) Pues ya sabes, hay que celebrarlo, cuando estéis listos empezamos (MS22) SR

83) We have to throw a housewarming party (FA13) NR

84) Let's have a party (FI2) IR

Although the North Americans also ask about the party, this is stated by using the strategy of *specific questions*. The Spaniards, on the other hand, seem to be more direct as only one Spaniard used the strategy of *specific questions* to ask about the housewarming party.

Two Spaniards (7%) and one North American (3%) joked about the employee's salary. The Spaniards joked about the employee earning too much money and the North American mentioned that negotiations regarding a raise will still not happen. In addition, two Spaniards (7%) and one North American (3%) offered to help (examples 85-86), none of the Indians used this strategy.

85) Let me know if there is anything I can do to help!(MA18) NR

86) Si necesitas que te ayude en la mudanza, me dices (MS21) SR

Offer of good wishes was also popular among the Spaniards who used it nine (30%) times. The most common phrase was expressed with the verb *disfrutar* (literally: *enjoy*, example 87). The Indians also made offers of good wishes, especially general wishes as seen in example 88, and they did so seven times (23%). The North Americans were the ones who used this strategy the least and only two respondents expressed good luck wishes.

87) Que la disfrutes (FS23) SR

88) All the best for a nice living in the new home (Mi24) IR

Regarding terms of endearment or titles, the North Americans used the first name once and *man* another time. The Indians used *buddy* and *my pal* once each and *man* and *dude* twice each. One Spaniard used the informal word *cabroncete* (little twerp).

4.3 Similarities and Differences

In most situations, there have been three strategies that have been used the most by the respondents. These top three strategies chosen by the participants for each situation have been presented in the table below (Table 24). Within these top three, nine different strategies have been alternated among the North Americans, five by the Indians and ten by the Spaniards. The Indians seem to have been more consistent in their use of strategies and have mostly alternated IFID, MO and *offer of good wishes* as their top three strategies (marked yellow, green and pink respectively in Table 24). Furthermore, overall, the three most used strategies across the groups are IFID, MO and *offer of good wishes*.

Table 24. *Top Three Strategies across the Groups in each Situation*

Situations	Variables	NR	IR	SR
1. New CEO wins amateur golf tournament	+ power +SD	1. MO 67% 2. assess/praise 23% 3. IFID 20%	1. MO 57% 2. IFID 27% 3. wish 17%	1. MO 77% 2. IFID/nothing 10% 3. assess/warranted/praise 3%
2. Employer's wedding	+power MSD	1. MO 53% 2. IFID 47%	1. wish 73% 2. IFID 43%	1. MO 57% 2. IFID 43%

		3. assess /specific questions 17%	3. MO 10%	3. wish 30%
3. Boss-friend promoted	+power -SD	1. IFID 43% 2. asses 40% 3. warranted 30 %	1. IFID 63% 2. MO 27% 3. wish 20%	1. IFID 73% 2. pers happiness 40% 3. warranted 33%
4. Significant other's Sister's engagement	=power +SD	1. MO 47% 2. IFID 43% 3. Pers happiness/wish 10%	1. IFID 60% 2. wish 30% 3. MO/pers happiness 10%	1. IFID 67% 2. wish 37% 3. MO 20%
5. Mr. X's newborn	=power MSD	1. IFID 63% 2. assess 50% 3. surprise 37%	1. IFID 70% 2. assess 37% 3. MO 23%	1. IFID 93% 2. surprise 20% 3. pers happiness/assess 13%
6. Sister pregnant	=power -SD	1. Pers happiness 43% 2. surprise/IFID 37% 3. assess 30%	1. IFID 50% 2. wish 23% 3. pers happiness 20%	1. IFID 57% 2. pers happiness 43% 3. assess 40%
7. Candidate wins marathon	-power +SD	1. MO 50% 2. Praise 40% 3. IFID 30%	1. IFID 47% 2. MO 43% 3. wish 20%	1. MO 70% 2. praise 20% 3. nothing 13%
8. Student's wedding	-power MSD	1. MO 43% 2. IFID 40% 3. assess/wish 23%	1. wish 47% 2. IFID 40% 3. MO 23%	1. MO 53% 2. wish 40% 3. IFID 30%
9. Employee-friend new house	-power -SD	1. IFID/assess 50% 2. specific questions 30% 3. MO/surprise 13%	1. IFID 60% 2. wish 23% 3. MO 20%	1. pers happiness 50% 2. IFID 37% 3. celebrate/wish 30%

4.3.1 Contrasting Groups

In five out of nine situations, the North Americans have employed the 'MO' strategy the most and although IFID has been employed in all situations it has only been used the most frequently in three situations. The most common strategies employed by the North Americans are IFID, MO and *assessing the situation positively* (marked yellow, green and red in Table 24). The use of IFID and *assessing the situation positively* agrees with findings in previous studies regarding the most common congratulation strategies employed by North Americans (Elwood, 2004).

Among the Indians, the IFID has in six out of nine situations been the most common strategy employed and MO has been used as the most frequent strategy in one situation. *Offer of good wishes* has been the most common strategy among the Indians in two situations. The top three most used strategies for the Indians are IFID, MO and *offer of good wishes*.

The Spaniards seem to have some strategies in common with the North Americans and others with the Indians. MO and the IFID were the most frequently used strategies in four out of nine situations by the Spaniards and it was only in one situation (situation 9) that *expressing*

personal happiness (marked turquoise) was the most frequent. *Offer of good wishes* was part of the top three most frequent strategies four times for the Spaniards, as well as *expressing personal happiness*. Therefore, the three most common strategies for the Spaniards are IFID and MO and a shared third place for *offer of good wishes* and *personal happiness*.

Differences between the groups in the category of *offer of good wishes* were the most striking as the Indians used this strategy as one of the top three most used strategies in almost all situations (8/9 situations) whereas the North Americans only used it as top three twice and the Spaniards in four out of nine situations. However, whenever *offer of good wishes* was expressed by the North Americans, they were equally likely to express other strategies (see Table 24). Seeing as the five most used strategies were IFID, MO, *offer of good wishes*, *assessing situation positively* and *expression of personal happiness* these have been further examined below along with the variables of power and social distance (SD).

