THE SPEECH ACT OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSE AS REALIZED BY YEMENI ARABIC SPEAKERS: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL
Ph D Research Scholar
Dept. of Linguistics
University of Kerala, **INDIA**
&
Teaching Faculty,
English Language Department,
Faculty of Education, Thamar University,
Republic of Yemen. B.O. Box: 87246
YEMEN

ABSTRACT

A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication such as apology, request or compliment. The present paper is a sociolinguistic study which attempts to investigate the compliment responses employed by Yemeni Arabic speakers. For the purpose of the study, data were collected through the use of written Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs hereafter) introduced by Herbert in (1989), with four situational settings. A total of 45 students from different universities in Yemen participated in the study. Findings revealed that the group employed a variation in the use of strategies responding to compliments elicited by situational settings. In this study, the researcher tried to find out the types of complement responses used by speakers of Yemeni Arabic variety. Since the participants were males and females, he tried to find out the types of compliment responses preferred by both gender. He concluded his study by looking at the similarities and differences between males and females when responding to compliments given in the form of questionnaire. The researcher found out that the males and females of Yemeni Arabic variety did not use all types of compliment response strategies such as "Comment History" type. However, both genders preferred the "Appreciation Token" and "Return" types of compliment response.

Keywords: compliment, compliment response, speech acts, Yemeni Arabic speakers

1. Introduction

Compliments and compliment responses may vary greatly across speech act communities (Holmes, 1990). Every society has its own worldview that is reflected in their language. Their general behavior in compliments and compliment responses also vary from culture to another. In the United States, for example, the act of complimenting has become a common phenomenon since it occurs in a very wide variety of situations and serves so many functions, such as complimenting, thanking, apologizing and so on.

The phenomenon of studying compliments and compliment responses has undoubtedly been one of the most intriguing topics in synchronic linguistics in the last three decades. There have been a large number of studies published on this topic since the early 1970s (Herbert, 1989; Holmes, 1986) by researchers from various subfields of linguistics (e.g. pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and ethnography of communication). Most of these studies have attempted to establish explanatory links between linguistic choices and sociocultural integrative processes. That is to say, they attempted to explore how the former invokes and at the same time is shaped by the latter.

Herbert (1997) argues that "compliment events, compliment and compliment response, provide interesting information on sociocultural values and organization" and "the topics of compliments reveal the values which are positively regarded within some particular society". The main function of complimenting behavior, according to Manes and Wolfson (1981), is "to create or reinforce solidarity by expressing appreciation or approval". They indicate that the formulas of other speech acts such as greetings, thanks and goodbyes are "overtly taught, whereas compliments are not". They think that compliments have more functions than other speech acts. Hatch (1992) sees the conversational structure of compliment response sequences as a speech event that "includes not just the speech act utterance but also the entire compliment interaction". Generally, the existing studies of the field focus mostly on compliment and responses. The present study is aimed to explore how native speakers of Yemeni Arabic respond to compliments and make the follow-up moves.

2. Review of Related Literature

The first researcher who discussed compliment responses from a pragmatic perspective was Pomerantz in (1978). She claimed that Americans face two dilemmas when responding to compliments. First, they have to agree with the speaker. Second, they have to avoid self-praise. Urano (1998) further explains this dilemma by stating that when a recipient of a compliment responds by agreeing with the speaker, it violates to avoiding self-praise as this response goes against the sociolinguistic expectations of the speaker. On the other hand, if the speaker does not accept the compliment to avoid self-praise, the response will be face-threatening since it violates the first condition. To mediate this conflict, recipients of compliments resolve to a variety of solutions: (1) Acceptance, (2) Rejection, and (3) Self-praise avoidance.

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   2 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Nelson et al. (1993) investigated Egyptian and American compliments using both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Extended interviews were conducted with 20 Egyptian and 20 American university students. Egyptians were interviewed in Arabic in Egypt and Americans were interviewed in English in the United States. Major findings suggest that both Egyptian and American compliments tended to be adjectival, both frequently compliment personal appearance. Egyptian compliments appeared to be longer than American compliments and contain more comparatives, references to marriage and metaphors; Americans tend to compliment more frequently than Egyptians; Egyptians tend to compliment personality traits, whereas Americans tend to compliment skills and work; and both Egyptians and Americans prefer direct rather than indirect means of complimenting.

Farghal and Al-Khatibb (2001) provides a preliminary analysis from a pragmatic and sociolinguistic point of view of compliment responses in Jordanian Arabic as they are used by Jordanian college students. As in a number of other speech communities, the gender of the speaker in Jordanian society seems to be a crucial parameter in the formulation and acceptance or rejection of a compliment.

