Performance of the speech Acts of condolence and congratulations to Iraqi and lebanese students as a English foreign language

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A B S T R A C T

It is often observed that students mostly fail to recognize and produce certain illocutionary acts, particularly congratulation and condolence. A lot of studies have demonstrated that failure in the performance of these speech acts are mainly due to the inability of learners to identify the suitable meaning and to produce the suitable form. Thus, the study intends to detect Iraqi and Lebanese EFL students' performance of these two speech acts , arriving at the reasons behind this failure. The study hypothesizes that both groups find recognizing condolence and congratulation easier than producing them. In addition, students' failure is ascribed to the influence of LI culture and their lack of pragmatic and linguistic knowledge. To achieve the aims of the study, a test of two questions (recognition and production) has been designed and administered to two samples of Iraqi and Lebanese EFL fourth-year college students to detect their abilities in recognizing and producing the speech acts of congratulation and condolence.

Keywords*:* *Pragmatics , Pragmatic Failure, Speech Acts Theory, Expressives, Condolence Congratulation*

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Both *Condolence* and *Congratulation* are expressive speech acts, as they are often employed to reflect the
speaker's feeling and emotion towards certain social issues. They are speech acts that express the speaker's feelings about themselvesor the world (Searle 1976: 12). Norrick (1978: 279) specifies that expressive speech acts express psychological conditions, and thus not beliefs or intentions, which arise to given states of affairs. Taavitsainen and Jucker(2010: 159),define expressives as expressing the state of mind, the attitudes, and the feelings of speakers , uttering phrases such as:*Okay, sorry about that*.

Mostly, people are often called upon to express sympathy at somebody's death. Condolence speech act is used to express the speaker's sorrow at the news of someone's death(Lotfollahi and Rasekh, 2011) .Like other types of speech acts, condolence cannot be meaningfully studied in isolation from the context and culture. This speech act is also different from culture to culture. That is, in many situations, outsiders to a given culture may not know what is appropriate to say.

Likewise, an act of congratulation simply allows the speaker to share in the experience and feelings of the addressee. In this humane sense congratulating is a friendly gesture which strengthen sties between individuals and makes life more pleasant (Norrick, 1978: 286). It is defined as "to express pleasure to (a person) on the occasion of success or good fortune";   "to express sympathetic pleasure at (an event)"; and "to express salute or greet". The following sentences exemplify the definition (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary ,2003: 262):

The Problem

Iraqi and Lebanese students' suffering from the problem of using the speech acts of condolence and congratulation might be considered an obstacle for efficient and effective communication. Furthermore, they seem to lack social and cultural knowledge coupled with the issuance of situations including the utilization of speech acts. There is no doubt that lacking such knowledge is even a crucial factor that handicaps the communication of the students. In some cases they might use their L1 norms and principles to understand and perform the illocutionary acts, and this is due to the interference of the two cultures in addition to the fact that the students do not have sufficient practice whereby they can encounter situations in the target language .This statement is emphasized by Hurley's (1992: 260) who confirms that pragmatic failure stems from unfamiliarity with values, attitudes, beliefs, and social norms and conventions, and having communicative competence in the target language should be one of the important tasks in the foreign language teaching classroom.

They often resort to formulaic expressions to express condolence and congratulation.In other words, this work is initiated to answer the following questions.

(i)   What are the points of difficulty both groups of students face in recognizing and producing the speech acts of condoling and congratulating?
(ii)   Which speech act (condoling or congratulating) seems to be more difficult for both Iraqi and Lebanese College students?
(iii) Which students (Iraqi or Lebanese) find more difficulty in handling these two speech acts ?

Aims

The study intends to achieve the following objectives :
1. Identifying the pragmatic level of Iraqi and Lebanese EFL College students in recognizing and using the speech of condoling and congratulating found in different situations.
2. Detecting points of difficulty and errors committed by both groups of students in handling these speech acts .
3. Identifying the major linguistic factors and reasons behind the difficulties and errors those students face, with the aim of finding remedial solutions and offering some pedagogical recommendations.

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that
1- Iraqi and Lebanese students' failure to identify and produce the speech of condoling and congratulating is due to the pragmatic factors which are attributed to the influence of L1 culture and insufficient linguistic knowledge.
2- Lack of syntactic and semantic knowledge may also lead to difficulty and failure in handling condolence and congratulation.