Another difference among the groups concerned the strategies that implied expressing feelings (3a, 3b, 6a, 7 & 8e, see Table 14). Overall, out of all the strategies employed, the North Americans have expressed feelings in 31% of these, the Indians 19% and the Spaniards 27%. In fact, only in situations where there is no power difference, was this strategy part of top three most frequent strategies adopted by the Indians (see Table 24). When examining the overall results (Table 14) and specifically analyzing the most popular strategies that express feelings, *assessing the situation positively* was the most frequent for the North Americans (16%) and the Indians (8%). *Personal happiness* was the most popular among the Spaniards (12%). Therefore, this seems to indicate that North Americans and Spaniards are more likely to express feelings when congratulating.

In addition, although the differences are small, the Spaniards seem to be more homogenous as a group regarding the most common strategy employed for each situation, since in eight out of nine situations more than half of the Spanish respondents have applied the same strategy

when congratulating. This has occurred among the North Americans three times and the Indians six times. Furthermore, according to Lewis, Spanish cultures tend to interweave social and professional situations (see Section 2.2.1). Situations 1 and 7 both take place in a professional setting where the social distance is high and the speaker is expected to congratulate the addressee on a personal matter. In these two situations, the Spaniards were the only ones who had the strategy Ø as one of the top three strategies. This thus does not corroborate with Lewis's description of multi-active cultures interweaving social and professional.

4.3.1.1 Contrasting Groups with Variables

The most common strategy used among the different groups was IFID. Out of all the strategies used, IFID was used 25%, 34% and 30 % by the North Americans, Indians and Spaniards, respectively. Figures 9 and 10 below illustrate when this strategy has been used the most with regard to the variables power and SD. As the Figures below illustrate, IFID is more commonly used when the power of the addressee is equal ('=P') among all the groups. However, it seemed to have a bigger effect on the Spaniards who more than half of the time (52%) used the IFID when power was equal. In addition, their responses changed more markedly when the power levels changed. Regarding SD, the North Americans and Spaniards used the strategy the least when the variable was high.

Figure 9. Power and IFID among the groups (raw frequency)

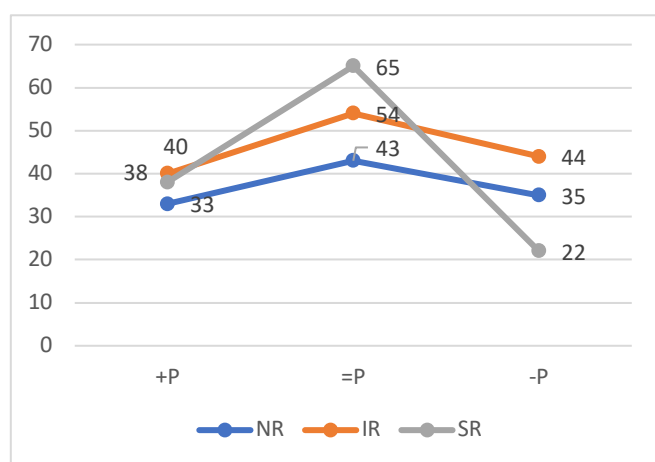
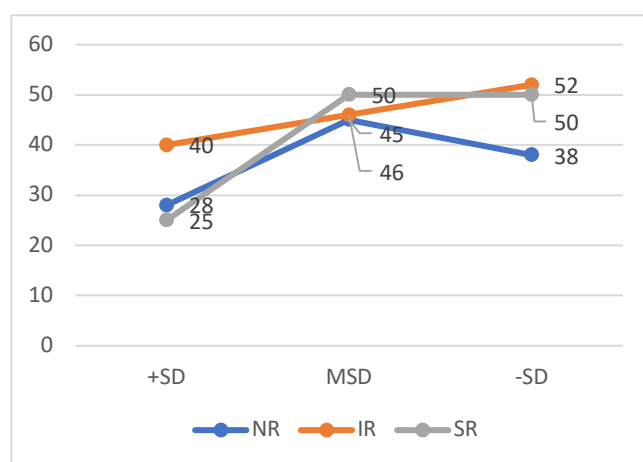


Figure 10. Social distance and IFID among the groups (raw frequency)



Another strategy that was one of the most used was MO and the trends of usage in relation to the variables have been shown in Figures 11 and 12 below. Overall, among all the strategies used within each group, this strategy was used 21% by the North Americans, 16% by the Indians and 17% by the Spaniards. As opposed to IFID, this strategy seems to be reversely affected by the power variable as when the power is equal (=P) the strategy has been used the least among all the groups. However, when it comes to SD, although the trends are similar there are also some differences. The North Americans and the Spaniards follow the same trend; the higher the SD, the higher the usage. Although the trend is similar for the Indians, the difference is that there does not seem to be a difference between MSD and -SD.

Figure 11. Power and MO among the groups (raw frequency)

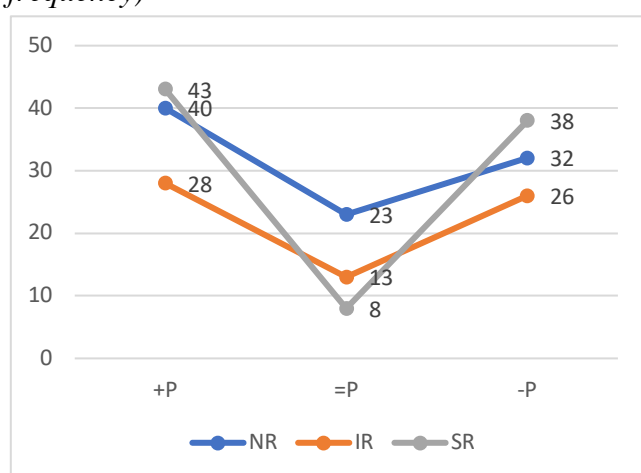
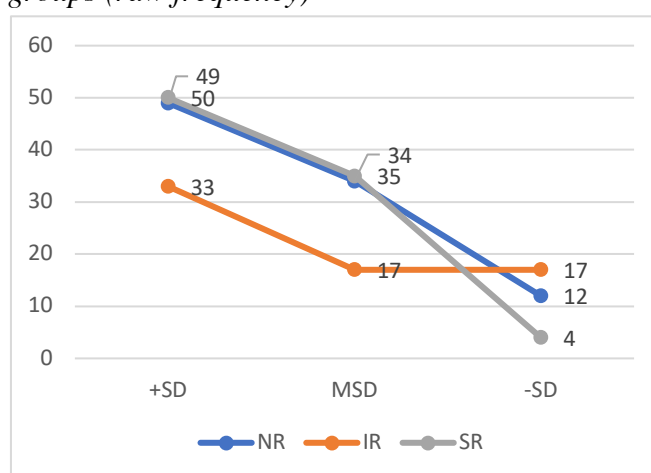