Al Falasi (2007) conducted a study which aimed at finding out whether Arabic learners of English, United Arab Emirate (UAE) females in particular, produce target like compliment responses in English and whether pragmatic transfer can occur. Discourse completion and interviews were utilized to study the strategies employed when responding to compliments by native speakers (NSs) and Arabic nonnative speakers (NNSs) of English. Findings suggest that Arabic, first language (L1), expressions and strategies were sometimes transferred to English, second language (L2). Her study also indicates that UAE female learners of English transfer some of their L1 pragmatic norms to L2 because they perceive these norms to be universal among languages rather than being language specific. Her study also shows that Arabic NNSs of English have some misconceptions about NSs that affect the way they respond to their compliments.

A number of contrastive studies have been conducted to compare compliment responses in different languages and language varieties. Arabic and South African English speakers were found to prefer accepting compliments rather than rejecting them. Speakers of Asian languages, on the other hand, were likely to reject compliments (Urano, 1998). In a study about the compliment responses between Chinese learners of English and American, Chen (1993), found out that the majority of Chinese NNSs of English rejected compliments, compared to the American NSs who accepted and appreciated those compliments.

Cedar's (2006) contrastive study of compliment responses used by Thai NNSs of English and American NSs of English revealed significant differences in responses to English compliments between the two groups. While Americans tended to accept compliments and

elaborate positively in their responses, Thai NNSs of English refrained from elaborating and used formulaic expressions in their responses. Cedar's explains this by stating that "the English conversational competence of Thai subjects was not developed enough to express their feelings of positive elaboration".

Previous studies have given us some lights on the pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistics aspects of complimenting behavior in many cultures, particularly on the compliment response strategies and pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2. This study will base on these literature and findings and explore a little bit more on the possible follow-ups of the responses, particularly, on the compliment response strategies utilized by Yemeni Arabic speakers, in addition to, exploring the similarities and differences between genders.

3. Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory is largely attributed to the British philosopher John Austin (1962) who claims that many utterances, termed performatives, do not only communicate information, but are equivalent to actions. Austin was one of the first modern scholars to recognize that words are in themselves actions. He defines speech acts as "all the things we do with words when we speak". For example, we use language to apologize, to order, to warn, to compliment, to threaten, to request and so on. Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts.

Austin (1962) classifies speech acts into five groups including: "verdicatives" (giving a verdict), "expositives" (fitting utterances into the course of an argument or conversation), "exercitires" (exercising power, rights or influence), "behabitatives, (demonstrating attitudes or social behavior), and "commissives" (promising or otherwise undertaking). One problem of this taxonomy, however, is that the categories are not mutually exclusive and they often overlap according to (Reiter, 2000).

Searle (1969), Austin's student, explains that speech acts are performed in real situations of language use. Therefore, the underlined assumption in speech act theory is that the minimal unit of human communication is the performance of certain kinds of acts or functions.

Searle (1979) provides a classification of speech acts according to their functions. He proposes five categories including "directives", "calmatives", "representatives", "declaratives" and "expressives". The focus of this study is categorized as "expressive". This is the case where the speaker expresses disappointment, joy, like, dislike, etc.

3.1 Universality versus Culture-Specificity of Speech Acts

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   4 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

When it comes to linguistic behavior like speech acts, the issue of universality versus culture-specificity has been of great interest to pragmatics. Some scholars claim that speech acts operate by universal principles of pragmatics (e.g., Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1975, 1979), by which communicative interaction between speaker and addressee is governed, as well as by some general mechanisms such as principles of cooperation (Grice, 1975) or of politeness.

The issue of universality versus culture-specificity in speech act studies is still hotly debated. Typical of this debate is the opposing views of Searle (1975) and Wierzbicka (1991). For example, Searle (1975), supporting Austin's (1962) claim that speech acts are semantic universals and hence not culture-bound, maintains that across languages and cultures, there are general norms for realizing speech acts and conducting politeness behavior, and that while the forms embodying these norms may vary from one language to another, the cross-cultural differences are not that important. However, Wierzbicka (1991), providing examples from Polish and Japanese, objects to this universalistic stand and contends that choosing circumstances for performing certain speech acts is based on cultural norms and values rather than on general mechanisms. She argues that any existing claims to universality in speech act behavior are necessarily subjective and ethnocentric.

4. Questions of Study

This study attempts to find out the ways the Yemeni Arabic speakers use when responding to the compliments given by the researcher in the form of a questionnaire. The following three questions are what the researcher is going to investigate in this research.

1. What are the types of compliment responses used by Yemeni Arabic speakers? Do Yemeni speakers of Arabic use all types of compliment responses introduced by Herbert (1989)?

2- What are the types of compliment responses preferred by Yemeni males and females when responding to compliments? Do they follow a specific order of preferences?

3- What are the similarities and/or differences between males and females of Yemeni Arabic variety when responding to compliments?

5. Significance of Study

This study is meant to shed some light on the communicative strategies inherent in compliment responses among males and females of Yemeni Arabic variety. The present study may be helpful for readers to understand the relationship between language and society since the data given are the compliment responses used in four situations and have heterogeneous participants and topics. The researcher finally hopes that this study will be

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL 5P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3 www.puneresearch.com/english MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

useful for other researchers who intend to conduct further studies about compliment responses among Arab societies.