Procedures

The following steps will be followed in this study:
1. Presenting a survey of pragmatics in general and the speech act theory in particular, focusing on introducing the pragmatic , semantic and syntactic bevahioursof the speech acts of condoling and congratulating in the literature available .
2. Constructing   a   test   which consists of two parts: recognition and production implying the utilization of the illocutionary acts of condoling and congratulating
3. A sample of 100 of Iraqi and Lebanese EFL college students (50 students for each group) of the fourth year classes , College of Arts is selected to be the subjects of the study.
4. Administering the test items(of recognition and production) to both the Iraqi and Lebanese subjects of the study to elicit their responses.
5. Analyzing the students′ responses to identify the linguistic areas of difficulty and failure.
    6.Analyzing the results of the responses to arrive at general conclusions, some pedagogical recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Limits

The study is limited to the investigation of the speech acts of condoling and congratulating asrecognized and produced by Iraqi and Lebanese EFL students. The sample of the study consists of two groups : 50 fourth year Iraqi EFL students at the Department of English Language and Literature , College of Arts, Al-Mustansiriya University, and 50 fourth year Lebanese students at the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts , Islamic University of Lebanon, during the academic year 2016-2016.

Value

The present study is of benefit to people interested in the study of linguistics as it offers aspects related to evaluating the recognition and production levels of the Iraqi and Lebanese college students. The difference between the Iraqi and Lebanese students might be beneficial to pinpoint points of strength and weakness in both Iraqi and Lebanese educational systems, and thus finding ways of improving educations in both countries. In addition, it might be of some importance for instructors who are engaged in teaching English, as it attempts at showing the factors leading to students' pragmatic failure while handling the speech acts of condoling and congratulating. Thus, it gives opportunities for instructors and teachers to identify points of difficulty and overlap when learners try to communicate in spoken situations.

Rationale of the Topic

This topic has been selected for the following purposes:
1. Speech acts theory is one of the important topics which plays a great role in comprehending and using language in context.
2. Speech acts are actions given by both teachers and students in every day actions. Often, teachers use these acts to persuade students, condole them, congratulate them, urge them towards taking an action …etc. They constitute a vital part of everyday classroom teaching.

3. Pragmatic knowledge provides students with the ability of how to use languagein real situations; knowledge above the sentence level, i.e. enabling students to encounter linguistic means in real authentic contexts related to everyday activities.

4. Students' difficulty and failure to perform tasks related to the speech acts of condoling and congratulating might give teachers insights into how to deal with pragmatic issues .

Methodology

The researcher uses a descriptive quantitative method in his research to describe and analyze the data analysis. The data are collected from responses given by the Iraqi and Lebanese college students on the test (including recognition and production questions concerning the speech acts of condoling and congratulating)administered to them during the first term of the academic year 2016-2017.

After presenting a survey of the classifications of speech act categories (of Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1976 and Bach and Harnish 1979), the researcher concentrates on the two involved speech acts of condoling and congratulating. A two-foldtest consisting of recognition and production is constructed to be administered to the testees. The data analysis is based on the pragmatic investigation of the students' answers on the test. Results analysis is made in terms of statistical means used for measuring students' number, type and percentage of errors committed by the students.

As a technique for doing research, the researcher in this study has followed the coming steps. First, he introduces pragmatic, semantic and syntactic definitions and classifications of the speech acts of condoling and congratulating, after presenting general view on the concepts of pragmatics and speech acts theory. Second, he constructs a representative test of two parts involving the recognition and production of the speech acts of condoling and congratulating. Fourth, he collects the sheets of the tests to analyze the pragmatic performance of both Iraqi and Lebanese college students to arrive the obtained results. Finally, a number of conclusions and pedagogical recommendations and suggestions for further research are put forward.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is mainly concerned with language users in their social context instead of limiting itself to the grammatically encoded aspects of contexts. The users of language as social beings communicate and use language in terms of society's premises. Based on this social perspective, Mey (2001, p. 6) maintains that "pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society". Udofot (1998, p. 127)adds that knowledge of pragmatics helps us to "interpret not only the literal meaning of an utterance but also the meanings that derive from the norms of formality and politeness that exist in the society where the language is used as well as the shared meanings that derive from the shared previous knowledge of the speaker and hearer and the situation in which the utterances are used".

Pragmatic Failure

Guanlian (2002,p. 195) affirms that pragmatic failure occurs "when the speaker uses grammatically correct sentences, but unconsciously violates the interpersonal relationship rules, social conventions, or takes little notice of time, space and addressee″. In cross-cultural communication pragmatic failure in occurs "under the following four circumstances" (Ziran and Xinren, 2004, pp. 52-7):

a. The speaker chooses an inappropriate topic. Different cultures usually have different beliefs, value views and living habits. Therefore, people need to distinguish between free and constrained topics in intercultural communication.

b. The speaker uses expressions which have different implications in the target language, or which deviate from his own intention in producing such utterances. This kind of pragmatic failure commonly happens in greetings. Besides, misuse of fixed expressions in the target language also gives rise to misunderstanding.

c. The utterance made by the speaker to express a certain idea does not conform to the convention of the target language. Since people with different cultural backgrounds tend to use different expressions and strategies to convey the same information, they tend to commit pragmatic failure while speaking a language other than their mother tongue.