Figure 12. Social distance and MO among the groups (raw frequency)



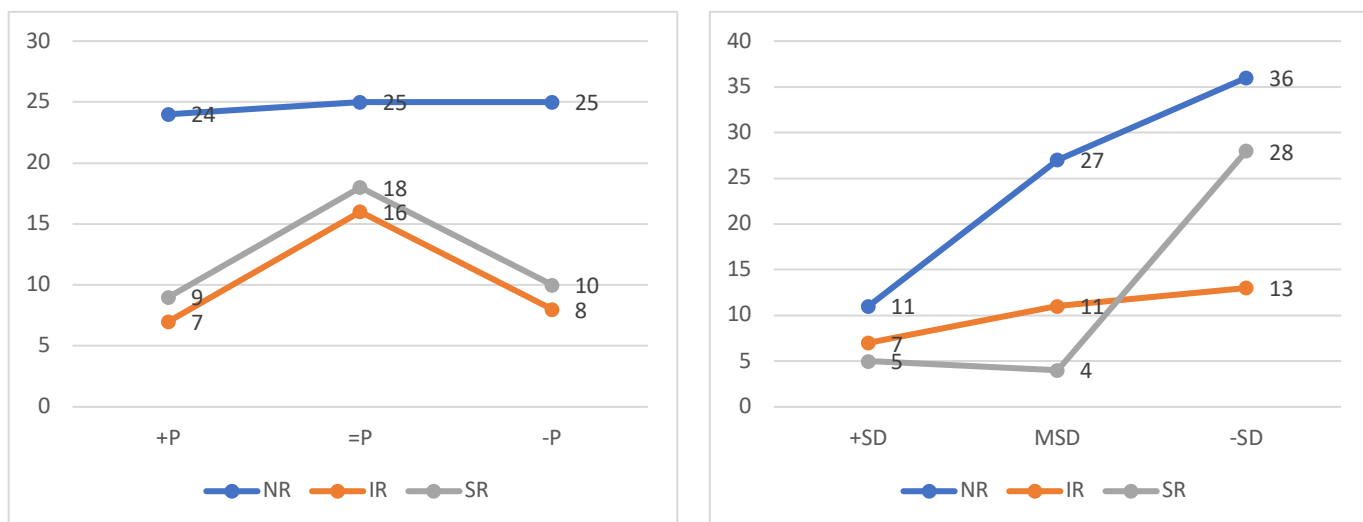
Overall, out of all the strategies used, the North Americans used *expressions of happiness* 23%. Within this strategy, *assessing the situation positively* (78%) was used almost three times

more than *personal happiness* (28%). Similar to the North Americans, the Spaniards also expressed feelings of happiness and did so in 20% of the strategies used. Unlike the North Americans, the Spaniards were more likely to express personal happiness (57%) than assessing the situation positively (43%). Overall, the Indians used expressions of happiness 14%. Just like the North Americans, the Indians were more likely to assess the situation positively (54%) than express personal happiness (46%).

As mentioned earlier, expressions of happiness were among the most popular strategies used. When examining the North American numbers for the strategy *assessing the situation positively*, the power variable did not seem to have much influence as the strategy was used almost equally among the three situations where power differed (-P 34%, =P 34% and +P 32%). However, almost half of the responses (49%, 36/74) were expressed in situations of -SD. Thus, when assessing a situation positively, power does not seem to be as relevant; however, personal happiness is more likely to be expressed in situations where power is equal. For the Spaniards, power seemed to have somewhat more importance as 49% of the responses occurred in situations of equal power (-P 27% & +P 24%) and, once again, -SD seemed to have an effect as 76% of the responses were expressed in situations of -SD. Therefore, when SD is low, Spaniards seem to be more likely to express personal happiness, and power does not seem to have much influence. For the Indians, a pattern similar to the Spanish one emerged regarding power as 52% of the responses for this strategy were employed when power was equal. Regarding SD, 45% of the responses were expressed in -SD. Thus, this might indicate that power and SD might both have an impact on when positive assessments are made by the Indians; however, the variables seemed to be more important for the other two groups (see Figures 13-14).

Figure 13. *Power and assessing positively among the groups (raw frequency)*

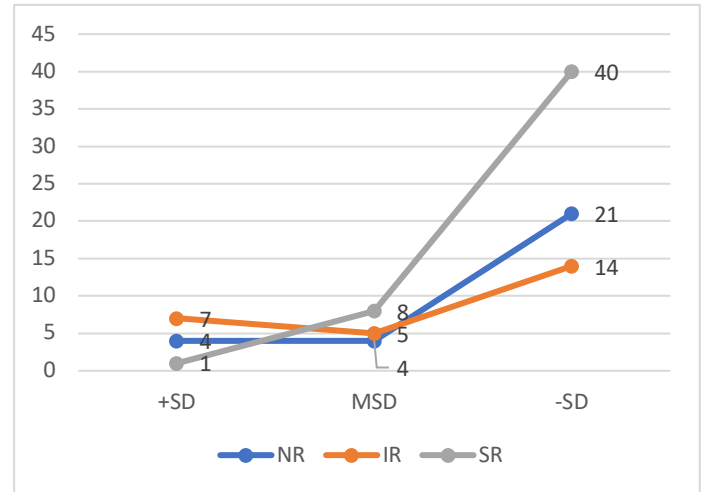
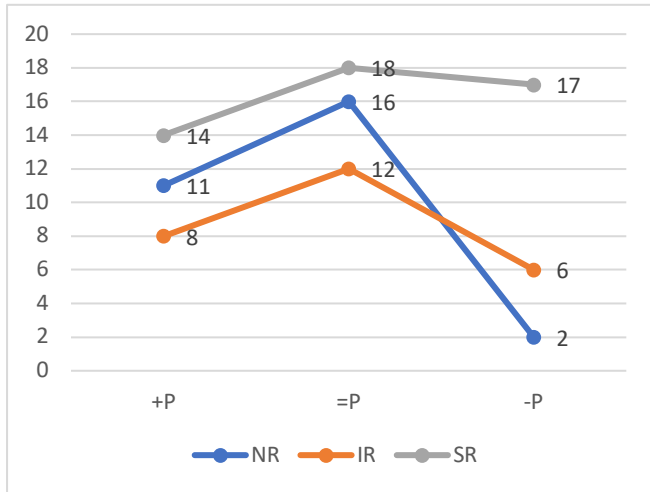
Figure 14. *Social distance and assessing positively among the groups (raw frequency)*