6. Limitations of the Study

The data obtained from DCTs may not provide a fully authentic picture of what the subjects have actually said in real-life situations. Nevertheless, the data should be able to reflect the norms which the group of target subjects keeps to. Weizman (1989) points out that DCTs "provides us with evidence of what the informants believe people would typically utter in a given situation". Besides, since the responses are presented in written forms, the phonological aspects can not be discussed.

7. Categorization of Herbert's Compliment Response Types (1989)

1. Agreements
  M: You have a nice jacket?
  F: Thanks/ Thank you.
	8. Disagreement
	  F1: Nice haircut.
	  F2: Yeah, I look like Buster Brown.
	  M: Those are nice shoes.
	  F: They hurt my feet. **9. Qualification**

2. Comment Acceptance
  F1: I like your hair long.
  F2: Me too. I'm never getting it cut short again.
  M1: I like your jacket.
  M2: Yeah, it's cool.
	F1: Your portfolio turned out great.
	  F2: It's alright, but I want to retake a picture.
	  M: You must be smart. You did well on the test.
	  F: Not really. You did better.

3. Praise Upgrade
  F: I like that shirt you're wearing.
  M: You're not the first and you're not the last.
	10. Question/ Question Response
	  M1: Nice sweater
	  M2: You like it?
	  M1: Yeah
	  M2: Why?

4. Comment History
  F1: I love that outfit.
  F2: I got it for the trip to Arizona.
	M1: It's a nice color.
	  M: That's a nice sweater.
	  F: Do you really think so?

5. Reassignment
  F: That's a beautiful sweater.
  M: My brother gave it to me.
	11. No Acknowledgement
	  M1: That's a beautiful sweater.
	  M2: Did you finish the assignment for today?

6. Return
  F: You're funny.
  M: You're a good audience.	

7. Scale Down
  F: That's a nice watch.
  M: It's all scratched up. I'm getting a new one.
	12. Request Interpretation
	  F: I like your shirt.
	  M: You want to borrow this one too?

The frameworks of compliment response categorization by Herbert (1989) and Pomerantz (1978) have been widely used with or without adaptation. For example, in order to contrast compliment responses by British and Spanish university students, Lorenzo-Dus (2001) adopted Herbert's (1989) taxonomy but used only the following compliment response types: compliment acceptance, comment history, return, praise upgrade, and reassignments. In the present study, the researcher adapted Herbert's model and tried to apply the twelve types of compliment responses used by Herbert, but the formation of the four situations were developed by the researcher.

8. Methodology

8.1 Design

As Golato (2003) puts it, ''DCTs are better suited to the study of 'what people think they would say' than to the study of 'what people actually do say' in a given speech setting''. In order to facilitate the discussion, the researcher has categorized the data into four situational settings relating to four different topics: skill, appearance, possession and ability. The data that the researcher received from the subjects are on Yemeni Arabic variety of Arabic language and then the researcher transcribed these data and translated them into English language.

Situation one: skill

You wrote an article in the newspaper and in the next day *your teacher* met you and said "I have read your article. It is very great. You are a skillful writer". What is your response to his/her compliment?

Situation Two: appearance

You bought a new uniform for the new school year and in the first day of study a *colleague* met you and looked at your uniform and said "You look handsome wearing this uniform". What would be your response to his/her compliment?

Situation Three: possession

After you finished all your studies, you became a teacher and you bought a luxurious car. One day, you gave a lift to one of *your student*s. When s/he approached his /her house, s/he said "You have a nice car my teacher". What would be your response to his/her compliment?

Situation Four: ability

After you finished all your final exams, you took your results and found out that you got the first place over your classmates. When *your brother/sister* saw your results, s/he said to you "You have made a great success over all your colleagues, you have great abilities". What would be your response to his/her compliment?

8.2 Subjects

Data were collected from a group of Yemeni students in different departments such as English language, Arabic language, History, Business Administration, Physics, Computer Science, Islamic Studies and Mathematics, at different Yemeni universities (Sana'a, Aden, Taiz University, Ibb, Al Hodaidah) and some others are Yemeni students were studying at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, Jeddah). Participation in this survey was voluntary. The sample included 30 males and 15 females (mean age 22). The respondents were relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background and academic/ linguistic experiences.