Speech Acts Theory

Speech act theory is concerned with the" role of communication" performed by people; particularly, in their "functions and actual acts" (Taylor, 1978, p.357). This theory is initiated in Austin's book *"Doing Things with Words"* in (1962) and based on his ideas which are formulated in the Speech Acts Theory. This theory is a direct refusal to logical traditions which place truth conditions as dominant phenomenon to language understanding. Nunan (1999, p. 131) defines speech acts, as "simply things people do through language, for example, apologizing, complaining, instructing, agreeing and warning". Searle (1969, p. 16-17)

Condolence

Naturally, people are often called upon to express sympathy at somebody's death. Death of a loved one can bring with itself a state of deep sorrow, grief, shock, and numbness" (Parkers, Laungani, & Young, 1997). Condolence means "acknowledging a loss, showing sympathy, or empathizing with someone. Humans are emotional beings and one can see this emotionality in every-day communication". Condolence is employed to express the speaker's sorrow at the news of

someone's death (Lotfollahi and Rasekh, 2011). Like other types of speech acts, condolence cannot be meaningfully studied in isolation from the context and culture. This speech act is also different from culture to culture. That is, in many situations, outsiders to a given culture may not know what is appropriate to say.

Congratulation

According to Austin (1962), congratulation is an expressive speech act which is utilized to express a manifestation of attitudinal disposition. It is often used to refer to" expressions of attitudes or reactions towards the past conduct, fortunes or attitudes of others; they are expressions of feelings and psychological states". Socially, congratulation is a "friendly gesture which strengthens between individuals and makes life more pleasant Congratulation is intended "to express pleasure to (a person) on the occasion of success or good fortune"; "to express sympathetic pleasure at (an event)"; and "to express salute or greet" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003, p. 262).

Pragmatics: Historical Background

The term "Pragmatics" is etymologically derived from the Latin word 'Pragmaticus' which means "skilled in business especially in law". It goes back to the Greek term 'pragmaticos' which means "practical and active"(OED, 1989: *s.v.pragmatics*). Generally, pragmatics is used to refer to "the study of the way in which language is used to express what somebody really means in particular situation, especially when the actual words used may appear to mean something different" (OALD, 2010: *s.v. pragmatics*). Morris (cited in Levinson, 1983, p. 1) recognized the key poles of this discipline when he distinguished three main branches of linguistic studies:
   1. **Syntactics** (syntax) which studies the formal relations between signs.
   2. **Semantics** which studies the relations between signs and their objects (referents).
   3. **Pragmatics** which studies the relations of signs to interpreters.

Definition of Pragmatics

Essentially, People often mean more than they say when communicating through language, and there is often a gap between what the speaker means and what the utterance or sentence means. Hence, pragmatics is concerned with "meaning in the context of language use".For instance, the utterance *"Can youpass the salt?"* is often used in a restaurant context to means   a request for the salt and not simply a question about ability? The interpretation of this utterance is derived in terms of the context in which this utterance is inserted.

Method Adopted

The researcher uses a descriptive quantitative methodin his research to describe and analyze the data analysis. The data are collected from responses given by the Iraqi and Lebanese college students on the test (including recognition and production questions concerning the speech acts of condoling and congratulating)

After presenting a survey of the classifications of speech act categories (of Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1976 and Bach and Harnish 1979), the researcher concentrates on the two involved speech acts of condoling and congratulating. A two-fold test consisting of recognition and production is constructed to be administered to the testees. The data analysis is based on the pragmatic investigation of the students' answers on the test. Results analysis is made in terms of statistical means used for measuring students' number, type and percentage of errors committed by the students. As a technique for doing research, the researcher in this study has followed the coming steps. First, he introduces pragmatic, semantic and syntactic definitions and classifications of the speech acts of condoling and congratulating, after presenting general view on the concepts of pragmatics and speech acts theory.

Sample

The term *sample* is used to refer to a small portion of people selected for observation and analysis   (Best and Kahn, 1987 cited in Noviant, 2002, p. 22). The sample of this research consists of two groups: (1) 50 fourth-year students, (of the whole population of the two classes 134 students of morning and evening Classes) morning studies in the Department of English, College of Arts / Al-Mustansiriyah University and (2) 50 fourth-year students (of the whole population 103 students) ,morning studies in the Department of English, College of Arts/Lebanese University (of the whole population 111 students) Both samples are representative of their populations; the former constitutes 48.53%, while the latter forms 45.04%. The reason behind selecting fourth – year learners is that they are supposed to acquire good knowledge concerning pragmatic and socio-pragmatic behavior, particularly the concept of speech acts, as they experience such topics in Linguistics and Grammar courses. All students are native speakers of Iraqi and Lebanese Arabic and their average age is twenty two years. These are the conditions of "homogeneity of the sample" (Corder, 1981, p. 71).

Validity

The validity of a test is concerned with what the test measures and how well it does so. The typical technique of estimating this factor is through statistical correlation with other related measures (Brown, 1987, p. 22). Another method is to find out how the test is evaluated as a measuring instrument for its specific purpose by exposing it to expert educationalists. This procedure should yield convincing and verifiable evidence that the test accurately and sufficiently measures the testes for the particular purpose it is designed to address (Harrison, 1983, p. 11).

Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 21) describe validity as the "extent to which the conclusions are applicable to a large population drawn from specific sample". Likewise, Tyler (1963. P. 28) considers validity as "the most important consideration in the construction and use of the test". Thus, the test is valid when it is accurate in measuring what it is ought to measure. (Tyler, 1963, p. 26; Ebel, 1972, p.435; Heaton, 1975, p. 153)

Reliability

Reliability is strongly connected with objectivity, but reliability is not exactly the same thing as objectivity. By reliability is meant the stability of the scores obtained from a test. The rules are then the more objective a test, the more reliable it is. The test is reliable if the accuracy and stability of the scores are trustful and consistent. One method of estimating test reliability is test-retest. That is, the chosen sample is exposed to the test twice within two weeks.

Reliability is a necessary characteristic of any good test. For a test to be valid at all, it must first be reliable as a measuring instrument (Heaton, 1975, p. 155). It is a general quality of stability of scores regardless of what the test measures. Thus, a test cannot be valid unless it is also reliable, for any unreliable test does not measure what it is supposed to measure well.

Lado (1964, p.330) affirms that reliability has to do with the stability of scores for the same individuals. So, if the scores of the students are stable, the test is reliable and if the scores tend to fluctuate for no apparent reason, the test is then unreliable.

A reliable test is a test that is both consistent and dependable (Harris, 1969, p. 14). Two types of reliability are important: scorer reliability and test reliability. Scorer reliability is used in situations when the scoring of tests involves subjectivity, such as with essay tests, short answer tests and oral tests (Gall et al, 2005, p. 150). Test reliability means the consistency with which a test measures the same thing all the time (Harrison, 1983. P. 11).

The matter of generalizability also plays a major role in test reliability to the extent that one can have confidence that performance on a particular test will carry over to non-testing contest. (Carter and Nunan, 2001, p. 280).

For the purpose of obtaining the reliability by the split-half method, the researcher applies the test to the same samples twice (Iraqis and Lebanese students). After collecting the data, the correlation – coefficient factor is made through the test, using Person Correlation – coefficient formula, the Correlation – coefficient is found 92% between the first test and the second test. This means that the test is reliable. The Correlation – coefficient formula is represented by the following :

$$R = \frac{N.EXY - EXEY}{\sqrt{[N.EX^2 - (EX)^2 \ [N.Ey^2 - (Ey)^2]}}$$

Where:

N = the number of student in the sample
EX = the sum of X scores
EY = the sums of Y scores
EX2 = the sum of squares of X scores
EY2 = the sum of squares of Y scores
EXY = the sum of the product Y scores for each student (Lado, 1964, p. 336)

The testees are informed that the test is intended to measure their linguistic performance of the topic in question in order to motivate them to do their best. Finally, the researcher explains the instructions of the test to the testes in Arabic when this is needed in order to make sure that they have understood these instructions.

Statistical Tools

This section presents a description for the test by using equations to find out the results in each domain. The aim is to know the points of difficulty and to affirm suggestions for those who are concerned with education (students, teachers and curriculum designers).

The analysis in this section is done by using statistical formulas which are used to reveal the points which the test aims at such as :

1. Item difficulty (ID) : which is measured by applying the following formula :

$$\text{Item difficulty} = \frac{Number \ of \ wrong \ answers}{Number \ of \ students}$$

2- Item simplicity (IS): which reveals the ease of an item by using the following formula:

$$\text{Item simplicity} = \frac{Number \ of \ correct \ answers}{Number \ of \ students}$$

Both Item difficulty and Item simplicity have been applied to arrive at the percentages of the correct and incorrect answers the students have made in both recognition and production questions.

3- Pearson's correlation coefficient is the covariance of the two variables divided by the product of their standard deviations. This formula has been used to measure the reliability of the present test as represented in:

$$R = \frac{N.EXY - EXEY}{\sqrt{[N.EX^2 - (EX)^2 \; [N.Ey^2 - (Ey)^2]}}$$ (Lado, 1964, p. 336)

4- Chi- square formula is used to reveal the comparison between two variables in a contingency table to see if they are related. In a more general sense, it tests to see whether distributions of <u>categorical variables</u> differ from each another. This formula has been used to show equalization between Iraqi and Lebanese students in terms of certain variables, such as age , gender, etc. This formula is represented in:

$$\chi_c^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where O is the observed value, E is the expected value and "i" is the "ith" position in the contingency table.(Best and kahn, 1987, p.77)

Data Analysis

Responses of Iraqi and Lebanese students to the two questions (recognition and production) have been collected to be the data of the study.That is, data analysis involves two levels recognition and production.

Recognition Level

This section presents the students' responses to the recognition question which includes 10 items concening the students' capability of the recognition of the two speech acts: congratulation and condolence . The ten item in question 1 are introduced as follows:
Item 1: I hope you make a swift and speedy recovery.
Item 2: I am so glad you won the prize.
Item 3: I sympathesizeyou on the death of your father.
Item 4: I will be thinking of you in this moment of pain.
Item 5: I wish you lots of happiness in your new home
Item 6: On her birthday, I say to Diana '' Happy Birthday ''.
Item 7 : Words cannot even begin to express our sorrow.
Item 8 : We are very sorry to hear about your loss.
Item 9: I wish you the best of luck and every success in your job.
Item 10 :*Our thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time of loss.*

Table (2) Recognition of Congratulation (Iraqi students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	18	36%
2	38	76%
5	33	66%
6	38	76%
9	39	78%
Total	166	66.5%

Table (3) Recognition of Condolence (Iraqi students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
3	41	82%
4	32	64%
7	29	58%
8	32	64%
10	41	82%
Total	175	70%

Table (4) Recognition of Congratulation and Condolence (Iraqi students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	18	36%
2	38	76%
3	41	82%
4	32	64%
5	33	66%

6	38	76%
7	29	58%
8	32	64%
9	39	78%
10	41	82%
Total	341	68.2%

To give a clearer picture of Iraqi students' responses to the recognition of Congratulation and Condolence , the following figure reveals the students' correct answers with their percentages.

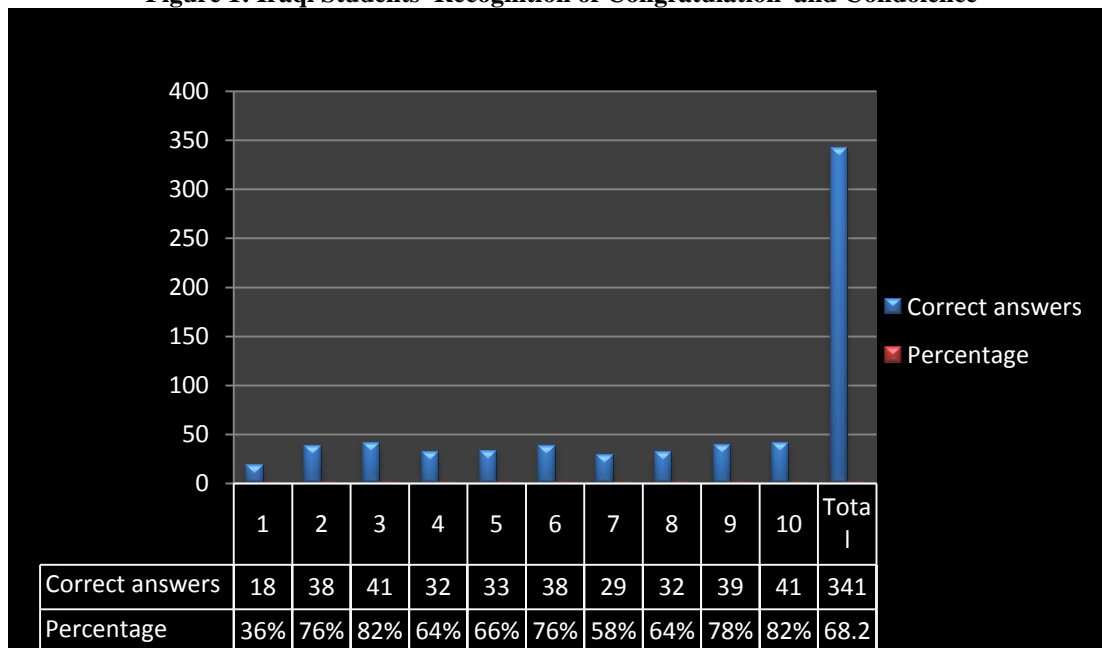**Figure 1: Iraqi Students' Recognition of Congratulation and Condolence**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Correct answers	18	38	41	32	33	38	29	32	39	41	341
Percentage	36%	76%	82%	64%	66%	76%	58%	64%	78%	82%	68.2

Table (5) Recognition of Congratulation (Lebanese students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	20	40%
2	40	80%
5	33	66%
6	42	84%
9	38	76%
Total	173	69.2%

Table (6) Recognition of Condolence (Lebanese students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
3	46	92%
4	43	86%
7	39	78%
8	38	76%
10	46	92%
Total	212	84.8%

Table (7) Recognition of Congratulation and Condolence (Lebanese students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	20	40%
2	40	80%
3	46	92%
4	43	86%
5	33	66%
6	42	84%
7	39	78%
8	38	76%
9	38	76%

10	46	92%
Total	**385**	**77%**

Lebanese students' answers to the recognition question can be more obviously presented in Figure 2, shown below:

Figure 2: Lebanese Students' Recognition of Congratulation and Condolence
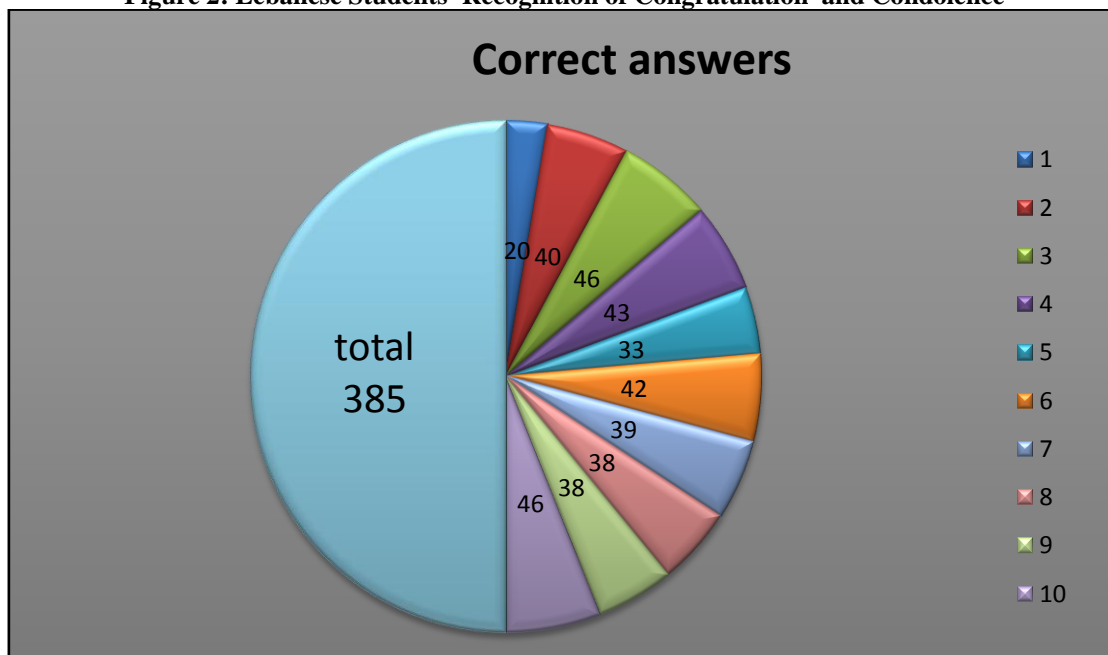
4.3 Production Level

This section is devoted to the presentation of the students' responses in the production question in which they are required to produce utterances implying the use of the two speech acts of congratulation and condolence. The the analysis of each item in terms of its number of the occurrences and percentages , attempting to find reasons or justification for the correct choice of each item are presented as follows.

Item 1: On the death of your dearest friend.
Item 2: Condole your eldest brother who has lost his son.
Item 3: Your uncle has recently got married.
Item 4: Your sister birthday is today.
Item 5: You hear that your aunt has lost all her money.
. Item 6: You are at a funeral and you meet the mother of the dead.
Item 7: Your cousin has lately passed her exam.
Item 8: Usama and Dalal have a new baby.
Item 9: Your brother's friend died.
Item 10: Your friend has got the scholarship to France.

Table (8) Production of Condolence (Iraqi students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	23	46%
2	26	52%
5	25	50%
6	26	52%
9	29	58%
Total	**129**	**51.6%**

Table (9) Production of Congratulation (Iraqi students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
3	45	90%
4	40	80%
7	40	80%
8	33	66%
10	24	48%
Total	**182**	**72.8%**

Table (10) Production of Condolence and Congratulation (Iraqi students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	23	46%
2	26	52%
3	45	90%
4	40	80%
5	25	50%
6	26	52%
7	40	80%
8	33	66%
9	29	58%
10	24	48%
Total	311	62.2%

Iraqi students' correct answers concerning the production of congratulation and condolence can be obviously shown in Figure 3.

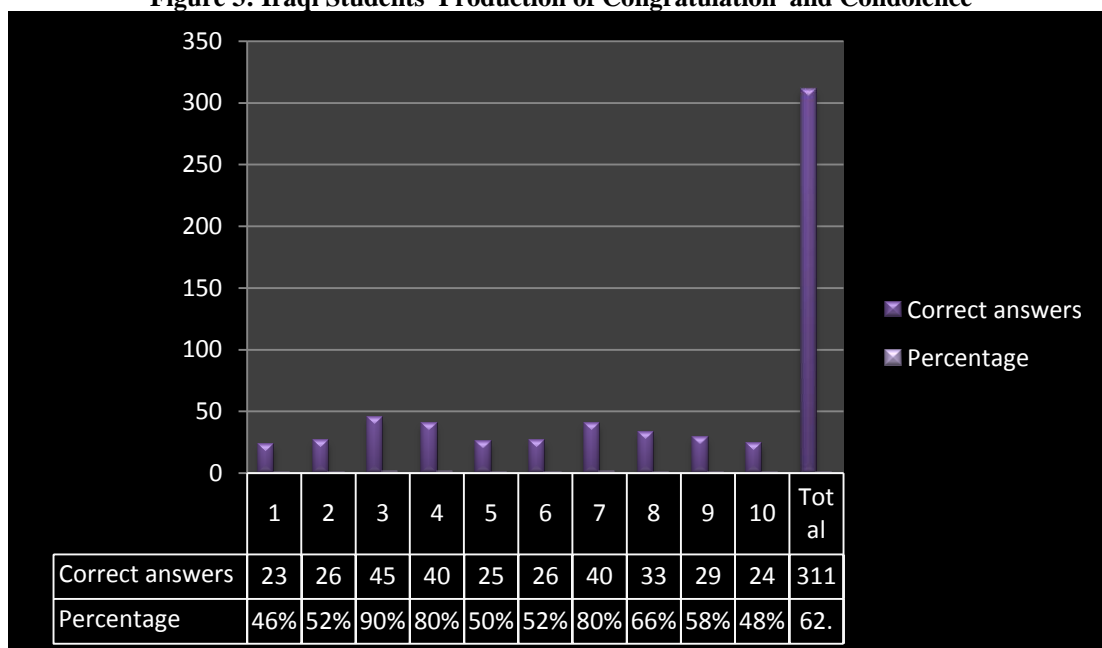**Figure 3: Iraqi Students' Production of Congratulation and Condolence**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Correct answers	23	26	45	40	25	26	40	33	29	24	311
Percentage	46%	52%	90%	80%	50%	52%	80%	66%	58%	48%	62.

Table (11) Production of Condolence (Lebanese students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	49	98%
2	47	94%
5	40	80%
6	47	94%
9	46	92%
Total	229	91.6%

Table (12) Production of Congratulation (Lebanese students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
3	50	100%
4	50	100%
7	48	96%
8	49	98%
10	49	98%
Total	246	98.4%

Table (13) Production (Lebanese students)

Item No.	Correct answers	Percentage
1	49	98%
2	47	94%
3	50	100%

4	50	100%
5	40	80%
6	47	94%
7	48	96%
8	49	98%
9	46	92%
10	49	98%
Total	475	95%

Lebanese students' of producing congratulation and condolence can be more obviously presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Lebanese Students' Production of Congratulation and Condolence