Concerning *personal happiness*, a closer look at the numbers reveals that 72% of the *expressions of personal happiness* occurred in situations of -SD for the North Americans (low social distance, MSD 14% & +SD 14%) and 55% of them in situations of equal power. Interestingly, only 7% of the North Americans expressed personal happiness when the addressee power was low (-P). Thus indicating that North Americans might be more likely to express personal happiness in situations of -SD and equal power. Looking at the data for the Spaniards, 82% of the *expressions of personal happiness* were expressed in situations of -SD (40/49). Unlike the North Americans, power did not seem to play an equally important role as around 30% of the responses for personal happiness were in situations of either low, equal or high power (-P 35%, = P 37%, +P 29%). For the Indians, the few occasions that personal happiness was expressed (6%), the data shows that they were more likely to be expressed in situations of -SD (54%) and equal power (46%) (see Figures 15-16).

Figure 15. Power and personal happiness among the groups (raw frequency)

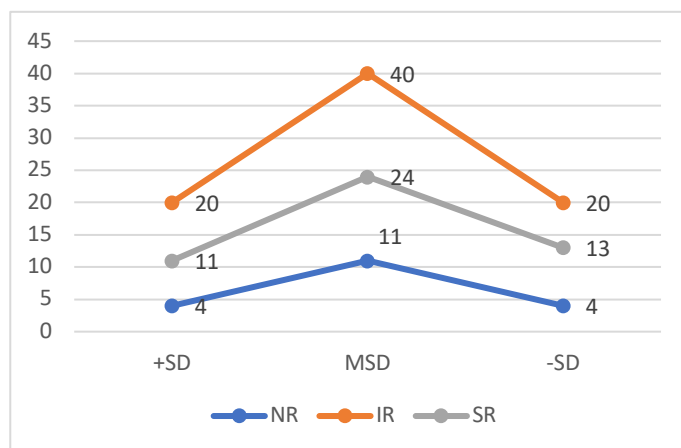
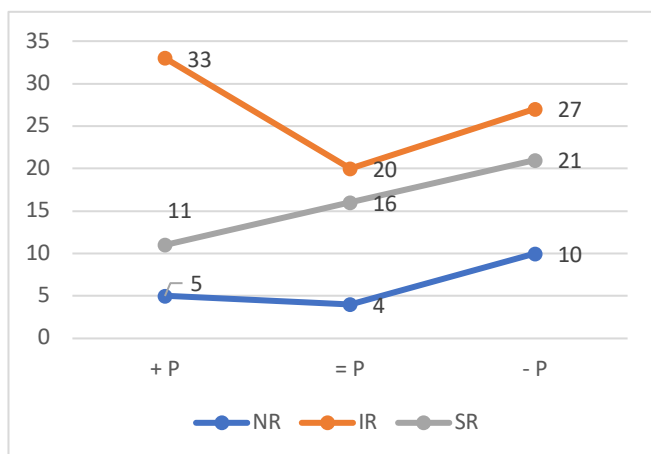
Figure 16. Social distance and personal happiness among the groups (raw frequency)



Moreover, another popular strategy among the groups was *offer of good wishes*. Overall, among all the strategies used within each group, this strategy was used 4% by the North Americans, 20% by the Indians and 11% by the Spaniards. The following two figures (17 & 18) show the distribution of the wishes across the groups with regard to the variables power and social distance. The data indicates that when the power of the addressee is high (+P), the Indians seem more likely to express wishes and when the power is equal (=P), wishes are the least likely to be expressed. For the North Americans and the Spaniards a different trend appears as they are both more probable to express wishes when the addressee's power is low (-P). More than half of the North American wishes (53%) and 44% of the Spanish ones were expressed when the power was low. For the Indians, 41% of their wishes were expressed when power was high (+P). Regarding SD, although the Indians employ this strategy more often, the trend is similar in all of the groups since wishes are more likely to be expressed in situations of medium social distance (MSD). For all the groups, around half of the wishes were expressed when the social distance was medium (see Figures 17-18).

Figure 17. *Power and wishes among the groups (raw frequency)*

Figure 18. *Social distance and wishes among the groups (raw frequency)*



4.3.2 Contrasting Situations

In situations where the event involved a strong element of achievement, such as winning a golf tournament/marathon or getting promoted at work (situations 1, 3 & 7, see Appendix V) there were more expressions of validation among the North Americans than among the Spaniards and the Indians. Although among the Spaniards, in these three situations, expressions of validation were part of the top three strategies, they were low in percentage (see Table 24). As mentioned earlier, the Indians seemed to be more consistent throughout the different situations in their use of strategies by alternating IFID, MO and *offer of good wishes*. If we accept the premise that a validation is showing the feeling of approval and acceptance, then this might confirm Lewis' theory about reactive cultures being accommodating and proper by resorting to strategies that do not involve showing feelings, such as IFID, MO and *offer of good wishes* (see Section 2.2.1).

In addition, situations 2 and 8 both dealt with weddings but the difference between them was the level of addressee power. Although in both situations the strategy *offer of good wishes* was the most popular among the Indians, it was not expressed in the same way. What seems to be an Indian English formulaic phrase 'happy married life' was expressed 19 times in situation 2 and only four times in situation 8 and this might have been due to the addressee power which was lower. Thus, it might mean that 'happy married life' might be more common in more formal contexts when the power of the addressee is high. In other words, this might be an indication

that the Indians seem to give some importance to the power of the addressee. Hence, this seems to corroborate previous research on politeness and face regarding HC cultures such as India (see Section 2.3.1). Nevertheless, more research needs to be done in order to draw any conclusions. In addition, in these two situations, the strategy of *offer of good wishes* was one of top three strategies only in situation 8. In this situation, almost half of the North American wishes (43%) concerned good luck wishes compared to only one Indian (7%).