8.3 Instrument of Data Collection

Data of this study were collected through a controlled elicitation method based on a questionnaire which is a modified version of DCTs used in (Herbert 1989). This type of questionnaire enabled the researcher to reach large number of respondents and statically control variables and analyze data accordingly. The questionnaire included four hypothesized situations. For each situation, subjects were instructed to fill in with what they would say in each of the four contexts. The respondents were asked to put themselves in real situations and to assume that in each situation they would say something in their Yemeni dialect and not in the Standard Arabic. Participants were asked to write down what they would say.
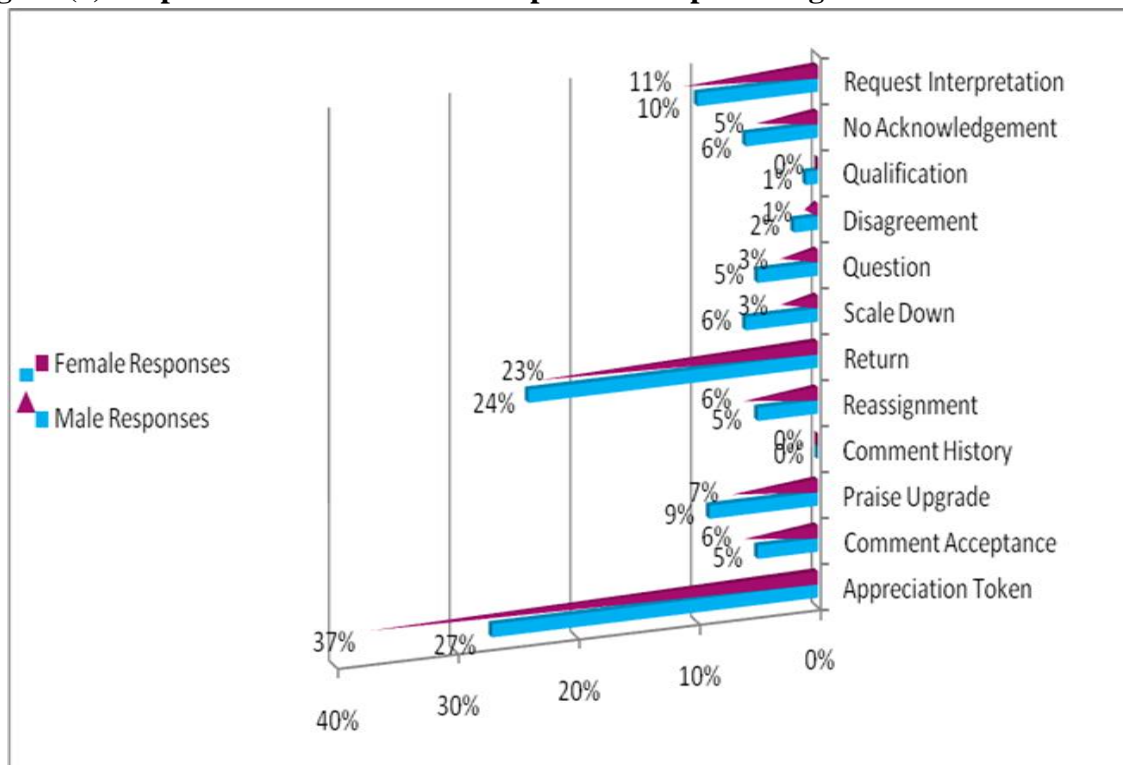
9. Analysis and Findings

Table (1) and figure (1) below serve some functions. At the outset, in the analysis of the findings, the researcher found out that Yemeni Arabic speakers do not use all the twelve types of compliment responses introduced by Herbert. For example, in "*Comment History*" compliment responses, none of the Yemeni gender used them at all. The researcher also found out that the compliment responses used by Yemenis are lengthy and this was found in a study carried out by Al Falasi (2005) in her study "Just Say Thank You" on UAE females: That is due to a general understanding that the longer the response to a compliment, the more sincere it is. Also, it was found that the combination between two types of responses occurred mostly in the responses provided by Yemenis and this what was found in a study conducted by Farghal & Al-Khatibb (2001). Farghal & Al-Khatibb called these responses as "complex responses" in which they contain two or more speech acts in one response such as

"Appreciation Token" + "Return" as in /Šukran! a'yuunak_il-hilwah/ (Thanks! Your beautiful eyes).

Table (1): Responses of the 12 Compliments

No.	Compliment Type	Male Responses		Female Responses	
1.	Appreciation Token	70	(27%)	42	(37%)
2.	Comment Acceptance	14	(5%)	7	(6%)
3.	Praise Upgrade	25	(9%)	8	(7%)
4.	Comment History	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
5.	Reassignment	14	(5%)	7	(6%)
6.	Return	64	(24%)	26	(23%)
7.	Scale Down	16	(6%)	3	(3%)
8.	Question	12	(5%)	4	(3%)
9.	Disagreement	5	(2%)	1	(1%)
10.	Qualification	2	(1%)	0	(0%)
11.	No Acknowledgement	16	(6%)	5	(4%)
12.	Request Interpretation	25	(10%)	11	(10%)
	Total Responses / Percentage	**263 / (100%)**		**114 / (100%)**	

Figure (1): Representation of the 12 Compliments in percentages

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   9 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   **MAY – JUNE 2017**
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Below is a brief description for the types of *Compliment Responses* produced by Yemeni Arabic Speakers in the four situations (see 8.1). They are classified based on the 12 types of compliment responses introduced by Herbert (1989).