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Correct answers	49	47	50	50	40	47	48	49	46	49	475
Percentage	98%	94%	100	100	80%	94%	96%	98%	92%	98%	95%
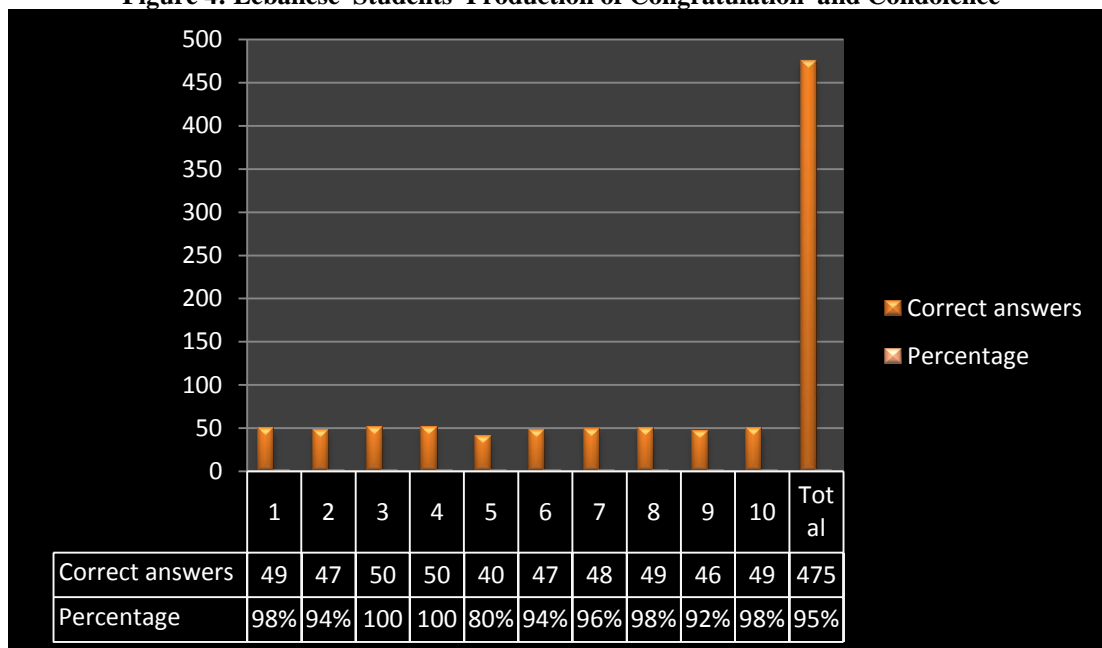
Results Discussion

It is essential to assign types of difficulties Iraqi and Lebanese students encounter in recognizing and producing both the speech acts of congratulation and condolence. One main type is that learners may transfer their L1 norms to L2 norms and end up with what Thomas (1983, p.94) calls "pragmatic failure", which occurs when two languages work under different social and cutlural conventions and principles . In this respect, pragmatic competence involves a complex set of unrelated factors, both linguistic and socio-cultural. This kind of knowledge is very difficult for non-native speakers to acquire. Language learners fail to follow the socio-cultural regulations that govern language behavior in the target language

(pragmatic failure).The existence of pragmatic failure can be ascribed to two reasons:

A. Learner's lack of linguistic means to convey his or her pragmatic knowledge, and
B. Cross-culture different as to what constitute appropriate cultural behavior.

Conclusions

With reference to the results obtained in chapter four, the following conclusions are postulated:

1. Generally speaking, Iraqi EFL college students' performance of recognizing the speech acts (of condolence and congratulation) is better than that of producing them, whereas Lebanese students' find it easier to produce these speech acts than recognizing them. This partially validates hypothesis No 1.

2. In particular, both Iraqi and Lebanese students find the recognition of condolence is easier than the recognition of congratulation. For the production level the opposite is true, that is, the production of congratulation for both groups is better than that of condolence. This is something related to the students' familiarity with such expressions used for expressing congratulation. This can partially verify hypothesis No. 1.

3. Overall, Lebanese students are better than Iraqis in both the recognition and production of congratulation and condolence. Perhaps, Iraqi students are more influenced by the linguistic realizations of the speech acts than by the contextual factors surrounding the issuance of these two speech acts. The undergraduate students have serious

problems at the recognition and production levels in the sense that their abilities in this regard are clearly limited to the syntactic and semantic behavior rather than the pragmatic behavior of an utterance.

4. Some inappropriate responses of both Iraqi and Lebanese undergraduate students have shown that students associate the performance of congratulation with greetings (as they overlap) more than with other speech acts.

5. The poor linguistic performance of the students of both groups is ascribed to the interference of the native language. Some of the utterances given by the students are direct translations of Iraqi or Lebanese cultures and societies used for expressing congratulation and condolence.

6. Iraqi and Lebanese students' pragmatic failure (when trying to recognize and produce congratulation and condolence) is mainly attributed to their lack of both socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge. That is they lack the social and cultural norms and principles of the target language, therefore; they resort to their native social and cultural norms and convention to solve problem found in the target language. This verifies hypothesis No 2.

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