Related to the topic of wedding is engagements in situation 4 which concerned the significant other's sister's engagement party. This situation was different from situations 2 and 8 in terms of both *power* and *social distance* as there was equal power and high SD. For the North Americans, these variables seemed to make little difference since the two most popular strategies chosen were the same in all three situations; MO and IFID. The third most frequent strategy was a shared third place between two strategies; either *assess situation positively/specific questions* (situation 2), *personal happiness/offer of good wishes* (situation 4) and *assess situation positively /offer of good wishes* (situation 8). This was the second time that this strategy was part of top three for the North Americans indicating that wishes might be more popular in contexts of weddings and engagements for the North Americans. In these situations, the Americans had made wishes 13 times and 3 of these (23%) concerned good luck wishes, and the rest wished for happiness or general *all the best* wishes. The data for Spaniards also seemed to indicate that wishes are more common in contexts of weddings and engagements as this strategy was part of top three in all of these three situations. However, the Spaniards were significantly more likely than the North Americans to use wishes in these situations (see Table 24). In situation 4, nine Indians used wishes, this time, however, the formulaic phrase *happy married life* was only used twice, which might have been due to the addressee power which was equal.

Furthermore, another possible pattern seemed to indicate that Indians use wishes more frequently when the situation regards a new beginning of some sort, such as weddings, engagements, pregnancies or buying a new house. However, when dealing with achievements, they were more inclined to use MO than wishes. In situations of achievements (1, 3 & 7), the Indians were more than twice as likely to use MO than wishes (42% and 19% respectively). Nevertheless, in all other situations, wishes were more than twice as likely to be used than MO (70% and 32%, respectively).

Two of the situations in the DCTs were child-related and there was no difference in the power level between the addressee and speaker (situations 5 & 6). The variable that differed was social distance which was medium in situation five and low in situation six. The North Americans were more likely to use expressions of feelings than the Indians. These expressions included *assessing the situation positively*, *expressions of surprise* and *personal happiness* (see Table 24). Among the top three strategies employed by the North Americans in situations five and six, IFID was used once and it was the only strategy that did not involve showing feelings. For the Indians, strategies expressing feelings were only used twice and these were: *assessing situation positively* and *personal happiness*. The rest were IFID, MO and *offer of good wishes* for the Indians. The Spaniards employed the same strategies as the North Americans when expressing feelings but they did so four times and the other two were IFID. These results could imply that Lewis's descriptions regarding communication patterns among Indians, which are described as not concealing feelings of joy, need to be studied further since the data in this study seems to suggest that Indians seem less willing to express feelings (see Section 2.2.1).

Regarding titles, the Indians used the more formal titles *sir* eight times and *mam'/ma'am* six times throughout the different situations. Five of the *sirs* and all six *mams* were used in situations 1-3 where the power of the addressee was higher. Connecting these findings with previous research on politeness and face where HC cultures such as India tend to be considered

societies which give importance to power distances, then it might explain the use of these titles in these situations by the Indians. However, it might have been expected that these titles would have been used more often since they have only been used in 12% of the responses. However, as previous research has shown, there might be a generational difference in the use of these kind of formulas (see Section 2.4).

Finally, one of the findings in this study seemed to indicate that depending on how the felicity situations were presented to the speaker, the strategies chosen varied. When the felicity was presented directly by the addressee, MO was not used as frequently as when it was presented indirectly to the speaker. For instance, in situation number one, the speaker is informed by somebody else that the new CEO (the addressee) has won a golf tournament. Hence, the speaker has been given the news indirectly. In this situation, 67% of all the respondents in all of the groups used MO when congratulating. However, in situation six, the speaker is told by his/her sister that she is pregnant, thus the speaker is directly informed about the felicity situation by the addressee (the sister). In this case, only 8% used MO. This is important methodologically speaking and should be taken into account when developing DCTs. This was, however, not taken into account when writing the DCTs, especially since none of the previous research consulted seemed to highlight its importance.

5. Conclusion

While the speech act of congratulation exists in all three groups, the patterns that are used in response to the news of another person's good fortune may vary greatly. With regard to Elwood's taxonomy of congratulations (2004), the data helped identify new strategies that were used by all the groups, such as MO and some strategies that were only used by one or two groups, such as *be careful*. Moreover, there were some strategies that had been identified by Elwood that were not used whatsoever, such as *request for advice*.

Four patterns were found to be the most basic types of congratulation responses, namely: IFID, MO, *offers of good wishes* and *assessing situation positively*. Overall, the most common strategy among all groups was IFID. Nevertheless, there were significant differences among the groups especially between the North Americans and the Indians. For the North Americans and the Spaniards, MO was the second most common strategy. However, for the Indians, MO was the third most common strategy as *offer of good wishes* came in second place. Expressions of happiness came in third place for the North Americans and the Spaniards; however, the North Americans were more likely to assess the situation positively and the Spaniards were more likely to express personal happiness. The use of IFID and *assessing the situation positively* agrees with findings in previous studies regarding the most common congratulation strategies employed by North Americans (Elwood 2004). Furthermore, and in accordance with Elwood's (2004) findings, *Offer of good wishes* was not part of the North Americans' top three strategies; it was, however, quite common among the Spaniards who used it almost as frequently as expressions of personal happiness. Nonetheless, when wishes were expressed by the North Americans and the Spaniards, these were mainly expressed in situations of weddings or engagements. For the Indians, however, wishes were more likely to be expressed in situations connected with *new beginnings* such as weddings, engagements, pregnancies and buying a new house. In addition, the data showed that there seems to be an Indian formulaic phrase to provide wishes in situations of weddings, namely, *happy married life*.

When it comes to the variables power and social distance there were some situations that seemed to indicate that these might have an impact on the choice of strategy. For instance, the North Americans and Spaniards seemed more willing to use expressions of happiness when power was equal and SD was low. However, for the North Americans, power did not appear to be an influencing factor when they assessed the situation positively, and, for the Spaniards, when they expressed personal happiness. Thus, despite previous research indicating that LC

cultures depend less on context, this study might have indicated otherwise, as social distance seemed to have an impact for when these strategies were applied. Similarly, regarding the Indians, the data seemed to suggest that context variables might play a role when strategies are used, especially when expressing wishes since they were more likely to express wishes when the power of the addressee was high. The data seems to indicate that the probability for a North American or Spaniard to express happiness in felicity situations is almost as high as it is for an Indian to offer good wishes. However, further research is needed in order to draw any conclusions.