(Table 2): Male to Male Interaction; Situation (1)

Responses	Types
- /šukran and šukran lek/ (Thanks and thank you)	- "Appreciation Token"
- /hatha min thawgak alhilo/ (This is your sweet style.)	- "Return"
- /maškoor, Allah yehfadhek/ (Thanks, May Allah preserve you.)	- "Appreciation Token"
- /badri a'lya lesati fi altareeq/ (It is early for me, I am still in the beginning of the road)	- "Downgrade"
- /šukran lek, min thawqak, maligeet a'lya wala mulahaDah/ (Thank you! This is from your taste. Did not you find any remark about it?)	- "Appreciation Token + Return + Question"
- /hi ra'eah walakin fi itila'ak aliha asbahat mutamyezah/ (It is great but once you look into it, it becomes distinguished.)	- "Qualification"
- /ana muhattam, wela ani akbar katib fi alšarq alawsat/ (I am discouraged, otherwise, I am the greatest writer in the Middle East.)	- "Praise Upgrade"
- /hatha bas lya'ank ostathi/ (This is only because you are my teacher.)	-"Comment Acceptance"

(Table 3): Female to Female Interaction; Situation (1)

Responses	Types
- /šukran mua'alimati/ (Thanks my teacher)	- "Appreciation Token"
- /hatha min thawqik/ (This is from your good taste.)	- "Return"
- /ana saeedah lya'anha a'ajabatiki/ (I am happy because it admires you.)	- "Comment Acceptance"
- /šukran, hatha min thawqik/ (Thanks! This is from your good taste)	- "Appreciation Token + Return"
- /walakin kayf arafti inaha ra'ah/ (But how did you know that it is great?)	- "Question"

(Table 4): Male to Male Interaction; Situation (2)

Responses	Types

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL 10P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3 www.puneresearch.com/english **MAY – JUNE 2017**
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

- /hi oyoonek alhilwah/ (They are your beautiful eyes.)	- "Return"
- /bas taba'an mu awsam minek/ (But of course not more handsome than you.)	- "Downgrade"
- /almalih malih hata lo yelbas junih/ (The handsome is handsome even if he wears a bag.)	- "Praise Upgrade"
- /ana lasto waseem walakin oyoonek hi men tara kul šae jamil/ (I am not handsome, but they are your eyes that see everything nice.)	- "Qualification"
- /hamdn lillah ala hathih alna'mah/ (Thanks God for this favor.)	- "Comment Acceptance"
- /šukran jazeelen, husen andharakum/ (Thank you vey much! Your beautiful eyes)	- "Appreciation Token + Return"

(Table 5): Female to Female Interaction; Situation (2)

Responses	Types
- /oyoonik alhilwh/ (Your beautiful eyes)	- "Return"
- /abtasim/ (I smile.)	"No acknowledgement"
- /šukran, min ba'D ma endakum/ (Thanks! Part of what you have)	- "Appreciation +Return"
- /taba'an meš ahla minek/ (Of course, not more beautiful than you)	- "Downgrade"

(Table 6): Male to Male Interaction; Situation (3)

Responses	Types
- /teštariha meni? / (Will you buy it from me?)	- "Question"
- /men yeštehi alhali sabar/ (He who wants a good thing should be patient.)	- "Comment Acceptance"
- /men jed wajed/ (As you sow , so will you reap)	- "Praise Upgrade"
- /hatha min faDel rabi/ (This virtue is from my Lord.)	- "Reassignment"
- /wain alrawa'h šakl qias netharatek Ghalat/ (Where is the beauty of it? It seems that your glasses' measurement is wrong!)	- "Disagreement"
- /ya'ni almohim inha tefi belGharaD (To meet the purpose is the very important thing)	- "Scale Down"
- /šukran! oyoonek alhilwah, hatha min thawgak/ (Thanks! Your beautiful eyes. This is from your high taste)	- "Appreciation Token + Return + Return"

(Table 7): Female to Female Interaction; Situation (3)

Responses	Types
- /šukran/ (Thanks)	- "Appreciation Token"
- /ndma turideen alrkoob mareh okhra kalimini/ (When you want a ride anther time, just tell me.)	- "Request"
- /hatha bas lyʔnaki talibah najeebah/ (This is because you are a smart student.)	- "Comment Acceptance"
- /la tebaliGhi, ala kul hal šukran/ (Do not exaggerate. Anyhow,	- "Disagreement +

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   11 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   **MAY – JUNE 2017**
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Thanks)	Appreciation Token"

(Table 8): Male to Male Interaction; Situation (4)

Responses	Types
- /thaker leki tusbeh mithli/ (Study hard to be like me.)	- "Praise Upgrade"
- /asekoot/ (The silence)	- "No Acknowledgement"
- /šukran! barakat dua'a alwalidain/(Thanks! This is the blessing of parents' supplication.)	- "Appreciation Token+ Reassignment"
- /ant akhi sideq tešaja' akhok/ (You are truly my brother. You encourage your brother.)	- "Comment Acceptance"

(Table 9): Female to Female Interaction; Situation (4)

Responses	Types
- /hatha ijtihadi walhamdulliah/ (This is my hardwork and thanks God.)	- "Praise Upgrade"
- /šukran!/ (Thanks!)	- "Appreciation Token" "Reassignment"
- /hatha min fadel rabi weda'wat walidati/ (This is from God's favor and my mother's supplication.)	
- /bas anti afdel meni/ (But you are better than me.)	- "Scale Down"
- /hatha befadl tašjia'ak/ (This is due to your encouragement.)	- "Return"
- /šukran! hal kan ladiki šak min quderati/ (Thanks! Did you have such a doubt of my abilities)	- "Appreciation Token + Question"

9.1 Male Responses

In this part, the researcher investigated most of the compliment responses employed by the male speakers of Yemeni Arabic variety as shown in tables (2-9) of the four situations above. The analysis revealed that there are three compliment responses preferred by Yemeni males when responding to compliments. These are *Appreciation Token* (the addressee accepts and appreciates the compliment by saying "thank you"), *Rerun* (The complimentee reciprocates the act of complimenting by paying back the compliment to the complimenter), and *Request* (the addressee interprets the compliment as a request rather than a simple compliment). Data showed that the "*Appreciation Token*" scored the highest occurrences in males' responses and then came the "*Rerun*" strategy next. The occurrences of "*Appreciation Token*" employed by the males were 70 times in the four situations (27%), (see table 1). It means that "*Appreciation Token*" such as, /šukran/, /maškoor/ and /šukran lek/ (Thanks and thank you) is used by Yemeni males mostly rather than any other types.

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   12 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

The use of "*Return*" compliment response type such as, /hatha min thawgak alhilw/ (This is from your sweet style) and /hi oyoonek alhilwh/ (They are your beautiful eyes) by the Yemeni males occurred 64 times (24%). "*Request Interpretation*" occurred for 25 times (10%). "*Praise Upgrade*" occurred 25 times (9%) and "*No Acknowledgement*" occurred 16 times (6%). "*Qualification*" was reported two times (1%). That means the addressee may choose not to accept the full complimentary force offered by qualifying that praise, usually by employing /walakin/ 'but' as exemplified in situation (1) (see table 2). The addressee says the article is really great but it becomes greater when the other party (the teacher) looks into it /hi raya'ah walakin bitla'ak aliha asbahat mutamizah/ (It is great but once you looked into it, it becomes distinguished).

9.2 Female Responses

In this part, the researcher studied the compliment responses used by the female Yemeni speakers of Arabic variety as they can be seen in the tables (2-9) of the four situations above.

"*Appreciation Token*" seemed to be the appropriate response to the compliments by the Yemeni females. As shown in table (1), "*Appreciation Token*" type occurred for 42 times (37%). It means this type of compliment response has been used more by Yemeni females than Yemeni males and they are rated as highest occurrences for both gender.

"*Rerun*" response occurrences reported 26 times (23%), which is nearly the same percentage found with males. As for "*Request*" compliment response type, it reported (10%) and this is the same percentage registered by males when they responded to compliments. "*Praise Upgrade*" was used at (7%) in which the addressee accepts the compliment and claims that the addresser pays him insufficient compliment, so exaggeration can be noticed in the responses. "*Reassignment*" (the transfer of compliment to a third person or to the object complimented itself but not the complimenter) scored (6%).

"*No Acknowledgment*" (addressee employs the conversational turn to do something other than responding to the compliment offered) reported (4%). The Yemeni females also used "*Scale Down*" in which the addressee wants to minimize the value of the things which are complimented. "*Question*" (Some of the addressees might want an expansion or repetition of the original compliment and some other question the sincerity of the compliment) scored (3%) and "*Disagreement*" reported (1%).

Finally, "*Comment History*" and "*Qualification*" have registered a zero percentage, (see table 1). The researcher expected some of the addressees to give compliment responses using the *Comment History* type especially for situation (2) and (3). For example, it was expected to

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   13P a g e

respond to situation (2) as 'I bought it last week' and to situation (3) 'I got it several years ago'.

9.3 Gender Similarities in Using Compliment Response Strategies

The researcher found out that both genders of Yemeni Arabic variety did not use all types of compliment responses strategies introduced by Herbert (1989). The researcher noticed that they used the "*Appreciation Token*" as their first preferred strategy when responding to compliments. It was also noticed that they used the "*Return*" strategy as their second preference, "*Request Interpretation*" ranked the third and "*Praise Upgrade*" was their fourth preference.