This study is a contribution to a more detailed analysis of cross-cultural pragmatics. Although it might shed some light on the similarities and differences across cultures with regards to the relatively understudied speech act of congratulations, it should also be mentioned that variations of pragmatic strategies cross culturally are vast and not so constrained. The findings in this study are limited to the languages and language varieties studied and to the nine situations mentioned. One of the major limitations of this study is the lack of representativity of the participants as random assignment has not been applied and variables such as age and gender have not been studied. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to a greater population. Furthermore, seeing as only one method has been chosen to collect data, the trustworthiness of the research might be questioned. Utilizing triangulation by including more data collection methods such as informal and formal interviewing, role plays and participant observations, strengthens the validity of the analyses and interpretations. Moreover, in this study, judgments have been made regarding the data by classifying utterances as certain congratulation strategies. When judgments are made, it is important to be consistent in the way that we measure our constructs as this relates to the reliability of the data. This study has been based on one researcher's evaluations and this might have influenced the rate of consistency when measuring the constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the reliability of the study

is low. Future research should take this into consideration and involve more than one researcher to assess the data in order to increase the rate of reliability.

As mentioned earlier in this study, previous research has stated that DCTs are a highly effective research tool when “creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will likely occur in natural speech” (Beebe & Cummings 1996:80). This study provides relevant information regarding the development of DCTs, since chosen strategies seem to depend on how the felicity situations are presented to the speaker. When the felicity was presented directly by the addressee, some strategies were not as frequently used as when it was presented indirectly to the speaker. This is, as mentioned earlier, important methodologically speaking and should be taken into account when developing DCTs. Furthermore, age is another aspect that should be taken into account in DCT procedures as some cultures might choose different strategies and/or terms of address/titles depending on the age of the addressee.

From a wider theoretical perspective, in order to improve and facilitate communication across cultures it is important to study speech acts as these are realized differently across cultures. These differences, which might stem from socio-cultural and sociolinguistic distinctions, have an impact on communication when people from different cultures interact. Through the studies of speech acts, we can gain more insights into social and cultural aspects of a language. These findings could be used in teacher training programs for second language teachers in order to help learners enhance their knowledge of the appropriate use of speech acts in the target language. Enhanced pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence is important not only to avoid possible communication errors but also to promote and ease interaction between speakers of different language backgrounds.

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Appendix I: The English DCT

Cross-cultural Analysis of Congratulations

Dear participants

This master thesis seeks to gain an understanding of how congratulations are expressed in two different varieties of English (American and Indian) and Peninsular Spanish. The main aim is to examine the differences and similarities of these strategies.

Instructions: Please read the following questions. After questions 6-14 you will be asked to write a response in order to congratulate a person. Please respond as naturally as possible and try to write your response as you feel you would say it in the situation and make sure all questions are answered before clicking done. The data will be used for research purposes only and in ways that will not reveal who you are.

1. Are you male or female? Male/female/Other/I do not want to say	2.How old are you? 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 years or above	
3.What is your native language? (language of the area you grew up in, could be plural)	4. What's your nationality?	5.Do you use English on a daily basis? Yes/no

6. Situation 1

You are the Chief Financial Officer at a multinational and have just been informed that you are having a one-on-one meeting with the new CEO, whom you've never met before. You have also been told that it's her birthday. What do you say to congratulate her?

7. Situation 2

You are an employee at a company and you have been informed that your employer got married recently. In the corridor at work, you see your employer and you want to congratulate him. What do you say?

8. Situation 3

Your boss, who is also your friend, calls you into her office and tells you that she's just been promoted. What do you say to congratulate her?

9. Situation 4

Your significant other's sister is throwing a birthday party. It's the first time you're meeting her. What do you say to congratulate her?

10. Situation 5

While working in your office Mr. X, with whom you are not close, enters and wants to speak with your colleague who is currently away on business.

You say: He's away on business, can I take a message?

Mr. X: I wanted to tell him my son was just born!

You want to congratulate Mr. X, what do you say to him?

11. Situation 6

Your sister tells you that she is going to have a baby for the first time. The baby is due this summer! What do you say to congratulate her?

12. Situation 7

You are the CEO of a company. You are about to hire an employee and it is the final stage of the recruiting process where two candidates get to have a one-on-one meeting with you. You are about to interview one of them and notice on their CV that it's their birthday. What do you say to congratulate the candidate?

13. Situation 8

You are a teacher and you've just found out that one of your students is getting married this summer. You run into him in the corridor. What do you say to congratulate him?

14. Situation 9

You are the CEO of a small family business. Your employee, who is also your friend, has just told you they have bought a new house. What do you say to congratulate him?

Thank you for participating! Should you have any questions, feel free to email me:

h18kimav@du.se

Appendix II: The Spanish DCT

Análisis Transcultural de Felicitaciones

Queridos participantes

Esta tesis de master busca obtener comprensión sobre cómo se expresan las felicitaciones en dos variedades diferentes de inglés (americano e indio) y español de España. El objetivo principal es examinar las diferencias y similitudes de estas estrategias.

Instrucciones: por favor lea las preguntas que se plantean a continuación. En las preguntas 6-14 se le pedirá que escriba una respuesta con el fin de felicitar a una persona. Por favor responda de la manera más natural posible intentando ponerse en la situación que se le plantea. La información será utilizada únicamente con fines investigativos y de manera que no se revele la identidad de los participantes.

1. ¿Es usted hombre o mujer? Mujer/Hombre/Otros/Prefiero no contestar	2. ¿Cuál es su edad? 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 años o más	
3. ¿Cual es su lengua nativa? (idioma de la zona en la que creció, pueden ser varias)	4. ¿Cuál es su nacionalidad?	12. ¿Utiliza el español en su día a día?

13. Situación 1

Estas al cargo del Departamento Financiero en una multinacional y acabas de ser informado de que tendrás una reunión a solas con la nueva Directora General, a la que no conoces. También te han dicho que hoy es su cumpleaños. ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

14. Situación 2

Trabajas para una empresa y te han informado de que tu jefe se ha casado recientemente. En la empresa, te encuentras con el jefe en el pasillo y quieres felicitarle. ¿Qué le dirías?

15. Situación 3

Tu jefa, que a su vez es tu amiga, te llama a su oficina para contarte que le acaban de ascender. ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

16. Situación 4

La hermana de tu pareja está celebrando su fiesta de cumpleaños. Es la primera vez que vas a conocerla. ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

17. Situación 5

Mientras trabajas en la oficina, entra el Sr. X, con el cual no tienes una relación cercana. Está buscando a tu compañera, la cual no está en la oficina en este momento.

Tú: Está fuera por negocios. ¿Quieres dejarle algún mensaje?

Sr. X: ¿Quería decirle que mi hijo acaba de nacer!

Quieres felicitarle. ¿Qué le dirías?

18. Situación 6

Tu hermana te dice que está embarazada por primera vez. ¡El bebé nacerá este verano! ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

19. Situación 7

Estas al mando de una empresa. Estas al final del proceso de selección para contratar un nuevo empleado, donde debes reunirte a solas con cada uno de los dos últimos candidatos. Estás a punto de reunirte con uno de ellos, y descubres en su CV que hoy es su cumpleaños. ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

20. Situación 8

Eres profesor/a y te has enterado de que uno de tus alumnos se va a casar este verano. Te encuentras con el en el pasillo. ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

21. Situación 9

Estas al mando de una pequeña empresa familiar. Tu empleado, que a su vez es tu amigo, te dice que ha comprado una casa nueva. ¿Qué le dirías para felicitarle?

¡Gracias por participar! Si tiene cualquier pregunta, no dude en contactarme:

h18kimav@du.se

Appendix III: The Pilot Study's English DCT

Study on Speech Acts: Congratulations across Cultures

Instructions: Please read the following questions. After questions 4-7 you will be asked to write a response in order to congratulate a person. Please respond as naturally as possible and try to write your response as you feel you would say it in the situation. The data will be used for research purposes only.

1. Are you male or female? () male () female	2. What's your nationality?	3. How old are you?
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4. While waiting for the bus, you see a friend you haven't seen in a long time.

You: Hey, how are you? How is everything with you?

Your friend: Well, the big news is that I got married three months ago!

What do you say?

5. You are an employee at a company and you have been informed that your employer got married recently. At noon, you see your employer and you want to congratulate him/her. What do you say?

6. You work in an office. You see the janitor of the office.

You: Hey, haven't seen you around much lately. How have you been?

Janitor: Well, my child was born three days ago!

What do you say?

7. While working in your office Mr. X, with whom you are not close, enters and wants to speak with your colleague at the same office.

Your colleague tells you: Mr. X's child was born yesterday.

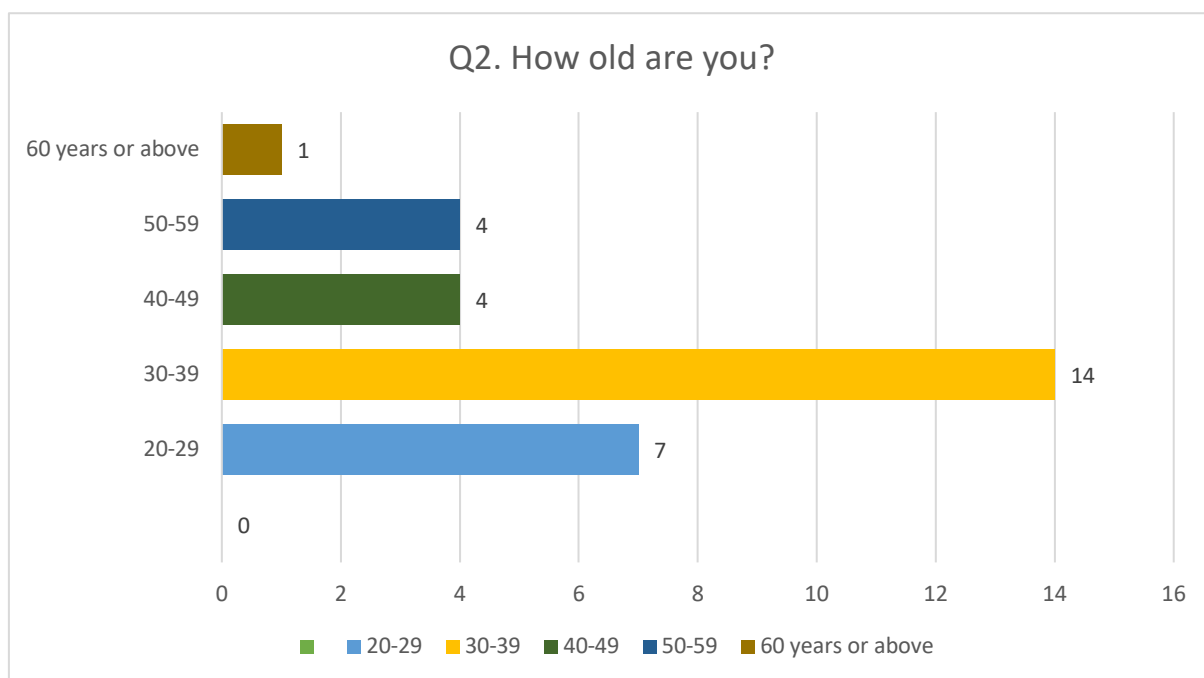
What do you say to Mr. X?

Thank you for participating! Should you have any questions, feel free to email me:

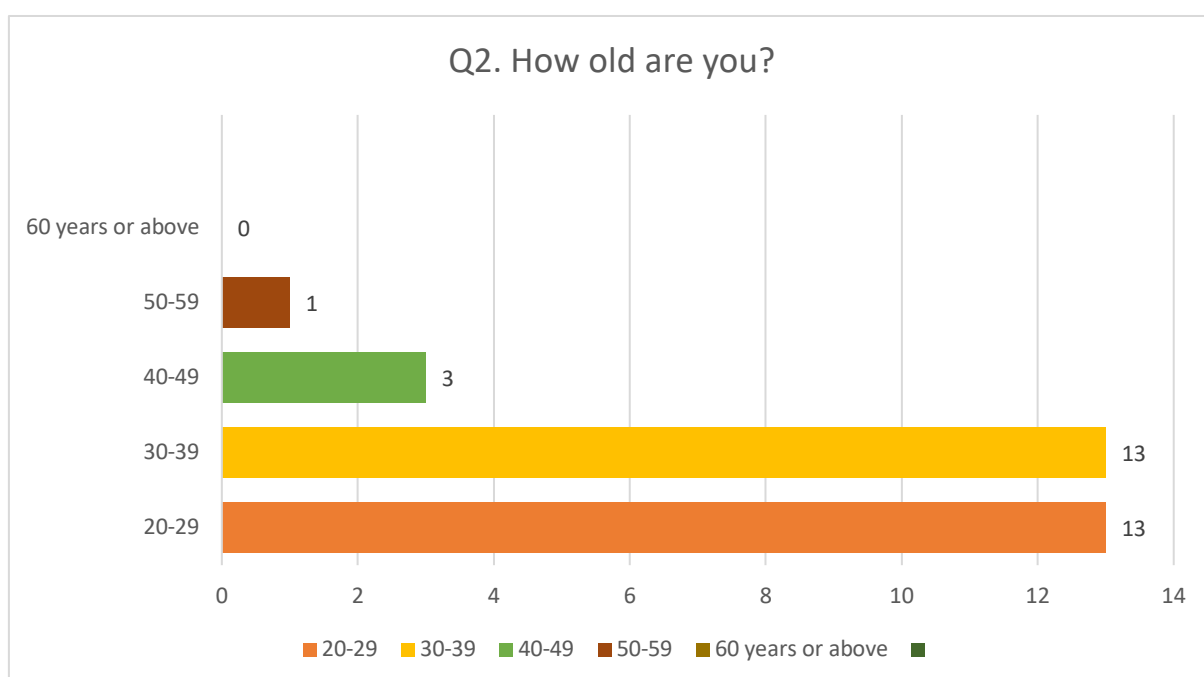
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Appendix IV: Age distribution among participants

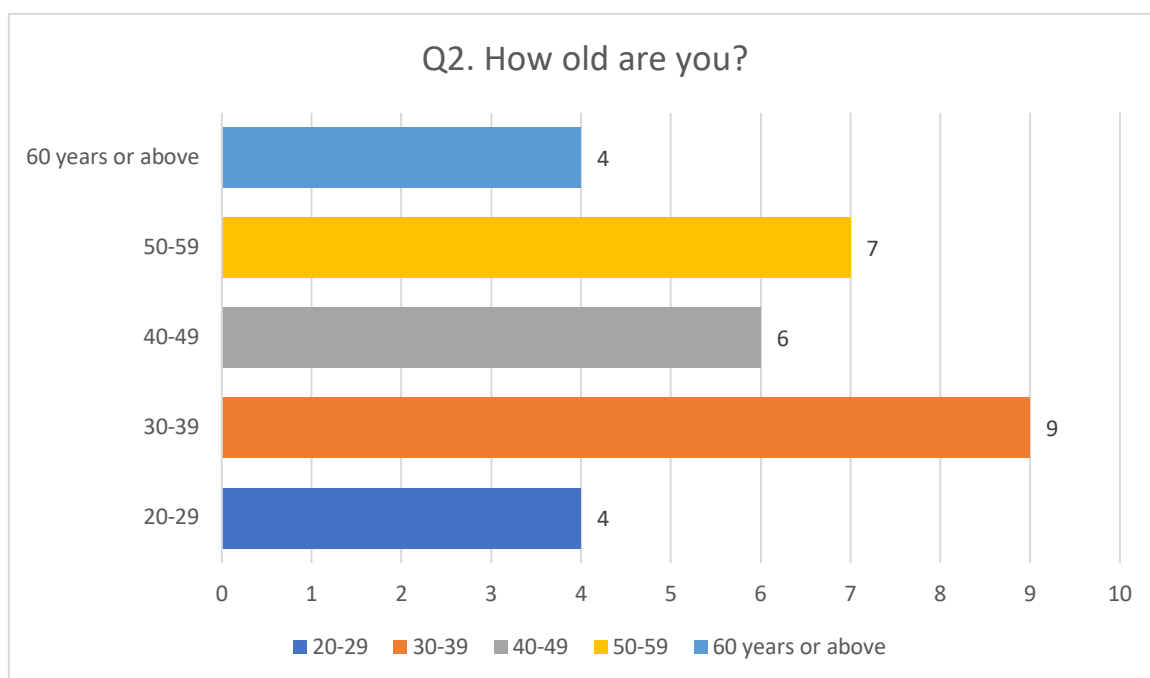
North Americans



Indians



Spaniards



Appendix V: DCT Situations

Situation 1 - New CEO wins amateur golf tournament

You are the Chief Financial Officer at a multinational and have just been informed that you are having a one-on-one meeting with the new CEO, whom you've never met before. You have just been told that she won a golf tournament for amateurs over the weekend. What do you say to congratulate her?

Situation 2 - Employer's wedding

You are an employee at a company and you have been informed that your employer got married recently. In the corridor at work, you see your employer and you want to congratulate him. What do you say?

Situation 3 Boss-friend promoted

Your boss, who is also your friend, calls you into her office and tells you that she's just been promoted. What do you say to congratulate her?

Situation 4 - Significant other's sister's engagement

Your significant other's sister is throwing an engagement party. It's the first time you're meeting her. What do you say to congratulate her?

Situation 5 - Mr. X's newborn

While working in your office Mr. X, with whom you are not close, enters and wants to speak with your colleague who is currently away on business.

You say: He's away on business, can I take a message?

Mr. X: I wanted to tell him my son was just born!

You want to congratulate Mr. X, what do you say to him?

Situation 6 - Sister pregnant

Your sister tells you that she is going to have a baby for the first time. The baby is due this summer! What do you say to congratulate her?

Situation 7 - Candidate wins marathon

You are the CEO of a company. You are about to hire an employee and it is the final stage of the recruiting process where two candidates get to have a one-on-one meeting with you. You are about to interview one of them and your secretary tells you that the candidate won a marathon the other day. What do you say to congratulate the candidate?

Situation 8 - Student's wedding

You are a teacher and you've just found out that one of your students is getting married this summer. You run into him in the corridor. What do you say to congratulate him?

Situation 9 - Employee-friend's new house

You are the CEO of a small family business. Your employee, who is also your friend, has just told you they have bought a new house. What do you say to congratulate him?