Another similarity noticed was that the "*Comment History*" was not used at all by the respondents, males and females. As their tenth preference, males and females used the "*Disagreement*" type to respond to compliments given by the researcher and they both responded in a direct way to show their "Disagreement" to the compliment. One final remark about the similarities between males and females, the researcher found out that both genders used two types, complex compliment in replying to one compliment such as the use of "Appreciation Token" + "Return" as it appears in tables (2-9) above.

9.4 Gender Differences in Using Compliment Response Strategies

One difference noticed between males and females of Yemen Arabic was that males used the "*Qualification*" type of compliment response while the females did not. Another difference is that both gender did not use all the compliment responses in the same order. For example, "*Comment Acceptance*" type ranked the fifth preference for females; however, "*Scale Down*" was the fifth preference for males.

10. Conclusion and Recommendation

10.1 Conclusion

The results of this research cannot be generalized to all Yemeni university students, let alone all Yemeni speakers of Arabic variety. Nevertheless, it does provide some good insights into understating better the participants of language use that shape the activity of responding to compliments in Yemeni culture. The researcher has formed four situations of compliments based on Herbert's model (1989). A questionnaire was passed to 45 participants, 30 males and 15 females. Participants were Yemeni university students in different departments. Analysis of data generated through a DCTs which revealed some important results.

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   14 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

The findings of this study bring up three interesting points. The first is a question of whether Yemeni speakers of Arabic variety should apply the 12 types of compliment responses introduced by Herbert (1989). The results showed that not all compliment response strategies were employed by Yemeni speakers of Arabic variety. For males, they used 11 types of compliment response strategies and left the "*Comment History*" type behind. Yemeni females used only 10 types of compliment response strategies, however, "*Comment History*" and "*Qualification*" were not realized when analyzing their compliment responses.

The second is a question of whether Yemeni speakers of Arabic variety prefer specific types of compliment responses rather than other types. When checking the responses, it was found that Yemenis do use three types of compliment responses as their preferences. "*Appreciation Token*" ranked as number one strategy and (27%) among the males and (37%) among the females. One interesting finding about females was that, all the female addressees replied with an "*Appreciation Token*" except one participant. "*Return*" came as a second preference by Yemeni speakers, both males and females. (24%) of males replied using the "*return*" and (23%) for females. "*Request Interpretation*" ranked preference number three and (10 %) for males and (10 %) for females.

The third interesting point is about the question of whether Yemeni males and females have something in common or whether they differ when they respond to compliments. One of the astonishing similarities was that both genders did not use the "*Comment History*" compliment response type. When forming the questionnaire the researcher thought that some subjects may respond to this particular strategy, especially for situation (2 and 3) as these situations help the addressees tell when did they get their suits as with situation (2) or when did they buy their cars as with situation (3).

One more similarity is that both genders used a combination of compliment response strategies. This phenomenon is called "complex response", Farghal and Al-Khatibb (2001) and it was found when two responses take place for one compliment as in responding with "Appreciation Token + Question".

As far as differences are concerned, the researcher found out that Yemeni males used the "*Qualification*" type of compliment response while the females did not. In addition, the responses of males are longer than the responses of females in different situations. According to the view of the researcher, that is because the Yemeni society is considered one of the conservative societies and this leads Yemeni females not to elaborate more and give longer responses; meaning that the females feel embarrassed when they give longer talks.

10.2 Suggestions for Further Studies

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   15 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

The researcher expects that this research will be useful for researchers who are interested in carrying out further studies on compliments and compliment responses among Yemeni community and any other Arab society.

The main concentration for this research was on the speech act of compliment response which demands more social interaction skills. Further studies can be launched to tackle the different variables that may affect the production of this challenging speech act. Sex and age differences together should all be carefully studied in future research. Further studies should also involve larger samples and more situations to yield more valid results.

The researcher formed his questionnaire in which the interaction took place between the same gender; that is male to male interaction and female to female interaction. Therefore, further studies should be carried out to investigate the interaction across gender; that is male to female interaction.

REFERENCES

Al-Eryani, Abdullah Ali. 2007. Refusal Strategies by Yemeni EFL Learners. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 9, (2): 19-34.

Al Falasi, H. 2007. Just Say "Thank You": A Study of Compliment Responses. *The Linguistics Journal*, 2(1): 28-42.

Alfattah, Mohammed Hasan Ahmed. 2010. Apology Strategies of Yemeni EFL University Students. *MJAL*, 2, (3): 223-49.

Austin, J. L. 1962. *How to do Things with Words*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Cedar, Payung. 2006. Thai and American Responses to Compliments in English. *The Linguistics Journal,* 1 (2): 6-28.

Chen, R. 1993. Responding to Compliments: A Contrastive Study of Politeness Strategies between American English and Chinese Speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 20: 49-75.

Chen, Rong and Dafu Yang. 2010. Responding to Compliments in Chinese: Has It Changed? *Journal of Pragmatics,* 42: 1951–1963.

Davis, Briallen. 2008. "Ah, Excuse me…I Like your Shirt": An Examination of Compliment Responses across Gender by Australians. *Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication*, 1 (2): 76 - 87.

Farghal, Mohammed & Al-Khatib, Mahmoud A. 2001. "Jordanian College Students' Responses to Compliments: A Pilot Study." *Journal of Pragmatics,* 33: 1485-1502.

Golato, Andrea. 2003. Studying Compliment Responses: A Comparison of DCTs and Recordings of Naturally Occurring Talk. *Applied Linguistics*, 24, (1): 90-121.

Creese, A. 1991. Speech Act Variation in British and American English. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 7: 37-58.

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL   16 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3   www.puneresearch.com/english   MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Grice, Paul .1975. Logic and Conversation. In: Cole, P., Morgan, J. (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3: speech acts. Academic Press, New York: 41–58.

Hatch E. 1992. *Discourse and Language Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heidari, Mohammad Ali, et al 2009. A Contrastive Study of Compliment Responses among Male & Female Iranian Teenage EFL Learners. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*, issue 29: 18-31.

Herbert, Robert K.1986. Say "Thank You" or Something. *American Speech*, 61(1):76-88.

------. 1989. "The Ethnography of English Compliments and Compliment Responses: A Contrastive Sketch." In Oleksy (Ed), *Contrastive pragmatics* (pp. 3-35). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.

-----. 1990. Sex-based Differences in Compliment Behavior. *Language in Society*, 19: 201-224.

----. 1997. The Sociology of Compliment Work in Polish and English. In: N. Coupland and A. Jaworski, eds., *Sociolinguistics* (pp.487-500). London: Macmillan.

Herbert, R. K., & Straight, H. S. 1989. Compliment-rejection versus Compliment Avoidance: Listener-based versus Speaker-based Pragmatic Strategies. *Language and Communication*, 9: 35-47.

Holmes, Janet, 1986. Compliments and Compliment Responses in New Zealand English. *Anthropological Linguistics,* 28(4): 485-508.

-----, 1990. Apologies in New Zealand English. *Language in Society* 19: 155-199.

Jucker, Andreas H. 2009. Speech Act Research between Armchair, Field and Laboratory The Sase of Compliments. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41: 1611–1635.

Leech, Geoffrey 1983. *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman, New York.

Lorenzo-Dus, N. (2001). Compliment Responses among British and Spanish University Students: A Contrastive Study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33: 107-27.

Manes, J., & Wolfson, N. 1981 The Compliment Formula. In F. Coulmas (Ed.). *Conversational Routine* (pp. 115-132). The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton.

Matsuura, Hiroko. 2004. Compliment-giving Behavior in American English and Japanese. *JALT*, 26 (2): 147-166.

Nelson L.G., El Bakary, W. And Al Batal M. 1993. Egyptian and American Compliments: Across-cultural Study. Inte*rnational Journal of Intercultural Relations,* Vol. 17, (3): 293-313.

Nelson, G. L., Al-Batal, M., & Echols, E. 1996. Arabic and English Compliment Responses: Potential for Pragmatic Failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 17(4): 411-430.

Pomerantz, A. 1978. Compliment Responses: Notes on the Cooperation of Multiple Constraints. In J. Schenkein (Ed.), *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction* (pp. 79-112). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Reiter Marquez. 2000. *Linguistic Politeness in Britain and Uruguay*. Amsterdam: John

Benjamins

Searle, John R. 1969. *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---, 1975. Indirect Speech Acts. In: Cole, P., Morgan, J. (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics*, vol. 3: speech acts. Academic Press, New York: 59–82.

----, 1976. *A Classification of Illocutionary Acts*. Language and Society, 5: 1-23.

----, 1979. *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Sulasi, Sri. 2009. *The Use of Request Expression in The Film Entitled "Princess Diaries": A Socio-Pragmatics Approach*. Thesis No (C1306529): English Department of Non-Regular program. Faculty of Letters and Fine Arts. Sebelas Maret University.

Tran, Giao Quynh 2007. Compliment Response Continuum Hypothesis. *The International Journal of Language, Society and Culture* (21). Available at: http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/tle/JOURNAL/issues/2007/21-1.pdf

Umar, Abdul Majeed Al-Tayib. 2006. The Speech Act of Complaint as Realized by Advanced Sudanese Learners of English. *Umm Al-Qura University Journal of Educational and Social Sciences and Humanities*, 18 (2): 7-40.

Urano, K. 1998. *Negative Pragmatic Transfer in Compliment Responses by Japanese Learners of English*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu.

Wierzbicka, Anna, 1991. *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction.* Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.

Weizman E. 1989. Requestive Hints. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House and G. Kasper. (eds.) 1989. *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 71-95.

Yule, G. 2000. *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

AMEEN ALI MOHAMMED AL-GAMAL 18 P a g e

VOL 3, ISSUE 3 www.puneresearch.com/english MAY – JUNE 2017
(IMPACT FACTOR 2.14) INDEXED, PEER-REVIEWED / REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL