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*Mashallah...; May Allah bless you: The Sociopragmatics of Giving and  
Responding to Compliments in the Hijazi Saudi Dialect*

By

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

## Abstract

This thesis investigates the influence which sociocultural values and norms can have on performing compliment exchanges in the Hijazi Saudi dialect and show whether aspects of compliment exchanges can be correlated with social variables such as gender, age and relationship. Using the field observation method and a note-taking tool, data based on real-life interactions were gathered from various social settings in Jeddah city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A database of 390 compliments and 482 compliment responses was compiled and classified in terms of gender, age and relationship. Compliments were investigated in terms of compliment topics, syntactic patterns, directness and indirectness, and the sociocultural phraseologies used in giving compliments. Responses were categorized in terms of response strategies and their correlations with gender, age and relationship.

The examination of 390 compliments showed that compliments occurred far more frequently in same-gender exchanges than in cross-gender exchanges. *Appearance* was the most frequent topic over all on which Hijazi people gave compliments. *Appearance* was the most frequent topic used by females, whereas *performance/skill* was the most frequent topic for the males. The young group also tended to focus on the *appearance* topic, while *performance/skill* was the most frequent topic for the middle-aged and elder groups.

*(Mashallah) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (mashallah)* was the most common syntactic pattern used among Hijazi people in giving compliments. *Ijnan* 'stunning', *raw'ah/rai'a* 'wonderful', *ti'aim* 'tasty', *lazeez* 'delicious', *wala ghaltah* 'flawless', and *fakhmah* 'fancy' were the most common adjectives used in the dataset. Intensifiers such as *merrah* 'very', *haqiqi* 'really' and *harfyeen* 'literally' were top words used most frequently in giving compliments. Moreover, the findings showed that Hijazi people used explicit (direct) compliments more frequently than implicit (indirect) compliments. *Mashallah*, 'may Allah's grace be upon you', *allahuma salli ala a-nabi* 'Allah's prayers be upon the prophet', and *tabarak allah* 'bless Allah' tended to be unique markers for Hijazi speakers as the most frequent religious

expressions used in giving compliments. Hijazi speakers believe that using such ritualistic phrases will drive the evil eye away and prevent any potential threats to the complimentee's negative face.

The examination of 482 compliment responses showed that *appreciation token* ranked first as the most frequent response strategy, followed by *invocation and blessing*. The findings showed that there were other responses which occurred in the Hijazi dialect such as *evil-eye (envy) protection* and *request interpretation*. Furthermore, the results revealed that Hijazi speakers used single responses more frequently than complex responses. The *Appreciation token + return compliment* complex response was on the top preferences, followed by the *invocation and blessing + return compliment* complex response.

**Keywords:** compliment topics, compliment strategies, compliment responses, evil-eye (envy) protection, sociopragmatics

## **Dedication**

*To my amazing parents for their fervent prayers, overwhelming  
love and infinite care and support.*

*May Allah protect them and guide me to always return their love, care and  
support.*

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**Chapter One: Introduction:**  
*Rationale, Research Aims and Questions, and Geographical and Cultural  
Overviews*



### **1.1 Rationale**

Each language has a distinct set of routine expressions that speakers employ to perform various types of speech acts, such as apologies, greetings, requests and compliments (Ziaei, 2012). There is no doubt that language and culture are bound together; therefore, interlocutors will be affected by their cultural values and social norms when they communicate on different occasions. Such values and norms have been referred to as sociocultural norms and rules which permeate almost all cultures and affect, to a great extent, what people say to one another, how they act and respond to what they hear, see and feel and in what settings or on what occasions they perform the above-mentioned speech acts. Some speech acts occur in different modes one of which can be face-to-face communication. This kind of interaction becomes successful when there is a mutual understanding between the interlocutors, typically when they come from similar cultural backgrounds or share similar sociolinguistic norms and values (Huth, 2006). For instance, in a western African community, complimenting a girl on being fat is accepted as a compliment, whereas in American culture this is viewed as a kind of offence, and not a compliment at all (Rizk, 2003).

Compliments and compliment responses have been given considerable attention by linguists because these expressions not only give insights into the principles of language use of a speech community, but they also reflect the value system of speech communities (Knapp et al., 1984; Manes, 1983; Wolfson, 1984). According to Herbert (1997), the compliment event 'provides interesting information on sociocultural values and organization' (p. 497). Although compliments used by people of different cultures may show possible similarities, each culture has its own distinct social factors and norms which might be reflected in the way people interact with and compliment one another: for instance, what is complimented, who compliments whom and the linguistic form of compliments. The present intra-lingual study is believed to be the first to shed light on giving compliments and responding to them in the Hijazi Saudi dialect and is based on naturally occurring data. It focuses on the impact of social, cultural and religious norms on compliment behaviours. Social variables such as age, gender, and relationship

along with their correlations with compliment events have been investigated in this study.

Since the study is concerned with examining compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect, the researcher hopes that its findings will shed some light on some linguistic and cultural aspects which are important to the field of pragmatics. Cross-linguistic pragmatic differences between individuals might lead to failure in communication. Therefore, highlighting the cultural and linguistic features used in giving and responding to compliments in the Hijazi dialect contributes to increasing awareness of such sociolinguistic aspects and eventually decreasing any potential failure in communication. Part of communicative competence within the Saudi Hijazi context is related to learning how male and female Saudis give and respond to compliments in a socially appropriate manner. So, providing such information can serve as the basis for educational materials that will help decrease pragmatic failure. Moreover, by discussing compliment exchanges between males and females within a Saudi context, this study hopes to correct some misconceptions about social interaction between males and females in Arab and Muslim countries which mistakenly hold that such interaction is forbidden or does not exist.

This thesis also discusses the *evil eye* phenomenon and its impact on performing compliment exchanges in the Hijazi dialect. Giving and responding to compliments can be face-enhancing acts or face-threatening acts. The evil eye phenomenon plays a crucial role in threatening the interlocutors' faces in the Hijazi Dialect. In exchanging compliments, some complimenter and complimentees pay attention to each other's face in order to protect their 'face wants' from any threat. In this respect, the study showed that Brown and Levinson's 'face wants' theory, which emphasizes individuals' interactional needs, could be applied to acts of compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect. Doing so contributes, culturally and linguistically, to various sub-fields of linguistic pragmatics, including speech acts, linguistic politeness and cross-cultural studies.

## **1.2 Aims of the Study**

This thesis examines compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect in order to achieve the following aims:

- I. To investigate the performance of compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect of the Western Province of Saudi Arabia- Hijazi dialect;
- II. To examine the impact of sociolinguistic aspects on compliment exchanges in the Hijazi Arabic dialect;
- III. To explore the role and functions of sociocultural phraseologies [religious phrases, proverbs and swear words] in different complimenting settings in the Hijazi dialect;
- IV. To investigate the impact of gender, age, and relationship on compliments and compliment responses used in the Hijazi dialect.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

This study examines compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect and attempts to answer the following questions:

### **A. How do Hijazi people give compliments to each other?**

1. Which topics of compliments are used by Hijazi males and females of different ages when complimenting each other?
2. What are the syntactic patterns of compliments used by both genders and different age groups?
3. Are direct or indirect compliments more frequently used by Hijazi speakers?
4. Which the sociocultural phraseologies are most frequently used in paying compliments in Hijazi culture? [e.g., religious phrases, proverbs or swear words]

## B. How do Hijazi speakers typically respond to compliments?

1. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by Hijazi males and females when responding to compliments?
2. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by different age groups?
3. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors?

### 1.4 Background on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

This section provides a geographical and cultural overview of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including the physical properties of Saudi Arabia, the nature of Saudi people and some cultural aspects of Saudi life. This background information sets the context for the current research.

#### 1.4.1 Geographical Overview of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the most important and influential countries in the Middle East due to its geographical location and eco-political status (Saudi Geological Survey, 2017). It is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula with an area of about two million square kilometres, representing about 70% of the peninsula's area (Saudi Geological Survey, 2017). Riyadh is the capital city.



Map 1.1: Map of Saudi Arabia Showing Its Geographical Borders

(Student News Daily, 2021)

The population of Saudi Arabia is estimated to be 35,013,414 people (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). It is bordered on the north by Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait and on the east by the Arabian Gulf, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman (See map 1.1). On the south, it is bordered by Yemen and Oman, and on the west, by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba (Saudi Geological Survey, 2017).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is comprised of 13 administrative regions. Arabic is the official language, and it is spoken by the Saudi people. There are several Arabic dialects spoken in each region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, such as Najdi, Hijazi, Southern, Qasimi, and Northern dialects and others. The Hijazi dialect, the topic of the current research, is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, Sections 3.2.

#### ***1.4.2 Cultural Overview of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia***

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is regarded as the centre of the Islamic world because it contains the two holy mosques, one in Makkah and the other in Madinah, which millions of Muslims around the world visit, and aspire to visit, regularly. Makkah is the place where Muslims from all over the world must go in order to do Hajj and/or perform Umrah (pilgrimages), and Madinah is the city which encompasses prophet Mohammad's mosque and shrine.

Saudi society is a homogeneous Islamic society that is shaped and regulated by Islamic values and Arab traditions. Like most Arab societies, it is a tribal society, distinguished by the loyalty that members have toward their own families and tribes. The family and tribe function to morally support the individual (Al-Khatib, 2006, p. 273). Social life in Saudi Arabia is affected by Islamic and cultural values which call for strengthening family ties and cementing social relationships, especially among close relatives, neighbours and friends. Moreover, Saudi society is a gender-segregated society where male-female interaction is kept to a minimum, especially among strangers. This sociocultural and religious aspect will be taken into account when investigating the language used in giving and responding to compliments in cross-gender interactions in the Hijazi dialect.

Belief in the evil eye and its profound impact is common to different cultures including Arab culture (Dundes, 1981; Ross, 2010). According to this belief, someone can harm others and their possessions by looking at them with envy and wishing them bad or evil things on them, so that their good possessions will disappear or change into bad things (Sheldrake, 2004; Ross, 2010). The evil eye practice or habit is not only a physical glance, but also a psychological condition of the one who looks or strikes with an evil eye (Alqarni, 2020). In Arab culture, envy is thought to be the driving force behind the evil eye. That is why it is known as *ayn alhasood* 'the eye of the envious' (AlAmro, 2013; Rassool, 2019). Compliments can therefore be misinterpreted as acts of the evil eye. It is widely reported that prophet Muhammed said, 'The evil eye is a fact, and if anything were to overtake the divine decree and change it, it would be the evil eye' (Annisabori, 2018, p. 864). The prophet Mohammad is also reported to have said 'would one of you knowingly kill his brother? Why don't you ask Allah to bless your brother when you see something (of him) that you like?' (Annisabori, 2018, p. 870). If compliments on children, possessions and achievements are not preceded or followed by the Islamic phrase *mashallah* (May Allah's grace be upon you), some compliment receivers may regard them as face-threatening acts, rather than as genuine compliments. To avoid any misinterpretation or any bad intentions, complimenters often start or end their compliments with *mashallah*. This phenomenon is discussed and examined in some detail when addressing compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi Saudi dialect in the following chapters.

### 1.5 Overview of the Thesis

The remainder of the thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter Two reviews the literature available on the speech act of compliments and compliment responses. Chapter Three presents the methodology followed in this thesis including the data source, the data collection method, the data collection tool, and the analytical frameworks. In Chapter Four, the findings on compliments are presented and discussed in terms of topics of compliments, compliments' syntactic patterns, directness and indirectness, and sociocultural phraseologies. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings on compliment responses. It discusses the

correlations between response strategies, age, gender and relationship. Chapter Six provides a summary of the most significant findings and highlights the implications and contributions of this thesis.

### **1.6 Summary**

This chapter has introduced the topic of the thesis: an examination of compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect and the sociocultural factors and variables affecting them. It has provided an account of the rationale for conducting the present study and has placed it within the sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of applied linguistics. Being an introductory chapter, it presented the general aims of the study along with the specific research questions which the study would attempt to answer.

In addition, this chapter has offered a general background to the geography and culture of Saudi Arabia in which the current study was conducted. This should help readers understand the locations where the Hijazi dialect is spoken and the sociocultural norms and religious teachings which could have important effects on compliments and compliment responses used in this dialect.

The last element of this chapter is an overview of the structure of the study which touched briefly on its various chapters. The following chapter provides a critical review of the literature available on the speech act of compliments and compliment responses and topics similar to the topic of the current thesis and elaborates on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used in this study.

**Chapter Two: Literature Review:**  
*Overview of Compliment Exchanges as Speech Acts*



## 2.1 Introduction

In order to give a clear overview of this field, this chapter defines terminology and discusses the state of the art in the following topics: pragmatics, speech acts, the most prominent concepts and postulates related to compliment exchanges, compliments and social variables in previous studies, and finally conceptual implications and theoretical frameworks of the current research study.

Culture-specific and cross-cultural studies on speech acts are worth our while as they deepen our comprehension of pragmatic norms of different cultures and provide evidence for cross-cultural comparisons. Culture has an obvious influence on how people use language to interact with one another, since culture and language are bound together; therefore, interlocutors will be mutually affected by their cultural values and social norms. Compliment events are within the domains of sociolinguistics, the science of studying the connections between language and society, and of pragmatics, the study of language in context (Holmes, 1986).

## 2.2 Pragmatics and Pragmatic Competence

Language, as a means of communication, can be used to perform various functions depending on language users' situations, contexts and purposes. Although *pragmatics* has a variety of meanings, its primary meaning is 'deriving meaning from communication in context' (Austin, 1998, p. 327). In this regard, *pragmatics* refers to how speakers (or writers) choose appropriate linguistic forms for their messages and how listeners (or readers) comprehend those messages (Austin, 1998). According to Verschueren (1987, p. 5):

the pragmatic perspective centers around the adaptability of language, the fundamental property of language which enables us to engage in the activity of talking which consists in the constant making of choices, at every level of linguistic structure, in harmony with the requirements of people, their beliefs, desires and intentions, and the real-world circumstances in which they interact.

Grundy (2008, p. 20) suggests that 'language is under-determined enough to allow us to infer the way in which an utterance is to be understood in the context in which it occurs'. A major type of inference is implicature, which refers to taking meaning beyond what is explicitly stated, relying on cultural and contextual

knowledge. In order to understand inferences such as implicatures, a speaker must have pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence was defined by Koike (1989, p. 279) as 'the speakers' knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts'. This kind of competence can also be defined as 'the knowledge underlying abilities to interpret, express, and negotiate social activities and their meanings beyond what is really expressed' (Austin 1998, p. 328). Green and Morgan (1981) hold that the interaction between the various types of knowledge and abilities is what makes both the production and interpretation of speech easy and possible. Regardless of the different levels of addressers' and addressees' ability to understand or elucidate utterances, pragmatic competence helps interlocutors infer meaning, whether speaker and hearer belong to the same culture or different cultures. In this respect, pragmatic competence contributes to a broader discourse competence.

### **2.3 Speech Acts**

The current study analyses a particular set of speech acts, compliment exchanges, in Saudi culture; therefore, it is necessary to shed some light on speech acts. Speech acts are considered very important to pragmatics (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1979). They not only say something, they also carry out an action (Austin 1962). Austin was the one of the earliest philosophers in the 1960s who started to realize that language was more than just phrases and words with only literal or lexical meanings. In his seminal work, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), he argues that utterances are indeed actions. Research since then has continued to emphasize that performing speech acts varies from culture to culture, not only in the manner of perceiving them but also in their functions, distribution and frequency (Wolfson, 1981, p. 119).

Levinson (2017, p. 2) defines speech acts as action performers rather than just meaning-bearers. Since compliments in Saudi Hijazi Arabic are the focus of the current study, Levinson's definition of speech acts holds true for compliments because they are also regarded as speech acts. In this sense, compliments can be compared to moves in the game of chess which are both rule-governed and open to

interpretations. Therefore, speech acts are not just random utterances or expressions, but they refer to actions, functions, and behaviours beyond the spoken or written words. Speech acts include requests, apologies, complaints, refusals, compliments, and compliment responses. Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 288) observe that 'all languages have a means of performing speech acts, and presumably speech acts themselves are universal, yet the form used in specific speech acts varies from culture to culture.'

To convey a message or meaning to the hearer is a significant aim of performing any type of speech act. In this respect, Austin (1962) argues that any utterance consists of three types of acts, which are *locutionary*, *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* acts. The locutionary act is the production of meaningful utterance. The illocutionary act refers to 'utterances which have a certain conventional force' (Austin, 1962, p. 149) which is used by the speaker to perform any kind of speech acts. The perlocutionary act is the impact which the speaker's or producer's utterances have on the receiver. For Searle (1969), the illocutionary act is the basic communicative unit of people's speech.

Austin (1962) described 'felicity conditions' that make these performative utterances possible. These can be thought of as rules available to interlocutors to understand and interpret speech acts. For instance, Searle's (1969) *sincerity conditions* represent one set of felicity conditions that require that speakers should perform speech acts in a sincere manner: these performative utterances or expressions are only effective if speakers mean what they say. Because there can be some counter examples where sincerity conditions are not met, speech acts or compliments do not have to be realised with performative verbs or performed with sincere intentions. When exchanging compliments, it is more common to find compliments in sentences such as 'I like your jacket' without any performative verbs, rather than 'I compliment you on your jacket' with the performative verb compliment. Some apparent compliments may be spoken with pejorative or negative intentions, which undermine the sincerity conditions. For example, the sentence 'What an excellent answer!' which has the form of a compliment may in fact be a sarcastic comment given by a teacher to a student who has given an

obviously wrong answer. So, Searle's sincerity condition is important to the study of compliments and compliment responses.

Searle, who was Austin's student, introduced the notion of indirect speech acts (1969). These are speaker's acts which are intended to communicate more than their apparent structures may suggest. Indirect speech acts depend on background information that is shared by both the speaker and the hearer. In other words, an indirect speech act is one in which the form of the locutionary act does not match the intention of the illocutionary act. For example, one might say, 'Could you open the door?', which sounds like a direct question of ability, but expresses an indirect request when the speaker would like the addressee to open the door. Searle (1979, p. 33) made this point by using the following example:

[1.9] A says to friend B: 'Let's go to the movie tonight.'

B answers: 'I have to study for an exam.'

In the above conversation, B doesn't respond to A's suggestion directly, but instead responds with a declarative sentence that allows B to apologize indirectly by saying he or she has to study for an exam. This utterance made by B is, in fact, a form of an indirect speech act in which a statement of fact expresses an act of refusal.

Although the concept of speech acts is undoubtedly essential for understanding language use, speech acts have not received considerable attention by linguists since the 1980s. Speech acts have received little attention in pragmatics during the last thirty years, despite significant research in other areas of pragmatics (Levinson, 2017). As is often the case with concepts in science, research on speech acts flourished for over a decade (in the 1970s and 1980s), and then faded with many important questions left unanswered. Some of these questions are: How many types of speech acts are there, and are they universal or cultural-specific? How are they expressed in language? And how can they be recognized in actual language use? (Levinson 2017, p. 2).

Some researchers (Sadock, 2004; Bach, 1997) thought that Searle and Austin regarded speech acts as isolated sentences devoid of the cultural settings in which

they would occur. Levinson (2017, p. 9) notes that most analysis of speech acts takes into account the way participants in a given speech act respond to each other's utterances which, in turn, play different roles according to their position in relation to other speech acts. In fact, the use of speech acts and the intention of compliment givers and compliment recipients as well as the cultural settings of speech acts are important especially to the understanding of the social structure and the value system of the target community.

## **2.4 Compliments and Compliment Responses**

A large number of research studies have been conducted on compliment exchanges in different languages. These studies have focused on issues such as the topics, functions, syntax and lexicon of compliments as well as the strategies of compliment responses. Compliments have also been approached in terms of their correlations with the social variables of the compliment givers and compliment recipients including their gender, age, and relationships. The following is a review of the literature available on compliments in different languages.

### **2.4.1 What are compliments?**

Compliments have attracted the attention of researchers in the philosophy of language (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), the fields of sociolinguistics (e.g., Wolfson, 1983; Herbert, 1990), pragmatics (e.g., Holmes, 1986), and applied linguistics (e.g., Farghal and Haggan, 2006; Qanbar, 2012). The term *compliment* has been approached and defined by researchers in many different ways due to their differences in terms of contexts, cultures and perspectives of the research. Herbert (1997), for example, believed that there is a general agreement on what a compliment is. Most definitions (e.g., Holmes, 1986; Ye, 1995; Fraser, 1990; Farghal and Haggan, 2006) agree that a compliment is an expression of praise for a person's possession, skills, performance, or personality traits. A compliment, then, is defined as a positive expression or evaluation, which explicitly or implicitly, gives credit to someone for something greatly appreciated by the speaker and the hearer, and even by the whole speech community (Holmes, 1986; Ye, 1995). Fraser (1990) regarded compliments as positive judgments that attribute direct or indirect qualities to the recipient. A compliment can also be described as

expressing and reflecting approval of people's conduct and work (Farghal and Haggan, 2006). A compliment event, as a speech act, is an occasion where a speaker compliments another person on saying or doing something. For the purposes of the current thesis, *compliment* is defined as an expression of praise used by someone for someone else's possessions, skills, performance, or personality traits. The one using a compliment is referred to in this thesis as a *complimenter*, and the one receiving the compliment is referred to as a *complimentee*. The complimenter/speaker can refer to the complimentee/hearer on one or more of the following:

- Physical appearance
- Possessions
- Skill
- Performance
- Personality trait

Compliments can carry out a number of social functions (Leech, 1983). For example, compliments can strengthen family relationships and lead to better work and social relationships because people in general like to hear kind expressions and compliments. Even young children and students like receiving compliments from their parents and teachers, and compliments can contribute to their performance at home and school respectively. Thus, speech acts, compliments, play an important role in maintaining strong interpersonal relationships and positive social interactions (Tang and Zhang 2009, p. 326). A compliment can be triggered by a desire to establish a good relationship, to save one's face, to follow established social norms, or serve as a strategy for social interaction. The following subsection looks at the functions of compliments in more detail.

### ***2.4.2 Functions of Compliments***

#### ***2.4.2a Compliments as Social Ties and Solidarity***

Compliments serve more social and emotional purposes than informative purposes (Holmes, 1988), helping to strengthen social ties among people, especially family members, friends and colleagues. Compliments 'oil the social wheels, paying attention to positive face wants and thus increasing or

consolidating solidarity between people' (Holmes, 1988, p. 462). They are 'social lubricants' that establish familiarity and closeness between people (Wolfson, 1983, p. 89). Holmes (1986) investigated the functions of compliments and came to the conclusion that compliments could lead to establishing solidarity and strengthening interlocutors' social ties. Jaworski (1995) conducted a study on Polish compliments and found that women tended to exchange compliments as a strategy to maintain relational solidarity, while men often used compliments as a strategy to exhibit power relations.

On the other hand, compliments may also cause unintended harm if they are not phrased in a way that reflects what the compliment giver intends to communicate through his/her compliments to the complementee. In a Muslim country like Saudi Arabia, compliment givers and compliment responders use religious expressions involving invocations and blessings such as *Allah yebar-ik fee-k* 'may Allah bless you' and *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you' to try to make their compliments and responses as harmless and mild as possible. This might be somewhat similar in effect to Leech's (1983) maxim of agreement as Muslims use religious phrases in their compliments and compliment responses, which work to maximize the agreement between the complimenter and complementee. Moreover, these religious phrases indicate to the complementee that the complimenter is being considerate, as both interlocutors know that such expressions drive the evil eye away. Schmidt and Richards (1980) note that a compliment can be harmful if it conveys an affective meaning that is not favoured by the listener or if the recipient mistakes the compliment for sarcasm or an attempt to take advantage. So, the intention of the compliment giver and the way the compliment is uttered or phrased can either weaken or strengthen social ties (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

#### *2.4.2b Compliments for Informative Purposes*

Compliments can also have informative purposes as they aim to provide information for the recipient. Johnson and Roen (1992) argue that, although compliments are, for the most part, given for emotional purposes, some compliments only aim to achieve informative purposes. They analysed a number of research studies and realized that the compliments in those studies had both

emotional and referential meanings. Referential meanings here refer to information conveyed in the compliment about the compliment giver: his or her character, power of observation, and other relevant information.

#### *2.4.2c Compliments and Maintaining the Speaker's Face*

On the individual or personal level, compliments help save the individual's face from embarrassment and trouble. For instance, a compliment given to your angry manager at work in front of other people could save your face and save you trouble or punishment. Compliments as significant 'relational speech acts' can be viewed 'as cultural constructions that reflect agreed upon ways of behaving' (Doohan and Manusov, 2004, p. 171). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), speakers observe and read other people's faces (face wants) and try to satisfy their face desires. Billmyer (1990) and Zhan (2010) argue that compliments regularly carry out specific socio-cultural functions as they differ from society to society and from culture to culture. Therefore, speakers need to take into account how they phrase their compliments and the way they utter them (Alqarni, 2017). Face wants and maintaining the individual's face are discussed in further detail in sections 2.7.1 and 2.7.2a.

#### **2.4.3 Topics of Compliments**

People exchange compliments on common things such as appearance, achievements, new or old possessions, success and happy social occasions. Culture is also important when deciding on the topics of compliments, and different cultures have different compliment topics for different situations. For example, studies conducted on people in the United States (Manes, 1983; Knap et al., 1984; Herbert, 1990), people in New Zealand (Holmes, 1986), people in Turkey (Ruhi, 2000) and Nigerians speaking English (Mustapha, 2003), as well as Jordanian people (Migdadi, 2003) and Najdi speakers in Saudi Arabia (AlAmro, 2013) have found that appearance was the most dominant topic in paying compliments. Polish speakers prefer to compliment each other on the topic of possessions (Herbert, 1991). Egyptian people exchange compliments on both appearance and personality (Nelson, El-Bakary and Al-Batal 1993). Compliments used by Japanese speakers seem to focus on performance (Adachi, 2011). The topic of children is the



most common topic of compliments among Spanish speakers (Yanez, 1990). Singapore Chinese people tend to compliment each other on their children's school achievement and prospective work success rather than on their appearance or possessions (Lee, 2009). The above variety of compliment topics bears witness to the cultural differences in, and preferences for, certain kinds of compliments in accordance with the social norms and codes of social conduct characterizing each culture. Besides cultural differences, other variables such as gender, age and relationship, as will be shown in section 2.5, have an impact on speakers' choices of compliment topics.

#### ***2.4.4 Strategies of Compliment Responses***

*Compliment response* was defined by Nelson, Al-Batal and Echols (1996, p. 413) as 'a verbal acknowledgement that the recipient of the compliment heard and reacted to the compliment'. However, responses to compliments include non-verbal responses; for instance, they might include smiling (discussed in Alamro, 2013 as a nonverbal acceptance response), or nodding one's head, shrugging one's shoulders or making other body gestures. These are taken into account in investigating responses to compliments for the current research.

Pomerantz (1978) was the first scholar to draw attention to the topic of compliment responses. She argued that compliment responses fell into two general categories: 1) agreement with the compliment giver and 2) avoidance of self-praise. Herbert (1986) modified Pomerantz's classification into three main categories: 1) agreement, 2) non-agreement and 3) other. These are further divided into a twelve-type taxonomy. (See Table 2.1 below.) Holmes (1995) provided a different classification of compliment responses that also had three major categories, 1) acceptance, 2) rejection, and 3) deflection/evasion, and twelve minor categories. These are the main categories that have been proposed as general frameworks for investigating compliment responses in certain languages since the early 1970s. Herbert's (1986) category is the framework of analysing compliment responses for the current research, and it will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three (Section 3.9.4).

Table 2.1: *Herbert's Taxonomy of Compliment Responses* (Herbert, 1986, p. 79)

| Response Type                   | Example  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>A- Agreement</b>             |  |
| <i>1- Acceptances</i>           |  |
| Appreciation Token              | Thanks; thank you; [smile].                        |
| Comment Acceptance              | Thanks, it's my favourite too.                     |
| Praise Upgrade                  | Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it? |
| <i>2- Comment History</i>       | I bought it for the trip to Arizona.               |
| <i>3- Transfers</i>             |  |
| Reassignment                    | My brother gave it to me.                          |
| Return                          | So's yours.  |
| <b>B- Non-Agreement</b>         |  |
| <i>1- Scale Down</i>            | It's really quite old.                             |
| <i>2- Question</i>              | Do you really think so?                            |
| <i>3- Non-acceptances</i>       |  |
| Disagreement                    | I hate it.   |
| Qualification                   | It's all right, but Len's is nicer.                |
| <i>4- No Acknowledgement</i>    | [Silence]  |
| <b>C- Other Interpretations</b> |  |
| <i>1- Request</i>               | You wanna borrow this one too?                     |

Pomerantz (1978) claimed that in American English, recipients of compliments encounter two conflicting conditions or restrictions that pose a problem when responding to compliments: (A) agreeing with the speaker and (B) avoiding self-praise (pp. 81-82). She proposed that in any conversational exchange, the responder is motivated to engage in supportive actions. So, she noted that there is some social pressure on the compliment recipient to accept the compliment and agree with it. On the other hand, there is strong pressure on both compliment givers and compliment recipients to avoid self-praise or keep it to a minimum. Urano (1998) explains that when a compliment recipient accepts the compliment, this follows condition (A), but violates condition (B) of avoiding self-praise. If the compliment recipient does not accept or welcome the compliment, this meets condition (B), but the compliment response threatens the compliment giver's face,

especially if it is not a positive response, violating condition (A). One solution to such a dilemma, as described by Wolfson (1989a), is that the compliment recipient reduces the effect of the compliment either by attributing the compliment to the object of the compliment or by shifting to another subject. In this case, he or she complies with condition (B) and avoids self-praise.

## **2.5 Compliment Exchanges and Social Variables**

As compliments and their responses are opportunities for people to engage in socially cordial communication, they are affected by a number of social variables, such as gender, age, relationship and cultural identity (Ruhi, 2006). This section discusses the impact of such variables on compliments and compliment responses in different languages and cultures.

### ***2.5.1 Gender Differences***

#### ***2.5.1a Who Gives Compliments More?***

A good number of studies have investigated the differences and similarities in how men and women use compliments and respond to them. Holmes (1988, 1995), in her seminal gender-oriented study of compliments, found that New Zealand women compliment each other more often than they compliment men or than men compliment each other. Investigating compliments in (Manes and Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, 1983, 1984; Lee, 1990; Sifianou, 2001) also show that women give and receive more compliments than men do. Knapp et al. (1984) studied compliment exchanges in American English, Alamro (2013) investigated compliments in Najdi Saudi and Ye (1995) investigated compliments of Chinese speakers, and they all found that compliments were given more to speakers of the same gender than to speakers of the other gender. Alqarni (2017) found that women perceive compliments and their importance in daily communication differently from men. Moreover, Qanbar (2012) studied compliments among Yemeni college students and found that female students used far more compliments than male students when they communicated in English and Arabic. Wolfson (1984) argues that women tend to be more socially interactive than men, and so they tend to give more compliments than men on a daily basis.

### *2.5.1b Gender and Compliment Topics*

Previous studies on men's and women's choices of compliment topics showed remarkable similarities in their findings although these studies have been conducted in different cultures and languages. For instance, Wolfson (1984) studied compliments in English-speaking American society and found that women received compliments regarding their appearance, shape and clothes. The study also showed that women received compliments for socially accepted behaviour. While men also received compliments, these compliments were directed to 'games well played and jobs well done, as well as to material possessions such as new cars, which represent an all-important male accomplishment—financial success' (p. 243). Similarly, in New Zealand English, Holmes (1986, 1988) found that men tended to give compliments more on possession and ability than on any other topic, while women complimented each other on appearance more than on any other topic. In a study on Hawaiian Creole English, Lee (1990) found that gender influenced the topic of the compliment in two ways. First, compliments on the acquisition of new things were more often used in men's interactions with each other than any other interactions between men and women or women and men. Second, it seemed that men used the topic of achievement in complimenting both genders more than women did. Yanez (1990) carried out a study on the topics of compliments commonly used by Chicano women and found that the topic of children was the subject of their compliments. In addition, Lee (2009) conducted a study in the Singapore context which showed that women complimented each other on their physical appearance. Similarly, in a study on compliments used by Najdi Saudis, AlAmro (2013) found that Najdi men used compliments for the topics of performance and personality, while most compliments of Najdi women were on appearance.

### *2.5.1c Gender and Compliment Responses Strategies*

Previous research showed that men and women use similar and different strategies for responding to compliments given by either gender. To begin with gender differences, Holmes (1986) carried out a study in which the data of compliment responses in New Zealand were collected and analysed. The study found that men ignored or avoided compliments more often than women. So, men

would not respond to a compliment by a compliment or another type of verbal response. Jaworski (1995) conducted a study on Polish compliments and came to the conclusion that women tended to exchange compliments as a strategy to maintain relational solidarity, while men often used compliments as a strategy to exhibit power relations. Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001), carried out a study on Jordanian participants and came to the conclusion that the male participants used the strategy of acceptance more than the female participants. The male participants tended to make use of simpler responses as their strategy when they were complimented by other men, and they tended to choose non-verbal responses as an exclusive strategy when complimented by women. Wang and Tsai (2003), in their study on Taiwanese students' responses, and Yousefvand (2010), in investigating Persian speakers' responses, found that females used questions expressing surprise as their strategy to respond to compliments, while males used more rejections or scaling as their strategy to respond to compliments. AlAmro (2013) conducted a study on Najdi Saudi dialect and found that female respondents used strategies, such as appreciation tokens, prayers, and praise in their compliment responses and returned more compliments than male compliment recipients.

On the other hand, a small number of studies have shown that gender has no influence on compliment responses strategies. For example, Al-Khateeb (2009) carried out a study on Egyptian and American speakers of English and found no gender differences in their compliment responses. Furthermore, Mascuñana et al. (2018) carried a study on compliment responses of Filipino students speaking English and came to the conclusion that acceptance was the most frequent macro-strategy often used by both male and female students.

### ***2.5.2 Age and Compliment Exchanges***

Age is another significant social factor that has been found to have an influence on compliments and compliment responses. The literature available on the correlations between age and compliments and compliment responses shows that age has received less attention than other social variables, such as gender and social status. For example, Knapp et al. (1984), AlAmro (2013) and Migdadi (2003)

treat this factor very lightly. Yet, their findings show that the speakers' ages affected the topics and syntactic structures of compliments. For instance, young speakers (i.e., 30 years or less) tended to give more compliments on appearance, whereas older speakers were more likely to laud people's achievements and character. Moreover, Knapp et al. (1984) found that the younger generation used a wider range of syntactic forms for compliments than the older generation.

AlAmro (2013) found that the middle-aged people and the older people used more non-acknowledgement as compliment responses than the younger generation. Yuan (1998) carried out a study on the correlation between the participants' use of compliments and compliment responses and the age of the participants in Kuming Chinese. She found that age had a strong influence on the speakers' choice of various types of both compliments and compliment responses. For example, the younger generation gave more indirect compliments and requested more explanation and clarification in their compliment responses than the older generation. They also included fewer explanations in their compliments than the older generation. Moreover, Migdadi (2003) conducted a study on the correlation between compliments and age and found that people belonging to the same age group tended to exchange more compliments than people belonging to different age groups.

Age is therefore an important variable in studying compliment events. Studying and analysing this variable will help us to identify the linguistic features that are used by young, middle-aged and elderly people in giving and responding to compliments. This thesis contributes to enriching literature in this aspect by discussing age with compliment topics, response strategies, syntactic patterns, vocabulary, etc.

### ***2.5.3 Relationship and Compliment Exchanges***

The power relationship between participants plays an important role in shaping the way compliments are paid and the way they are received. These are considered in turn below.

### *2.5.3a Relationship and Compliment-Giving*

In previous studies, it has been found that most compliments are exchanged between people of equal status. This has been reported for English (Wolfson, 1983; Knapp et al., 1984; Holmes, 1995), Japanese (Kawaguchi et al., 1996; Ono, 2003; Matsuura, 2004; Adachi, 2011) and Arabic (Alamro, 2013). To use Wolfson's words, 'the overwhelming majority of all compliments are given to people of the same age and status as the speaker' (1983, p. 91). Holmes also agreed with this finding in her New Zealand data which showed that 80% of the compliments collected took place between people of equal status (Holmes, 1988, 1995).

As well as equal status, compliments tend to involve people who are in closer relationships. To use Holmes' words again, 'compliments typically occur in informal interactions between friends' (1995, p. 134). Alamro (2013) found that there was a close relationship between compliments and social distance in the Najdi region of Saudi Arabia. So, familiar speakers such as colleagues, friends or relatives exchanged more compliments than unfamiliar or strange speakers.

### *2.5.3b Relationship and Compliment Length*

Previous studies show that social distance between interlocutors has an influence on the length of compliments. Holmes (1988, 1995), in her New Zealand data, and Nelson et al. (1993), in Egyptian and American data, reported the existence of a strong relationship between the social distance of the participants and the length of the compliments they used. In other words, when the compliment giver and the compliment recipient had a closer social distance, they tended to use longer compliments. Shorter compliments correlated with greater social distance between the compliment giver and the compliment recipient.

### *2.5.3c Relationship and Compliment Responses Strategies*

Social distance has been found to play an important role in how compliment recipients respond to compliments. Ye (1995) showed that the 'praise upgrade' strategy was common among Chinese friends, and that they tend to use this response to compliments in a joking manner. Chen (2003) conducted a study on compliment responses in Mandarin Chinese. The study found that the strategy of

acceptance was more often used in situations where the speakers were of equal status, while the rejection strategy was more often employed in situations in which the compliment giver was of a higher status than the compliment recipient. In contrast, Othman (2011), carried out a study on the relationship between compliment responses and social distance in Malaysian Malay speakers. He found that when the relationship was more distant, the compliment was more likely to be accepted, and when the relationship between speakers was closer and more intimate, the compliments were more likely to be rejected. Alamro (2013) investigated compliment responses among Saudi Najdi speakers. He reported that familiar speakers seemed to welcome compliments implicitly, whereas unfamiliar speakers' responses were mainly prayers and blessings for the compliment giver.

## **2.6 Structural/Content Variation**

### ***2.6.1 Syntactic Patterns and Lexicon of Compliments***

Many researchers (Manes and Wolfson, 1981; Holmes, 1988a; Herbert, 1991; Nelson et al., 1993) have observed that compliments often take the form of invariable or fixed or semi-fixed expressions in many languages, repeating lexis and syntax. In English, for example, Manes and Wolfson (1981) found that five adjectives, *nice*, *good*, *beautiful*, *pretty*, and *great*, and the verbs *like* and *love* account for most of the positive lexical items used in compliments, and that only a few syntactic structures feature in most of the compliments. However, the kinds of lexical and syntactic constructs that are fixed in compliments can differ across languages and language varieties. For example, Lee (1990) showed that, unlike the case of general American English, speakers of Hawaiian Creole English have a preference for the adjective *cute* and the verb *like* over the adjective *beautiful* and the verb *love*. He also shows that speakers of Hawaiian Creole English usually employ more varied syntactic patterns in compliments than American English speakers do. In addition, Nelson et al. (1993) argue that although compliments in Egyptian Arabic and American English are comparable in terms of the use of a limited number of syntactic patterns and lexical items, compliments in Egyptian Arabic tend to be longer than compliments in American English due to the speakers' repetitions and use of long adjectives and wordy elaborations. An



example of a repetitive compliment in Egyptian Arabic (Nelson et al., 1993, p. 299) is:

*eeh l-halaawah di! eehish-iyaka di*  
(What is all this beauty! What is all this chicness!)

Manes and Wolfson (1981) specified nine linguistic or syntactic patterns of compliments derived from more than six hundred naturally occurring compliment exchanges produced by about one hundred students at two American universities. Table 2.2 below shows the nine linguistic patterns of compliments they found.

Table 2.2: *Linguistic Patterns of Compliments According to Manes and Wolfson (1981)*

| Syntactic pattern               | Example                                    |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. NP is/looks (really) ADJ     | <i>Your watch is really amazing</i>        |
| 2. I (really) like/love NP      | <i>I like your laptop</i>                  |
| 3. PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP   | <i>That's a nice comment</i>               |
| 4. You V (a) (really) ADJ NP    | <i>You did a wonderful job</i>             |
| 5. You V NP (really) ADV        | <i>You explained that rule really well</i> |
| 6. You have (a) (really) ADJ NP | <i>You have a luxury bedroom</i>           |
| 7. What (a) ADJ NP!             | <i>What a cute baby you have!</i>          |
| 8. ADJ NP!                      | <i>Great answer!</i>                       |
| 9. Isn't NP ADJ!                | <i>Isn't your jacket beautiful!</i>        |

Wolfson (1981) carried out a study to investigate compliments used by American English, Iranian and Arabic speakers. The study found that 80% of all compliments included adjectives, and that 'like' and 'love' were the most commonly used verbs. Wolfson also noted that proverbs and religious phrases were used by Arabs and Iranian speakers when complimenting each other. Daikuhara (1986) conducted a study on compliments used by American English and Japanese speakers. The study found that an equivalent linguistic structure to 'I like/love NP' was not used by Japanese speakers. In addition, Yanez's (1990) study found that Spanish-speaking Chicano women used limited a limited number of verbs: 'to be', 'to look' and 'to

like'. As the above studies have shown, some similarities can be seen across languages in how they prefer particular syntactic structures and the lexical items of compliments, they also differ from language to language and from culture to culture.

### **2.6.2 Directness and Indirectness**

In speech act research, it is important to make a distinction between direct speech acts, in which the utterance and the meaning are the same, and indirect speech acts, in which the meaning communicated has more or different information from the literal utterance (Migdadi, 2003). Explicitness and implicitness play a significant role in paying compliments; therefore, it is necessary to define the differences between them. An *explicit compliment* is 'a direct positive comment in which the form contains at least one positive semantic carrier' (Sun, 2002, p. 24), for example, *nice in your jacket is nice*. An *implicit compliment* is composed of 'a general statement without a positive semantic carrier, where the addressee is not directly [complimented] but the positive meaning can be inferred from what is said in a particular context' (Yuan, 2002, p. 192), for example, *I wish I could do my job like you do*.

Holmes (1995) and Aakhus and Aldrich (2002) agree that compliments are not always explicit. Lewandowska-Tomaszcyk (1989) links the indirectness level of a compliment with its 'linguistic conventionality'. This means that the frequent forms of compliments, as discussed in the last subsection, are usually direct, explicit and unambiguous, but less conventional compliments are more likely to be ambiguous and hard to interpret with regard to their functions as positive utterances. The interpretation of a compliment may not rely on the explicitness of its syntactic structure. The sentence *I wonder how you did that so fast*, for instance, has the power and effect of a compliment if both the speaker and the hearer believe that doing something fast is positive.

Compliments as speech acts can be complicated and confusing, not only cross-culturally, but even within the same cultural community (Yousefvand, 2010). Hence, learning how to give suitable compliments, identify them and respond

appropriately is important to the development of the communicative competence that everyone in a given community needs to improve in order to avoid pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure (Holmes and Brown, 1987). Failure to understand the illocutionary force of a compliment or response in an interaction might be caused by differences in the interlocutors' culture, value systems, or speech norms.

### ***2.6.3 Positions of Compliments in Discourse***

Studies on compliments have shown that compliments seem to come at the beginning or end of conversations (Manes, 1983; Holmes and Brown, 1987). However, compliments can come in the middle of a conversation (Knapp et al., 1984). Cordelia et al.'s (1995) study on complimenting behaviour in Australian English showed that Australian females complimented each other in the middle of the conversation more frequently than at the beginning.

The position of compliments in a conversation or speech exchange has also been investigated in relation to compliment topics, and correlations have been found between conversational position and topic. For instance, Wolfson (1983) discovered that compliments on possession and achievements occurred as conversation openers in American English-speaking culture. Similarly, Knapp et al. (1984) found that compliments among American English speakers could come at the beginning or middle of the conversation, with compliments on physical appearance coming at the beginning.

## **2.7 Conceptual Implications and Theoretical Frameworks**

The above review of studies has shown that many aspects of compliments and compliment responses are culture-specific phenomena. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 have shown gender, age, and relationship differences in giving and responding to compliments. Moreover, the selection of compliment topics and the strategies of compliment responses can vary from culture to culture. For instance, studies on compliments and/or compliment responses in the United States, New Zealand, China, Japan, Egypt, Iran and Malaysia have shown the impact of culture on language usage. The findings on compliment exchanges in the previous studies

therefore cannot be applied to all cultural settings. Each culture has its own way of using language for various communication purposes (Fraser, 1990; Qanbar, 2012; Qu and Wang, 2005).

Leech (1983) argues that all cultures make use of the same politeness maxims, to be discussed in 2.7.2b, but cultures vary in the degree to which they use them and in the priority they give to each one. In addition to these principles, the concepts of face and politeness differ across cultures in the way they operate within communities. Therefore, before constructing the framework for the current study, it is necessary to explain some key points regarding Saudi culture and Islamic values which will have an influence on choosing the theoretical frameworks. The following points might play an important role in paying compliments and responding to them in Hijazi Saudi culture.

### ***2.7.1 Key Points Regarding Arabic Analysis (Compliments in Saudi Context)***

1. Saudi society might be considered a collectivist society in which 'the group comes first and the individuals are expected to sacrifice their own needs for the greater need of the group' (Rugh, 1985 cited in Mursy and Wilson, 2001, p. 6). This concept is in contrast with that of individualism which regards groups as a number of people with common goals. According to this Western view, individual rights are more important than group rights provided that these rights do not clash with the rights of other individuals (Mursy and Wilson, 2001).
2. Saudi society is a homogeneous Islamic community influenced and governed by Islamic rules which affect communication or speech acts in general and compliments and responses to compliments in particular. For instance, there is a common Islamic belief in Saudi culture that complimenting people in their presence is not preferable or advisable because this might cause them to be arrogant, especially when the compliments are related to personal qualities. In this specific respect, it was narrated that when people of Mecca praised Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, saying 'you are the best, you are the

master and the son of master', he was said to have hated it and asked the people to instead call him 'the slave of God'.

3. It was narrated that 'Abu Mosa said: The prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, heard a man praising another man while he was present with them. He said 'Woe unto you! You have beheaded your friend'. He repeated this several times and added 'if one of you has to praise, let him say, I think this and that (about the praised man) if he thinks that, and his reckoning is with Allah, and let him not ascribe purity to anyone' (compiled by Yahya and Ad-Dimashqi, 1990). From this narration, Muslims infer that the prophet prohibited praising others, especially when they are present. Yahya and Ad-Dimashqi (1990) commented on the above narration saying, 'such praise may encourage the praised persons to overestimate themselves, especially if they were people of position or wealth. Also, such praise may lead the praised person to be arrogant, which may lead to laziness and a lower number of good deeds, for one will depend on what he heard of praise and ignore more good deeds' (p. 1322).

However, there are two cases where compliments are commendable in Saudi culture. The first is when the compliment giver compliments a person on his or her good performance. This would encourage the others to copy his or her action and do as well as the complementee. The second is when the compliment giver compliments a person on a favour he or she has done. This compliment serves as appreciation and gratitude, which Muslims should always show to those who do them favours.

4. Belief in envy has a strong cultural and religious foundation in the Middle East in general and Saudi Arabia in particular. Compliments are often not welcomed because the underlying cause of compliments is believed to be the evil eye of the compliment giver. More importantly, compliments on appearance, achievements, and new possessions or acquisitions are very sensitive topics that compliment givers should be careful with, especially if the compliment givers come from a different culture. For example, when someone compliments someone else on their possessions, the complimented person's face might be

threatened as this complimenting act is related to the evil eye in Islam because the compliment giver might be seen as wishing that he/she had the complimented person's possessions, be them a new car, a new computer, etc. This wish or burning desire here could be the source of envy, and so the complimented person might feel that he/she is the target of the evil eye. Accordingly, he/she might feel uncomfortable with such compliments, especially if they are void of any Islamic phrases like *mashallah* 'May Allah's grace be upon you', which prevents the evil eye from harming the complimentee so that the complimented person can receive the compliment with comfort, and his or her face is saved.

### ***2.7.2 Theoretical Frameworks of the Current Study***

A number of scholars from different areas of studies, including Linguistics, Sociology, and Anthropology, have discussed *politeness* in their research (Culpeper and Kádár, 2010, p. 10). The concept of politeness has been approached and defined in different ways according to the scholars who have provided definitions for politeness. For instance, Lakoff (1973) defined politeness as a system which is intended to make integration into a community easier in order to reduce the possibility of conflict in human interaction. Holmes (1995, p. 4) sees politeness as verbal attitudes and a 'non-imposing distancing attitude' which reflect concern for, and kindness to, participants in communication. Watts (2003, pp. 9-10) claims that politeness has to be learned because it is not an innate feature that people are born with.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, particularly face wants, is used as the main theoretical framework of the current study to examine the various aspects of giving compliments. In addition, Leech's politeness maxims will be adopted to discuss compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect. The following two sections will summarize these two frameworks and justify their adoption in the current study.

### 2.7.2a Brown and Levinson's Face-Saving View

Brown and Levinson derived the notion of face from Goffman (1967), which 'ties face up with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or losing face' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61). A Model Person (MP), consisting of the two properties *rationality* and *face*, is the basis of Brown and Levinson's theory. Brown and Levinson defined *rationality* as a 'the application of a specific mode of reasoning which guarantees inferences from end or goals to means that will satisfy those ends', whereas *face* refers to 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pp. 61-62). The notion of face has two components:

- Negative face: 'the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others.'
- Positive face: 'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that any utterance can pose a threat to someone's face and that individuals have 'face wants', 'the desire to protect our positive face and negative face from threat or damage' (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 88). To this end, Brown and Levinson propose two strategies:

- Negative politeness strategies: 'the strategies that avoid offence by showing deference.'
- Positive politeness strategies: 'the strategies that avoid offence by highlighting friendliness' (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 90).

When someone has a face-threatening act (FTA) to perform, there are five strategies to choose from:

- 1) Do the FTA on record without redressive action, baldly: without attempting to hide what we are doing.
- 2) Do the FTA on record with positive politeness redress.
- 3) Do the FTA on record with negative politeness redress.
- 4) Do the FTA off-record: in such a way as to pretend to hide it; (giving hints).
- 5) Don't do the FTA: say nothing.

The framework developed by Brown and Levinson has been criticised as being western-ethnocentric. Trying to use the framework in non-Western cultures can create some challenges. Some studies within non-Western contexts (see, e.g., Ide, 1998; Mao, 1994; Matsumoto, 1988; Mursy and Wilson, 2001; Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily, 2012; Yu, 2011) argued, for example, that politeness in some cultures is governed by cultural norms and expectations of social conduct, rather than by individual face wants. These studies highlighted the collective aspect of many non-Western cultures in contrast to the individualistic aspect of Western culture which Brown and Levinson's politeness framework drew on. For instance, in a study conducted by Mursy and Wilson (2001) in the Egyptian context, the concept of 'face' was formulated as per the social norms and values prevalent in the Egyptian society.

Hijazi Saudi face does not only refer to the face as 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61), but it also refers to how society, along with its social values and norms, perceives it. The way a Hijazi Saudi thinks other Saudis see him or her may not be the same way he or she is really seen by other Saudis. This difference can be clearer when Hijazi people exchange compliments as compliments can be a way of expressing admiration in an attempt to win social approval without meaning them literally. For instance, Hijazi complimenters might tell complimentees that the complimented object is nice or beautiful to maintain a positive face for both complimenters and complimentees as compliments are mutual. However, the faces of Hijazi complimenters and complimentees might be threatened while exchanging compliments if compliments are misunderstood. Rejecting a compliment in the Hijazi dialect, for example, might threaten the complimenter's face because it runs counter to saving his/her positive face.

In Saudi culture, as discussed above, the complimentee's face might be threatened if he/she receives a compliment that does not have the phrase *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you'. That is because the complimentee might perceive this compliment as enacting the evil eye 'a sign of envy'. At the same time, the complimenter's face might be threatened if the complimentee asks him/her to say



mashallah in order to drive the evil eye away. Therefore, some complimenters habitually use such religious expressions to avoid any possible threats to the complimentee's negative face. In protecting the complimentee's negative face, the complimenter can protect their own positive face. Moreover, in Saudi culture some people might hate to have someone praise them in their presence; therefore, their responses to compliments might threaten the complimenter's face.

The current study anticipates that culture-specific face wants, such as protection from the evil eye, result in the use of positive and negative politeness strategies by complimenters and complimentees. Thus, Brown and Levinson's 'face wants' is a good framework for investigating and discussing compliment behaviours in the Hijazi culture.

#### *2.7.2b Leech's Politeness Maxims*

This research has adopted Leech's politeness maxims in investigating and discussing compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect. Like Brown and Levinson, Leech (1983) adopted Grice's (1975) construct of Conversational Principles and provided a detailed analysis of politeness within a pragmatic framework which views politeness as an important factor in interaction.

Leech (1983, p. 123) states that there are three pragmatic scales related to his politeness principle (PP), which are:

- The cost/benefit scale: 'which specifies how much the action performed is judged by the speaker to be of cost or benefit to the speaker or to the hearer.'
- The optionality scale: 'which specifies to what extent the action performed is at the choice of the hearer.'
- The indirectness scale: 'which specifies how much inference is involved in the action.'

Furthermore, Leech (1983) proposed the following politeness maxims:

- Tact Maxim: minimize cost to other, maximize benefit to other.
- Generosity Maxim: minimize benefit to other, maximize cost to self.

- Approbation Maxim: minimize dispraise of other, maximize praise of other.
- Modesty Maxim: minimize praise of self, maximize dispraise of self.
- Agreement Maxim: minimize disagreement between self and other, maximize agreement between self and other.
- Sympathy Maxim: 'minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between the self and other' (Leech, 1983, p. 132).

Although Leech's politeness principle may vary from culture to culture according to social and cultural norms, compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect can be seen to reflector represent some of Leech's maxims such as the modesty and agreement maxims.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter has provided an introduction to the literature available on compliments and compliment responses and highlighted the conceptual and theoretical frameworks suitable for this kind of study. A detailed account of speech act theory was followed by a discussion of compliments and compliment responses in general and in Arab and Muslim contexts in particular as the present study was conducted in an Arab Muslim country. Then followed a section on compliments and compliment responses which provided functional definitions, functions, purposes and topics of compliments along with strategies of compliment responses and their respective categories. The chapter then highlighted social variables that can affect on compliments and their responses. Such variables include the genders, ages and relationships of people involved in compliments and compliment responses. The chapter also touched on the structural and content variations of compliments and compliment responses. In this respect, I discussed the syntactic patterns of compliments and their lexical features. A thorough discussion of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning compliments and compliment responses followed with specific reference to the theoretical frameworks adopted in the current study. The following chapter will discuss the various methodological aspects of the present study.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the research methodology followed in the present study. It begins by giving information about the Hijazi dialect and Jeddah city as the place where data were collected. The chapter also explains how naturally occurring data were collected in Jeddah and the advantages and disadvantages of such data. In specific terms, the chapter will elaborate the design of the data collection tool (a documentation sheet), the training of the fieldworkers who assisted in collecting the data and the research population. Moreover, the data collection procedure will be presented and the data analysis framework, including data coding, will be discussed in some detail. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the data collection tool will be discussed in relation to the research questions and objectives.

The present study investigates how societal values and norms might influence how natural compliments and compliment responses are performed in the Hijazi dialect of Saudi Arabic and establishes whether aspects of compliment exchanges can be correlated with social variables such as gender, age and relationship. As explained in Chapter One, the present study seeks to provide answers for two main questions and their respective sub-questions related to compliments and compliment responses. To explore novel features of Saudi Hijazi culture, utmost care was taken to collect naturally occurring data in order to answer the following questions:

#### **A. How do Hijazi people give compliments to each other?**

1. Which topics of compliments are used by Hijazi males and females of different ages when complimenting each other?
2. What are the syntactic patterns of compliments used by different genders and age groups?
3. Are direct or indirect compliments more frequently used by Hijazi speakers?
4. Which the sociocultural phraseologies are most frequently used in paying compliments? [e.g., religious phrases, proverbs or swear words]

## **B. How do Hijazi speakers typically respond to compliments?**

1. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by Hijazi males and females when responding to compliments?
2. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by different age groups?
3. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors?

### **3.2 Information about the Hijazi Dialect**

There are three main varieties of the Arabic language. These are Classical Arabic (the language used in the Holy Quran and the language used in old Arabic literature), Modern Standard Arabic (the formal language used in Arab countries in official news channels and educational textbooks) and Spoken/Colloquial Arabic (the language spoken by Arabs, which varies considerably depending on their geographical locations) (Abdelali, 2004).

The Hijazi dialect fits under colloquial Arabic as it is spoken by Hijazi people in Saudi Arabia in their everyday communication. It is the second most common dialect in Saudi Arabia. The differences between the Hijazi dialect and the other Saudi dialects mostly lie in the lexicon and the pronunciation of some sounds and words. There are some words used by Hijazi people such as *ya wad* 'oh boy', *imrastak* 'neat', and *andor* 'get out!'. Regarding the pronunciation differences, the phoneme /θ/ in the Hijazi dialect can be pronounced as [θ], [t] or [s]. Also, the phoneme /ð/ might be pronounced as [ð] or [z] (Rifai, 2016)

The Hijazi dialect is spoken in two main provinces of the Western Region (The Hijaz) of Saudi Arabia. These two provinces are Makkah which consists of sixteen governorates and Madinah which consists of eight governorates. Both provinces are located in the western part of Saudi Arabia close to the Red Sea. Together they occupy an area of about 287.000 km<sup>2</sup> (see Map 3.1) and have a population of about 10 million (Saudi Geological Survey, 2017). These two places are densely

populated compared to the other regions of Saudi Arabia because of their religious status and significance for Saudis and Muslims all over the world.

### 3.3 Sampling

#### 3.3.1 Overview of Jeddah

The data for this study were collected in the city of Jeddah (sometimes spelled Jiddah or Jedda; English: /'dʒɛdə/) in Saudi Arabia (see Map 3.1). It is an important part of the western region of Saudi Arabia on the coast of the Red Sea. It is the biggest city in Makkah Province and has the biggest commercial port in Saudi Arabia, Jeddah Islamic Port located on the Red Sea. In terms of population, Jeddah is the second largest city in Saudi Arabia after the capital city, Riyadh, with a population of about 3.5 million people (Saudi Geological Survey, 2017). It is known as one of the tourist attractions in Saudi Arabia. Kingdom Tower, or Mile-High Tower, which is still under construction in Jeddah, is believed to be the tallest tower in the world although its exact height has not been revealed yet. There is a big football stadium called Al-Jawhara which means 'a jewel' because its design is said to have been based on the form of a jewel. On the educational level, there are three big universities in Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology and The University of Jeddah. There are also private colleges and many international schools. Jeddah is the main gateway to Makkah and Madinah, two holy cities for Muslims all over the world. Makkah is the place where all Muslims around the world go to do Hajj or perform Umrah, and Madinah is the city where the Prophet's mosque and grave are.



Map 3.1: Map of Saudi Arabia Showing the Geographical Location of the Data Source

### **3.3.2 Why Jeddah?**

Although Makkah province is comprised of sixteen governorates, Jeddah has been selected as the target place from which to collect a stratified random sample of target subjects for the following reasons:

1. Jeddah is considered the centre of the western region of Saudi Arabia where the Hijazi dialect is commonly spoken. Therefore, collecting data on this dialect from its original place would contribute to ensuring the reliability of data sampling and obtaining significant results related to the target dialect.
2. Since it is the biggest city in the western province (The Hijaz) in terms of population, various kinds of compliments and compliment responses in different situations are likely to be gathered.
3. Jeddah has always been referred to as the 'most open' city in Saudi Arabia. In Arabic, the city's tourism motto is Jeddah Ghair, which translates to 'Jeddah is different' from the other cities of Saudi Arabia. Jeddah is different in its beautiful beaches, seasonal activities, festivals and its people's more tolerant attitudes.
4. Although Saudi Arabia is regarded as a gender-segregated country, Jeddah is relatively socially open with fewer gender-related restrictions compared with other Saudi cities and regions, due to its commercial and tourist location and significance. The variables of gender, age and relationship have been taken into account when collecting, analysing and interpreting the data of the present study to see if they would have any effects on the compliments and the compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect. Communication between both genders is not unusual in Jeddah as its people are known for holding moderate attitudes to male-female interaction while observing Islamic teachings.

The findings of this study will contribute to enriching the literature of previous work on Arabic dialects by showing how Hijazi people exchange compliments, and how compliments are affected by societal norms. Also, this study's findings can be

used to compare the exchange of compliments between an open Arab society and a conservative Arab society. This can be seen through the use of words, phrases and also the usage of strategies of paying compliments and responding to them in terms of gender, age and relationship. Moreover, the findings of this study can be compared with findings on compliment exchanges in a Western country in order to see what potential similarities can be found in terms of strategies, borrowing words, structures especially for some languages that might share some aspects with the Arabic language and Arabic culture.

### 3.4 Data Collection Method

Compliments and compliment responses can be studied in two ways: *observation* of naturally occurring interactions and *elicitation* of speech acts in less natural settings. In specific terms, note-taking and spontaneous speech recording (e.g., Herbert, 1986; Holmes, 1988; Golato, 2002) are the most common instruments for observing and documenting natural data. Elicitation tools such as discourse completion tasks (DCTs: e.g., Yuan, 2002), interviews and questionnaires (e.g., Nelson, El-Bakary and Al-Batal, 1993) are the most common tools for eliciting data. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below summarize the observation and elicitation methods of data collection used in previous studies. By reviewing these studies, it can be said that data collection tools used in previous studies varied according to the nature and objectives of each research study. Moreover, factors such as research type, target language or dialect, participants/target subjects (L1 or L2), gender and age of participants, as well as their social status, play a crucial role in determining the most appropriate tools for data collection.

Table 3.1: A Summary of Observation Methods Used in Data Collection in Previous Studies

| Researcher/s           | Language  | Topic                | Collection Tool                                 | Method of Data Analysis+ variables                     |
|------------------------|---|----------------------|---|--|
| Valdes and Pino (1981) | English-Spanish (American-Mexican bilingual)                        | Compliment responses | Recording and observations of social gatherings | Compliment responses strategies                        |
| Wolfson (1981)         | American English/ non-native speakers (Iranian and Arabic speakers) | Compliments          | Note-taking                                     | Compliment topics; semantics and syntactic structures. |



|                              |  |                                      |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Daikuhara (1986)             | American and English Japanese                    | Compliment and compliment responses  | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; syntactic structures  |
| Holmes (1986); (1988)        | New Zealand English                              | Compliments and compliment responses | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; gender; status; syntactic structures.                               |
| Herbert and Straight (1989)  | American English and South African English       | Compliment responses                 | Note-taking  | Compliment responses strategies   |
| Herbert (1990)               | American English                                 | Compliments and compliment responses | Note-taking  | Compliment responses strategies; gender; focus; syntactic structures.   |
| Yanez (1990)                 | Spanish (Chicano women from southern New Mexico) | Compliments and compliment Responses | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; syntactic structures; compliment responses strategies.   |
| Herbert (1991)               | Polish and American English                      | Compliments and compliment responses | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; syntactic structure.   |
| Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001) | Jordanian Arabic                                 | Compliment responses                 | Note-taking  | Compliment responses strategies; gender   |
| Golato (2002)                | German and American English                      | Compliment responses                 | Video-taped dinner-table conversations and audio-taped telephone conversations | Compliment responses strategies   |
| Migdadi (2003)               | Jordanian Arabic                                 | Compliments and compliment responses | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; syntactic patterns; positive semantic carriers; format of compliments; types of compliment responses |
| Farghal and Haggan (2006)    | Kuwaiti speakers learning English (EFL)          | Compliment responses                 | Note-taking  | Compliment responses strategies   |
| Parisi and Wogan (2006)      | American English                                 | Compliments                          | Audio recording of naturally occurring conversation                            | Compliment topics; gender   |
| Lee (2009)                   | Singapore Chinese                                | Compliment and compliment responses  | Tape recording and jotting down  | Compliment topics and compliment responses strategies   |
| Adachi (2011)                | Japanese   | Compliment and compliment responses  | Recording conversations  | Compliment topics; syntactic structures; compliment responses strategies; status.                                       |
| Othman (2011)                | Malaysian  | Compliment and compliment responses  | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; relationship.   |
| Katsuta (2012)               | English American and Japanese                    | Compliments and compliment responses | Recording conversation   | Compliment topics and compliment responses strategies.  |
| AlAmro (2013)                | Najdi Saudi                                      | Compliments and compliment responses | Note-taking  | Compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; syntactic structure; gender; age                                    |

Table 3.2: A Summary of Elicitation Methods Used in Data Collection in Previous Studies

| Researcher/s                          | Language  | Topic                                | Collection Tool                          | Method of Data Analysis+ variables   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Knapp et al. (1984)                   | American English                                | Compliments and compliment responses | Recall and interviewing                  | compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; syntactic structure; status; age; gender |
| Nelson, El-Bakary and Al-Batal (1993) | Egyptian Arabic and American English            | Compliments                          | Interviewing and questionnaire           | Compliment topics; syntactic structures; relationship; gender; compliment frequency          |
| Nelson, Al-Batal and Echols (1996)    | American English and Syrian Arabic              | Compliment responses                 | interviewing                             | Compliment responses strategies  |
| Lorenzo (2001)                        | British and Spanish                             | Compliment responses                 | DCT                                      | Compliment responses strategies; gender.   |
| Yuan (2002)                           | Mandarin (dialect spoken in Kunming, China)     | Compliments and compliment responses | DCT                                      | Compliments; syntactic patterns; semantic formulas; response strategies.                     |
| Chen (2003)                           | Mandarin Chinese                                | Compliment responses                 | DCT                                      | Compliment responses strategies  |
| AlFalasi (2007)                       | Emirati Arabic (female NSs and NNSs of English) | Compliment responses                 | DCT and interviewing                     | Compliment responses strategies  |
| AbdulSattar and Lah (2008)            | Iraqi Arabic (EFL students)                     | Compliment responses                 | DCT                                      | Compliment responses strategies  |
| Behnam and Amizadeh (2008)            | American English and Persian                    | Compliments and compliment responses | Video-taped TV interviews of celebrities | Compliment topics; compliment responses strategies   |
| Shehzad (2010)                        | Pakistani                                       | Compliment responses                 | DCT                                      | Compliment responses strategies  |
| Yousefvand (2010)                     | Persian   | Compliment responses                 | DCT                                      | Compliment responses strategies; gender  |
| Lin, Woodfield and Ren (2012)         | Taiwan Chinese and Mainland Chinese             | Compliments                          | DCT                                      | Compliment topics; region  |
| Alqarni (2017)                        | English (Saudi EFL students)                    | Compliment and compliment responses  | DCT                                      | Compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; gender                                   |
| Mascuñana et al. (2018)               | Filipino  | Compliment responses                 | DCT                                      | Compliment responses strategies; gender  |

Table 3.1 shows that note-taking is the most common tool of observation used by the researchers investigating compliment exchanges in L1. This tool allows researchers to explore many aspects of language (e.g., semantics and syntactic patterns, length of compliments, directness and indirectness) as well as several social variables such as gender, age, relationship and social status. On the other hand, Table 3.2 shows that DCT has been the most common tool for eliciting data and that it tends to be used by scholars investigating how non-native speakers of English respond to compliments written in English. In most studies, research participants were limited to college students who belonged to the same generation, unlike those ones which used note-taking tools. Moreover, some

studies that used discourse completion tests (DCT) aimed to compare two languages or two dialects and spot the similarities and differences between them (cross-linguistic research), unlike other studies which adopted note-taking and focused on intralingual research.

Although elicitation tools have been widely used in various types of study (e.g., Nelson, El-Bakary and Al-Batal, 1993; Yousefvand, 2010; Mascuñana et al., 2018; Chen, 2003; Shehzad, 2010), naturally occurring data have the advantage of reflecting the actual use of language. Researchers such as Labov (1972), Hymes (1974) and Wolfson (1983) strongly advocate participant observation as a data collection tool. In this respect, Labov (1972) believes that authentic, natural data can be obtained from observing how people use language while they are unaware of being watched. With regard to people's communication, including compliments and compliment responses as examples of speech acts, Wolfson (1983, p. 95) claims that 'ethnographic research is the only reliable method about the way speech acts function in interaction'.

Golato (2003) carried out a thorough analysis of data collection methods for speech acts, compliments and compliment responses. She suggested that field observation could be a useful data collection tool provided that the researcher uses it carefully and pays close attention to non-verbal communication aspects of compliment responses such as nodding one's head, blushing and smiling which usually accompany compliment responses.

### ***3.4.1 Rationale for Using Field Observation Strategy***

The main aim of the present study is to investigate compliment events in the Hijazi Saudi culture based on naturally occurring data. The following points explain why naturally occurring data is more appropriate for this study and the advantages of using *field observation* strategy in observing naturally occurring data in Hijazi dialect.

1. The Arabic language exists in three varieties: Classical Arabic (CA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Spoken/Colloquial Arabic (Abdelali, 2004). Abdelali (2004) defined CA as the language of the Holy Quran and the language of early Arabic literature. According to Abdelali, the difference between CA and

Qur'anic Arabic is basically a lexical one. The lexical items used in the Holy Quran require further explanation most of the time. MSA was defined by Abdelali (2004) as a mixture of CA and modern Arabic which also includes words from other dialects common in all Arab countries as well as words that have been standardized due to modern technology and its various innovations. In addition, MSA is the formal language used in all Arab countries in oral and written discourse such as education, media, and literature. It is also used in formal contexts such as TV, radio programmes and official letters and governmental circulars. This language variety is formally called 'Fus'ha'. It has to be pointed out that the terms MSA and CA are sometimes used interchangeably. MSA is to a large degree derived from CA and has nearly the same format and formality.

Spoken/ Colloquial Arabic refers to local Arabic which differs from country to country in the Arab world and is used by native speakers of Arabic in their daily communication and interactions. Moreover, colloquial Arabic, the so-called 'dialect', is the language spoken by native speakers of Arabic in their everyday interactions. It has many regional versions and is used among friends, family members and colleagues when they communicate with one another, exchange compliments, reciprocate greetings and perform a variety of other speech acts. Therefore, in order to obtain more natural results from examining compliments and compliment responses in Arabic generally, and in Saudi dialects particularly, it is logically necessary to focus on the spontaneous form of Arabic which Hijazi Saudis use in their daily interactions, i.e., the Hijazi dialect.

2. Observing spoken conversations has been chosen as the most appropriate method for this study since natural spoken language, unlike written language, reflects the actual use of language particularly in an Arabic dialect such as Saudi Hijazi dialect. Moreover, as discussed in point # 1, the language used in written texts (MSA) is not the language which Arabs use in their daily interactions (colloquial Arabic). Therefore, if written texts were to be used as DCT to investigate compliment exchanges, participants would use MSA instead

of colloquial Arabic. By doing so, non-verbal responses, sociocultural expressions and swear words, which are typically used more in colloquial Arabic than MSA, cannot be observed. Therefore, such important aspects of colloquial Arabic might simply be overlooked or unobserved when using written texts. Furthermore, the participation of the target subjects will not be natural or spontaneous, and they might intend to choose their words or phrases carefully even though they do not use them in their daily interactions. This is why the present study did not use written texts as the source of its data.

3. Observation using note-taking tool enables the researcher to collect various instances of compliment exchanges from diverse settings and a large number of speakers. This is an enormous advantage of this method (Golato, 2003).

#### ***3.4.2 Potential Limitations and Solutions***

As pointed out by Golato (2003), each data collection tool has its own potential limitations, and observation is no exception. Below are some limitations or disadvantages to observation with some possible solutions to overcome them.

1. One potential disadvantage to observation using note-taking is that the researcher and fieldworkers sometimes depend on memory to retrieve information about the target subjects' verbal and non-verbal responses and communication. This might be the case when the researcher and fieldworkers delay recording the target subjects' responses. To minimize dependence on memory, the researcher asked the fieldworkers to record the interlocutors' compliments and compliment responses immediately after they hear or notice them. The fieldworkers were also provided with a small notebook designed by the researcher for collecting data from the target subjects (see Section 3.5) to help them reduce or minimize their reliance on memory. It was easy for them to carry the notebook and record compliment events wherever they found themselves in any social settings. Moreover, they were trained to interfere in conversations as little as possible and to record data in the notebooks as soon as they obtain them. (Fieldworkers' training is discussed in detail in Section

## 3.6.1.)

2. Another disadvantage of this data collection tool is that it is difficult to control the social variables under study. For example, in most studies some social characteristics of target subjects, such as age and socioeconomic status, etc., are often neglected and left unreported (Beebe and Cummings, 1996). In the present study, the main social variables such as gender and age have been recorded when collecting data. Gender is easy to determine, especially in a gender-segregated country such as Saudi Arabia, by merely looking at the interlocutor's physical appearance and clothes. To determine which of three age groups the subject belonged to, the researcher and his assistants depended on his/her physical features. It is not hard for the fieldworkers to determine the approximate age of the target subjects, especially when they are familiar with the age of their relatives, peers and friends.

### 3.5 Data Collection Tool

A documentation sheet which was developed by AlAmro (2013) was adapted and modified by the researcher to be used for field observation as a note-taking tool to help gather data and reduce the time for recording (writing down) the details of the compliment events. This tool is in the form of a small notebook which can be carried by the fieldworkers easily. It consists of 30 pages. The researcher made copies of this notebook and distributed them among the fieldworkers. To validate the data collection tool, a pilot study was carried out (as discussed in section 3.11). This data collection tool consists of two parallel columns to simulate the real interaction between two interlocutors. The one on the right (left in the English copy) includes the compliment and the complimenter's demographic information. The left column (right in the English copy) has blank areas to be filled with compliment responses and the complimentee's information. The researcher chose this design intentionally to make it easy for the fieldworkers to fill the blanks with the required information. The fieldworkers filled in the blanks with the observed compliments, compliment responses, gender, age, and other information about the interaction setting. (See Table 3.3).

## جدول 3.3 : أداة جمع البيانات

| أداة بحث  |   |
|---|---|
| اسم الباحث الميداني (جامع البيانات):  | التاريخ:  |
| معلومات عن الشخص المدح  | معلومات عن الشخص المدح  |
| المدح/ الإطراء/ الثناء:   | المدح/ الإطراء/ الثناء:   |
| الرد على المدح:   | أي حركة غير لفظية:  |
| أي رد غير لفظي:   | أي حركة غير لفظية:  |
| الجنس: <input type="checkbox"/> ذكر <input type="checkbox"/> أنثى   | الجنس: <input type="checkbox"/> ذكر <input type="checkbox"/> أنثى                                 |
| العمر: <input type="checkbox"/> 55+ <input type="checkbox"/> 35-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-36   | العمر: <input type="checkbox"/> 55+ <input type="checkbox"/> 35-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-36 |
| موضوع المدح:  |   |
| موقع المدح في المحادثة: <input type="checkbox"/> فاتحة المحادثة <input type="checkbox"/> ضمن المحادثة <input type="checkbox"/> خاتمة المحادثة |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> غير ذلك ، حدد : .....  |   |
| صلة العلاقة بين المتحاورين:   |   |
| معلومات عن المحادثة:  |   |
| 1. المكان:.....   |   |
| 2. الوقت:.....  |   |
| 3. موضوع المحادثة:.....   |   |
| هل تعتقد أن المدح لم يكن صادقاً؟  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> نعم <input type="checkbox"/> لا  |   |
| لماذا؟ .....  |   |

Table 3.3: A Translated Copy of the Arabic Research Tool

| Research Tool  |   |
|--|---|
| Name of fieldworker (data collector):  | Date:   |
| <b>Information on complimenter</b>   | <b>Information on complementee</b>  |
| Exact compliment:  | Exact compliment responses:   |
| Any nonverbal element:   | Any nonverbal response:   |
| Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female  | Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female                           |
| Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-55 <input type="checkbox"/> +55  | Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-55 <input type="checkbox"/> +55 |
| Compliment topic:  |   |
| Linguistic context: <input type="checkbox"/> conversation opener <input type="checkbox"/> within conversation <input type="checkbox"/> conversation closer |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other; specify: .....   |   |
| Relationship between interlocutors:  |   |
| <b>Setting:</b>  |   |
| 1. Place:.....   |   |
| 2. Time:.....  |   |
| 3. Conversation Topic:.....  |   |
| Do you think the compliment was insincere?   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |   |
| Why? .....   |   |

### **3.6 Fieldworkers**

The data collection team consisted of the researcher and nine fieldworkers from different age groups who live in Jeddah city. According to Bernard (2011, p. 351), 'in all cultures you can't go into certain areas and situations because you are a woman or a man' and given the fact that Saudi Arabia is a gender-segregated society, five of the nine fieldworkers were female, recruited to assist the researcher in collecting data particularly from women. I tried to involve an equal number of male and female data collectors in order not to suffer from loss of important data because of the gender of data collectors. The majority of the fieldworkers were young people between the ages of 23 and 35.

The fieldworkers were recruited through close personal contacts; they are the researcher's relatives and close friends. They are highly educated; two of them are lecturers and have Master's degrees in Applied Linguistics, and the rest hold Bachelor's degrees. The researcher intentionally chose these educated people because they are expected to be familiar with research and its basic elements, hence making work with them easy and saves time.

#### ***3.6.1 Fieldworker Training***

As has been highlighted above, the job of fieldworkers is to listen for compliment events in real-life situations and to record them by writing their details on a documentation sheet. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection tool, two types of training (theoretical explanation and practical training) have been used to ensure that the fieldworkers are similar and reliable in their processes and judgements. Training methods provided the researcher's team members with an overview of compliment events and an opportunity to apply some techniques for collecting natural data. The following two sections discuss this training in some detail.

##### ***3.6.1a Theoretical Explanation***

The researcher held a session with his team members to explain what they needed to do and how they should do it. The session consisted of two main parts: A) an explanation of the research topic and B) the fieldworkers' task. The first part was



done by the researcher through defining compliments and compliment responses to familiarize the fieldworkers with these two key terms. I explained that compliments are expressions of praise given by one person to another person for their abilities, talents, performances, or personal traits. I also explained that the individual who gives a compliment is known as a complimenter, and the person who is complimented is known as a complimentee. I clarified that some utterances such as *alf alf mabrook azzawaj*, which means ‘congratulations on marriage’, are expressions of congratulations rather than compliments. Moreover, I reviewed the categories of compliment topics that have been identified in the literature, specifically *appearance, performance/skill, possession, personality* and *children*. I also reviewed *explicit* and *implicit* compliments. I explained that compliments might be explicit such as *sa’at-ek hulwah* ‘your watch is beautiful’ or implicit, such as *atmana alagi sadiqah zayyek* ‘I hope I find a friend like you’ in which the complimenter expresses his/her admiration indirectly. Furthermore, I defined compliment responses as a declaration that the complimentee heard and responded to the compliment. I told the fieldworkers that the complimentee's response could be verbal, nonverbal (such as smiling, nodding, or making an embarrassed face), or there could be no response at all when the complimentee just keeps silent upon hearing a compliment. The fieldworkers were told that there was a special blank on the documentation sheet to note such non-verbal responses if observed.

The second part elaborated on the fieldworkers’ job. As assistants in collecting data, the fieldworkers were asked to collect as many instances of compliment events as possible. Contexts for these events could include, but were not limited to, family gatherings, restaurants, cafes, streets, mosques and malls. The fieldworkers were to write down the compliments and the compliment responses in such events directly after hearing them to avoid forgetting any part of them. In other words, their main task was to write down the compliment event verbatim, put ticks next to the correct demographic information and write a few words describing the event (see Table 3.3 in section 3.5). At the end of the session, the researcher received positive feedback from the fieldworkers, listened to their questions and answered them to the best of his ability.

### *3.6.1b Practical Training*

To simulate reality and to ensure that the data collectors were qualified and ready to observe and record compliment events, roleplaying was used with the fieldworkers. The roleplaying was executed by friends and relatives in twelve true-to-life situations which covered various types of compliment topics (e.g., appearance, skill, personality, possession and children) and social variables such as gender and age. The roleplay scenarios are described in Appendix 2. After viewing the roleplay, they were asked to write down what they observed to make sure they followed the instructions which they were provided with in the training session.

The first four situations (1-4 in Appendix 2) were used as models of paying compliments and responding to them. The researcher gave the trainees a demonstration of how to record a compliment event and write down the target subjects' information in the relevant space provided in the notebook. In situations 5-8, the trainees were asked to work in groups of three and write down what they observed in the documentation sheets provided for them. These situations were carried out with the help of the researcher. The last four situations (9-12) were carried out individually to ensure that the trainees were able to do their tasks on their own independently. They were asked to discuss their observations or recordings with the researcher and their fellow fieldworkers. There were minor mistakes in writing down some compliments which were discussed and corrected immediately. A selection of situations was repeated as extra practice to ensure the fieldworkers learned how to collect data on compliments and compliment responses.

After conducting the theoretical and practical sessions successfully, each fieldworker was provided with a data collection notebook in which to record the data which they would observe. Furthermore, the researcher supplied the fieldworkers with his contact details and kept regular contact with them during the data collection period in case they encountered any unforeseen problem or difficulty. The instructions provided for the fieldworkers and the training sessions

which they had with the researcher help account for the consistency of data collection.

### 3.7 Target Subjects

The target subjects in the present study were Saudi males and females living in Jeddah city. The target subjects included three age groups: a **young group** (18-35), a **middle-aged group** (36-55), and an **older group** (55+). The choice of these three groups was made as an attempt to represent most age groups of Saudi society. The young group has grown up with the internet and social media, which might make them more influenced by technology, fashions, etc. and less influenced by traditional and cultural norms than the elder group (55+) which is expected to adhere to religious rules and traditional values more. The middle-aged group (36-55) grew up in a more conservative society than the younger generation, but are also influenced by technology and its modern products despite their relative adherence to old traditions and conventions. So, this group shares features from both groups, the young group and the elder group.

The interlocutors' (complimenters and complimentees) relationships were divided into two groups: **familiar**, including relatives and close friends, and **non-familiar**, including strangers and acquaintances. Acquaintances are those who know each other through a third party or by sight or name without any close relationship.

### 3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher and the fieldworkers spent about four months collecting instances of compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect, from the sixth of January 2020 to the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2020. As a result, a database of 390 naturally occurring compliment exchanges has been collected. These exchanges consisted of 390 compliments and 390 responses, in which 482 response strategies were observed. That means some complimentees' responses involved more than one response strategy (for more details see Chapter 5, Sections 5.1 and 5.8). The 390 compliment exchanges were collected from same-gender and cross-gender interlocutors distributed as follows: 117 male-male (M-M), 30 male-female (M-F), 192 female-female (F-F), and 51 female-male (F-M) compliment events. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four, Section 4.2.1a. (The dataset will be available

upon request from the researcher. Please email me at fahhadalqahtani@hotmail.com if you are interested).

The data from real-life interactions have been gathered from different places in Jeddah city and from various social settings and events such as family gatherings, tribal gatherings, friends' gatherings, wedding celebrations, malls, hospitals, cafes, workplaces, mosques and corniches. Social variables such as gender, age and relationship besides contextual information were recorded by the researcher and his fieldworkers. As illustrated earlier in Section 3.6.1, the data collectors were instructed to write down the compliment event immediately after it took place. The researcher kept in touch with the fieldworkers during the data collection stage in order to answer their inquiries and keep an eye on the progress of the data collection process.

### ***3.8.1 Ethical Considerations***

Since the collected data were natural and spontaneous, they were anonymized at the point of recording, i.e., there was no link or suggestion to the target subjects' identity. To meet the ethical standards of academic research, minors under the age of eighteen were not recorded. After collecting the data and recording them in the notebooks (documentation sheets), the fieldworkers handed in the notebooks to the researcher either personally or electronically as an email attachment. The obtained data have been kept confidential and used for the sole purposes of the current study. The ethical review committee at the University of Sussex gave the researcher an official certificate of approval to carry out the present research study. The reference number of this certificate is ER/FA276/4, and it was issued in 12-Dec-2019 (The full information about this certificate is presented in Appendix 4).

### **3.9 Analytical Frameworks**

This section presents the frameworks developed for analysing compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi Saudi Dialect. It starts with the analytical framework of compliment topics followed by the categorization of compliments' syntactic patterns, direct and indirect strategies of paying compliments and finally

the categorization of the strategies used in compliment responses with a definition of each category.

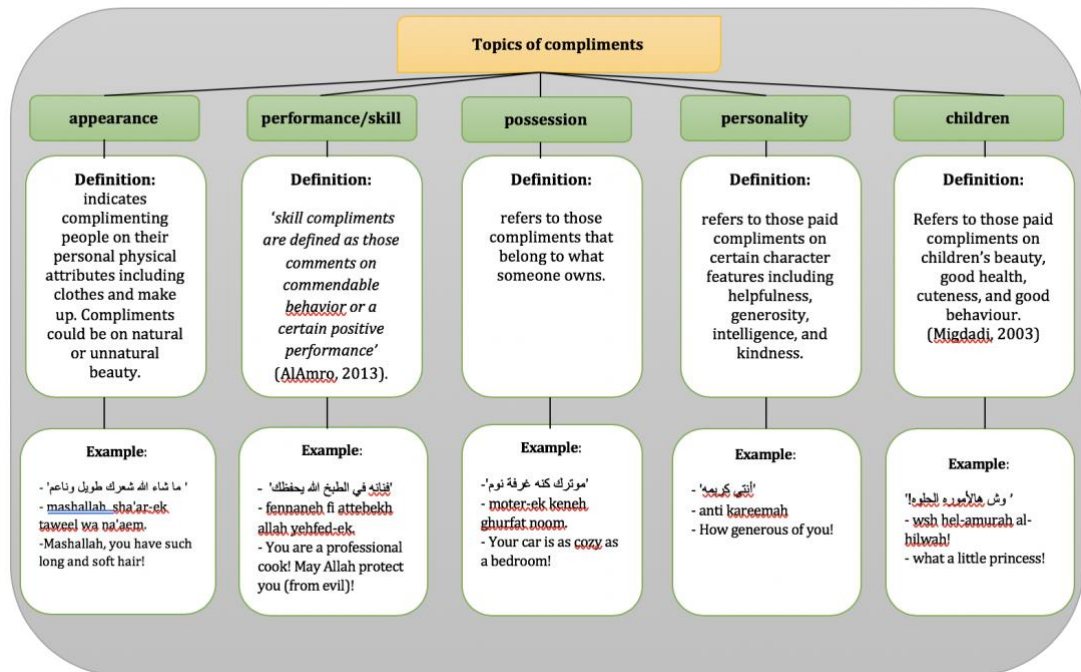


Figure 3.1: Analytical Framework of Compliment Topics

### 3.9.1 Analytical Framework of Compliment Topics

For the categorization of compliment topics, the researcher adopted the categorization of Holmes (1986) with some modification. The modification was made by just adding the category of *children* discussed in Migdadi's (2003) study on investigating compliments in Jordanian Arabic. These categories have been chosen because they could flexibly be applied to the Hijazi Saudi culture and dialect. So, the compliments of the present study were classified into five basic categories: appearance, performance/ skill, possession, personality and children as shown in (Figure 3.1). These five categories are presented with definitions and examples from the Hijazi dialect.

### 3.9.2 Analytical Framework of Compliments' Syntactic Patterns

The collected compliments were examined and classified into 11 syntactic patterns. These were the most frequent patterns in the data. The least frequently occurring compliment patterns were tabulated as 'Other'.

Compliment patterns include syntactic patterns and sometimes discourse markers. These discourse markers are generally religious phrases such as *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you' which are commonly used in complimenting people in the Hijazi dialect. Rather than combining the discourse markers under a single category, *mashallah* is presented in the compliment structure is that this phrase was treated separately in previous Arabic studies. This will make it easier to compare this study with previous studies. This phrase plays an important part in discussing compliments and the evil eye in Hijazi culture.

In addition, the phrase *ya wad* 'oh boy' is used frequently in male-to-male exchanges, so it is presented separately for easier analysis of the gender differences. More details and examples from the Hijazi dialect are discussed in detail in Section 4.2.3.

Table 3.4: Syntactic Patterns of Compliments in the Hijazi Dialect

| Compliments' Syntactic Patterns   |
|---|
| Pattern 1: ( <i>mashallah</i> ) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ ( <i>mashallah</i> ) |
| Pattern2: ( <i>mashallah</i> ) what NP (ADJ) DEM ( <i>ya wad</i> )            |
| Pattern 3: ( <i>mashallah</i> ) what DEM NP ADJ ( <i>ya wad</i> )             |
| Pattern 4: ( <i>ya wad</i> ) NP V   |
| Pattern 5: I love/like NP   |
| Pattern 6: <i>Mashallah</i> ADJ   |
| Pattern 7: NP (DEM) PREP NP   |
| Pattern 8: (NP) (V) (PRO) Superlative form                                    |
| Pattern 9: ( <i>ya wad</i> ) NP DEM ADJ                                       |
| Pattern 10: DEM NP PREP DEM NP  |
| Pattern 11: ( <i>mashallah</i> ) V (NP) ADJ                                   |
| Pattern 12: Others  |

### **3.9.3 Analytical Framework of Direct and Indirect Compliment Strategies**

Compliments in the present study, as is the case in other studies, were classified into two main compliment strategies: Explicit/Direct and Implicit/Indirect compliments (e.g., For French see Weiland, 1995; Egyptian Arabic, Nelson et al., 1993; Polish, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989; Jordanian Arabic, Migdadi, 2003) (as discussed previously in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2). Explicitness and implicitness play a significant role in paying compliments; therefore, it is necessary to define the differences between them. Explicit compliments refer to 'a direct positive comment in which the form contains at least one positive semantic carrier' (Sun, 2002, p. 24). The following are examples of explicit compliments:

- *Your bag is really amazing.*
- *What a beautiful car you have!*
- *You did a great job.*
- *I like your jacket.*

On the other hand, Implicit compliments refer to 'a general statement without a positive semantic carrier, where the addressee is not directly (addressed) but the positive meaning can be inferred from what is said in a particular context' (Yuan, 2002, p. 192). Examples of this strategy are:

- *I wish I could do my job like you do.*
- *I hope I find a friend like you.*

### **3.9.4 Analytical Framework of Compliment Response Strategies**

The present study used Herbert's (1986) categorization of compliment responses which provides the basic framework for investigating compliment response types. This taxonomy is divided into three macro-level categories: Agreement, Non-agreement, and Other Interpretations, with twelve micro-level categories. (The full taxonomy is presented with examples in Appendix 3.) This helps investigate Saudi Arabic speech acts, since *Other Interpretations* category is modified into new subscales which correlate with features of Saudi culture. Therefore, according to

the collected data, compliment responses have been classified into fifteen micro-level categories which are defined and clarified in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5: *Analytical Framework of Compliment Response Strategies*

| Compliment Response Strategy |                                   | Definition   | Example   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| macro-level Category         | micro-level category              |  |   |
| A. Agreement                 | 1. <b>Appreciation Token</b>      | A verbal acceptance of the compliment.   | Thanks' 'thank you; cheers                      |
|                              | 2. <b>Praise Upgrade</b>          | 'In which the hearer accepts the compliment and asserts that the complimentary force is insufficient' (Herbert, 1986, p. 78).                                  | They are not. I made them more beautiful.       |
|                              | 3. <b>Comment History</b>         | The addressee offers a comment on the complimented topic/object to shift the force from the addressee via a reference to the past (Herbert, 1986, p. 78).      | I bought it from Amazon.                        |
|                              | 4. <b>Reassignment</b>            | In which the addressee agrees with the compliment assertion, but the complimentary force is transferred to some third person or object (Herbert, 1986, p. 78). | It is a gift from my mother.                    |
|                              | 5. <b>Return compliment</b>       | The praise is returned to the complimenter.  | Your eyes are more beautiful.                   |
|                              | 6. <b>Offering</b>                | The addressee offers the praised object to the speaker.  | Take it; it's yours.                            |
|                              | 7. <b>Invocation and Blessing</b> | Supplicating (making a prayer) for someone.  | May Allah bless you.<br>May Allah protect you.  |
| B. Non-agreement             | 8. <b>Question</b>                | The complimentee questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of the compliment (Herbert, 1986, p. 78).  | Really?<br>Do you think so?                     |
|                              | 9. <b>Disagreement</b>            | 'In which the speaker asserts that the object complimented is not worthy of praise; the first speaker's assertion is in error' (Herbert, 1986, p. 78).         | On the contrary, I don't like it.               |
|                              | 10. <b>Qualification</b>          | The addressee qualifies the original assertion, usually with but, though, well, etc. (Herbert, 1986, p. 78).   | It's nice, but it would be nicer if it's black. |



|                                 |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
|                                 | <b>11. No Acknowledgment</b>          | Giving no response [silence] or changing the topic.  | Silence; I am so busy.                                |
| <b>C. Other interpretations</b> | <b>12. evil-eye (envy) protection</b> | Resorting to the use of some religious expressions or short verses from the Holy Quran in order to drive the evil eye away (AlAmro, 2013). | Say mashallah. Mention Allah.                         |
|                                 | <b>13. Joking</b>                     | Humorous utterances.   | A: Your cheeks are like flowers.<br>B: smell them     |
|                                 | <b>14. Request Interpretation</b>     | The complimentee interprets the compliment as an indirect way for asking a favor or doing something rather than a simple compliment.       | What are you after?!<br>What do you want?             |
|                                 | <b>15. Non-verbal Response</b>        | Any non-verbal expressions that might appear on the face.  | smile; anger; laugh; nod; gestures; facial expression |

### 3.10 Data Analysis

A statistical analysis was used to analyse and interpret the qualitative data in a quantifiable manner (Baun and Clarke, 2006). In addition, content analysis and thematic analysis are two methods that can be used for coding and categorising qualitative data (Wilkinson, 2000). Content analysis tends to be more profound and detailed as it aims to examine the data very closely, and thematic coding is used to classify and analyse data qualitatively (Ryan and Bernard, 2000). However, it has been argued that thematic coding can be used to conduct a quantitative analysis of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). In this study, data have been analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

#### 3.10.1 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of the data consisted of three stages:

- A.** The collected data were both transliterated and translated literally (word by word) and functionally into English as accurately as possible, as illustrated below, in order to be comprehensible for non-Arab readers.

**Example:**

|                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Arabic compliment      | → | "ما شاء الله أكلك مره طعم"              |
| Transliteration        | → | ma sha' allah akl-ik merrah ti'aim      |
| Literal Translation    | → | What willed Allah food-your very tasty. |
| Functional Translation | → | Mashallah, your food is really tasty.   |

\*mashallah (ما شاء الله): May Allah's grace be upon you.

**B.** The data were examined closely and classified as follows: topics of compliments, compliment patterns and compliment responses.

### **B.1 Topics of compliments:**

The researcher started investigating compliments according to the expressions used in saying them, and this led him to put them in five categories; i.e., topics of compliments as shown in Figure 3.1. Moreover, the researcher looked for distinct phrases used in paying compliments, such as religious phrases, proverbs and swear words. (These phrases are defined and discussed with some examples in Chapter 4. Section 4.2.5a.) Then, he highlighted these expressions using different colors, coded and tabulated them.

### **B.2 Compliment patterns:**

The researcher parsed 390 compliments into their component parts. These compliments were broken down and coded using the following abbreviations: NP= Noun Phrase, INT= Intensifier, ADJ= Adjective, PRO= Pronoun, VP= Verb Phrase, DEM PRO= Demonstrative Pronoun and DM= Discourse Marker. This would help arrange compliments in a simple table and present them in distinct syntactic structures along with examples. At the same time, the table would help readers identify the various syntactic structures of compliments and see examples of these structures both quickly and easily.

### **B.3 Compliment responses:**

The researcher, following the taxonomy shown in Table 3.5, carefully examined the target subjects' responses, and classified them into fifteen micro-level categories. These responses were sorted according to the complimentee's gender, age and relationship.

- C. Since one of the objectives of the present study is to find any correlation between the social variables of the target subjects, the compliments and compliment responses were closely examined to see if such correlations with age, gender and relationship status can be established.

### **3.10.2 Quantitative Analysis**

The quantitative analysis of the data collected for the present study presents the data statistically in terms of frequency, proportions and a chi-square test. The researcher used Microsoft Excel to generate descriptive statistics for the data because it is one of the most common packages to manipulate and analyse complex data with uncomplicated instructions. The descriptive statistics include the frequency and percentage of compliment topics, compliment syntactic patterns and compliment response strategies.

A chi-square test is a statistical test used to examine the relationship between two variables to determine whether there is a correlation between the two variables or not. *P* value is a measurement tool derived from the chi-square test, and the significance of the correlation between the two variables is determined based on its value. If the result of the *p* value is less than or equal to 0.05 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), it shows that there is a significant correlation between them, and this indicates that does not happen by chance. The chi-square test was applied in Excel to identify any significant correlations between the social variables of the target subjects (gender, age and relationship), and the strategies of paying compliments and responding to them. The Microsoft Excel output helped the researcher present the findings of the study in tables, charts and graphs. This quantitative presentation of the data of the present study would also help the reader identify the findings readily and understand them easily.

### **3.11 Reliability and Validity**

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the data used in the present study, two significant points were taken into account: reliability of data sampling and reliability of the research tool.

1. Data were collected in the city of Jeddah, the centre of the western region, where the Hijazi dialect is commonly spoken. Therefore, collecting data from its original place contributes greatly to the reliability of data sampling, hence obtaining accurate results related to the target dialect, the Hijazi dialect.
2. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection tool (documentation sheet), several steps were taken:
  - a. After designing the documentation sheet, the researcher sent it to three academics to review it and give their feedback on it with an eye to improving it and ensuring its reliability as a valid tool.
  - b. A pilot study was also conducted in order to refine the data collection tool. The researcher gave copies of the tool to some of his friends and asked them to record compliment events among their friends. He also asked them to turn to him when they encountered any difficulty related to the tool.
  - c. The academics' comments on the data collection tool and the outcomes of the pilot study helped the researcher make some changes to the documentation sheet, such as redesigning the documentation sheet, changing some terms and restructuring some options.
  - d. Before collecting the data, a set of training sessions were conducted for the fieldworkers. These sessions consisted of theoretical explanations and some practical techniques (See Section 3.6.1) for collecting natural data, besides engaging the fieldworkers in roleplaying to prepare them very well for their task and ensure they carry it out both satisfactorily and accurately.
  - e. Since the present study involved a group of fieldworkers representing both genders, male and female, the 'inter-rater reliability' of the documentation provided by the fieldworkers was measured using a measure known as 'Cohen's Kappa' (Bernard, 2011) in which the level of reliability should not go below 85%. The inter-rater reliability of the documentation provided by the fieldworkers was measured during the practical training. The inter-rater reliability level was 97.2% which means the fieldworkers had no serious

difficulties or issues in collecting such compliment exchanges from the target subjects in the present study.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter provided a discussion of the various methodological elements of the present thesis. It reviewed the observation and elicitation tools that were used in previous studies. It elaborated on the design of the data collection tool used in the study and provided reasons why observation was chosen to collect natural data on the compliments and compliment responses in the Hijazi dialect given by the participants in this study. This chapter also showed how the fieldworkers were trained by the researcher to collect naturally occurring data that would help realize the objectives of the study and answer its research questions. Ethical considerations which were taken into account when collecting data from the participants were also presented. Moreover, the data collection procedure was discussed, and the data analysis frameworks were presented with some examples. The qualitative and quantitative aspects of the present thesis were presented and discussed in detail. A discussion of the reliability and validity of the data collection was also provided. The following chapter presents an elaborate discussion of the Hijazi compliments and the findings which the researcher arrived at after closely analysing the collected data on the Hijazi compliments given by the sample of the study.

## **Chapter Four: Hijazi Compliments**

#### 4.1 Introduction

The findings of this study are based on 390 compliment exchanges collected in the Hijazi dialect. These exchanges consist of 390 compliments and 482 responses. (Responses are discussed in Chapter 5.) The number of responses does not match the number of compliments because some responses involve two types of response strategies (This is explained in detail in Chapter Five, Section 5.1 and 5.8).

This chapter presents the findings on 390 compliments which have been collected in the Hijazi Dialect of Saudi Arabia. These findings will show how the compliment events correlate with the interlocutors' gender, age and relationship. The findings are presented and discussed in the order of the following research questions:

- **How do Hijazi people give compliments to each other?**
  1. Which topics of compliments are used by Hijazi males and females of different ages when complimenting each other?
  2. What are the syntactic patterns of compliments used by different genders and age groups?
  3. Are direct or indirect compliments more frequently used by Hijazi speakers?
  4. Which the sociocultural phraseologies are most frequently used in paying compliments?

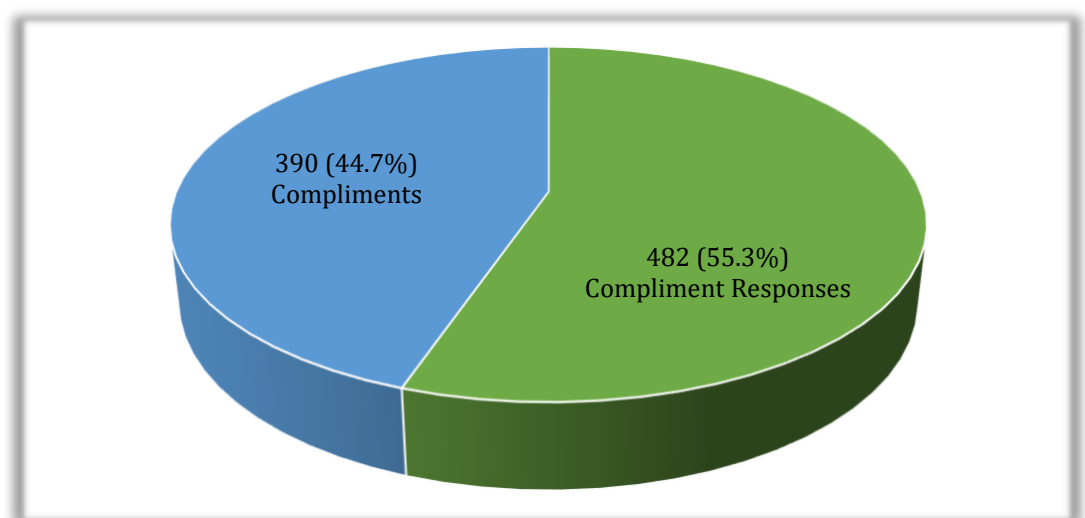


Chart 4.1: *Breakdown of Collected Compliment Exchanges in Hijazi Dialect*

## **4.2 Compliments**

The present research aims to examine compliments paid in the Hijazi colloquial dialect. To achieve this aim, the researcher has investigated and analysed a dataset of 390 examples of compliments in terms of their occurrence, topics, syntactic patterns, directness and indirectness, and the sociocultural phraseologies used in giving compliments.

### ***4.2.1 Occurrence of Compliments***

This subsection discusses who uses compliments more often among Hijazi speakers and discusses compliments with reference to gender, age and relationship. Percentages, tables and charts have been used to represent the data with an eye to clarifying and simplifying the analysis of the data and the findings.

#### ***4.2.1a Occurrence of Compliments and Gender***

This section provides an analysis and discussion of the occurrence of compliments and their correlation with interlocutors' gender. The data, as discussed in Section 3.6, was collected by fieldworkers of both genders. Given that Saudi Arabia is a gender-segregated society, I engaged an equal number of male and female fieldworkers to avoid losing important data due to the gender of the data collectors. Table 4.1 shows that there are some important gender differences in the occurrence of compliments in the dataset. The most apparent trend is that compliments occur more often in same-gender encounters (309 times) than in cross-gender interactions (81 times). This finding is in line with Herbert's (1990) finding on American English compliments and Holmes' (1988) finding on New Zealand English compliments which found that compliments occurred less frequently in cross-gender exchanges with a percentage of 47% of American compliments and 37% of New Zealand compliments. The low occurrence of cross-gender compliments in the present study can be primarily attributed to the social and religious norms and practices which are common in Saudi Arabia, an Arab Muslim country. Another factor which may also contribute to this low occurrence of cross-gender compliments is the fact that Saudi Arabia is a gender-segregated country where direct communication and interaction between both genders is very limited even in workplaces where both men and women work. According to



Migdadi (2003), who studied Jordanian compliments, cross-gender interaction depends on how conservative or liberal a society is.

Table 4.1: *Occurrence of Compliments According to Gender*

| Gender |        | Occurrence |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Male   | Male   | 117        |
| Female | Female | 192        |
| Male   | Female | 30         |
| Female | Male   | 51         |
| Total  |        | 390        |

As Table 4.1 shows, 147 compliments out of 390 were paid by men to men and women, while 243 compliments were given by women to women and men. In addition, the table also shows that women received more compliments from men and women than men. In other words, women gave and received more compliments than men. This finding is in line with other findings of similar studies conducted in other languages such as American English (e.g., Wolfson, 1983; Herbert, 1990), New Zealand English (Holmes, 1988) and Chinese (Yuan, 1998). Holmes (1995) attributed the gender discrepancy to the way women regard compliments and respond to them. She believed that 'women may regard compliments as primarily positively affective speech acts, for instance, expressing solidarity and positive politeness' (p. 123).

#### 4.2.1b *Occurrence of Compliments and Age*

This section provides an analysis and discussion of the occurrence of compliments and their correlation with interlocutors' age. The data, as discussed in Chapter Three, was collected from different generations in the Hijazi region. The majority of the fieldworkers who collected the data, as discussed in Section 3.6, were young people aged between 23 and 35 years. They recorded many complimentary events in encounters with people who were close to their age. This factor might have contributed to the large number of compliments given and received by young people.

According to the complimenter's age, compliments were classified into three age groups which were young (18-35), middle (36-55) and older (55+). Table 4.2

below shows the occurrence of compliments across the three age groups. The young group gave 245 compliments out of 390 and received 275, while the middle group paid 113 compliments and received 89. The older group gave 32 compliments and received 26 compliments.

Table 4.2: *Occurrence of Compliments According to Age*

| Age Group                 | Breakdown of Interlocutors' ages | Compliments | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| <b>Young<br/>(18-35)</b>  | Young - Young                    | 226         | 245   |
|                           | Young - Middle                   | 13          |       |
|                           | Young - Older                    | 6           |       |
| <b>Middle<br/>(36-55)</b> | Middle - Young                   | 40          | 113   |
|                           | Middle - Middle                  | 70          |       |
|                           | Middle - Older                   | 3           |       |
| <b>Older<br/>(55+)</b>    | Older - Young                    | 9           | 32    |
|                           | Older - Middle                   | 6           |       |
|                           | Older - Older                    | 17          |       |
| <b>Total</b>              |                                  | <b>390</b>  |       |

The differences in the number of compliments given and received by different age groups or generations could be attributed to their cultural and religious values which other research studies on compliments also suggested (Hymes, 1974; Wolfson, 1981, 1983). Young people tend to create their own social environments through hanging together and attending social events together. This probably makes them exchange compliments quite often and creates more harmony among them (Manes and Wolfson, 1981). As compliments may sometimes involve exaggerated praise, which might also explain why young people give more. According to Migdadi (2003) older people in Arab Muslim countries were raised in communities which valued and encouraged simplicity, modesty and other Arabo-Islamic values, which might conflict with compliments or exaggerated praise. Excessive complimenting is discouraged in Islam because it may amount to flattery and lead to arrogance. Accordingly, older Muslims tend to adhere to this rule more than the younger Muslim generation.

Moreover, there was a strong relationship between the age of the complimenter and the complementee. 313 compliments out of 390 were paid more to people of the same age, as shown in Table 4.2. The distribution of this number among the various age groups is as follows: young-young 226, middle-middle 70 and older-older 17. This might suggest that speakers are generally more willing to compliment those who belong to their age group than those who belong to other age groups. Another potential interpretation is that people usually interact, communicate and share their thoughts and feelings with other people who belong to their own age group. This finding is in line with other Western and Arabic studies, such as Holmes (1988), Wolfson (1983), Knapp et al. (1984) and Migdadi (2003).

#### *4.2.1c Occurrence of Compliments and Relationship*

This section provides a discussion of the rates of giving compliments based on the interlocutors' social relationship with each other. As discussed in Section 3.7 of Chapter Three, the relationship between the complimenter and complementee was categorized as *familiar* or *unfamiliar*. Familiar relationships include relatives and close friends, and unfamiliar relationship refers to strangers and acquaintances. Chart 4.2 shows that the majority of compliments in the Hijazi community were exchanged between familiar interlocutors, with an occurrence of 334 times, whereas compliments between unfamiliar speakers occurred 56 times out of 390. This finding is in agreement with findings of other studies on compliments (Wolfson, 1989b; Holmes, 1995; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989). (This is discussed previously in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3a.)

This finding may suggest that paying compliments and responding to them among familiar people such as family members and close friends bring them closer together and cement their social relationships. According to Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1989), compliments among strangers are rarely given because they presuppose familiarity with the interlocutors. To presume such familiarity where it is absent can cause embarrassment.

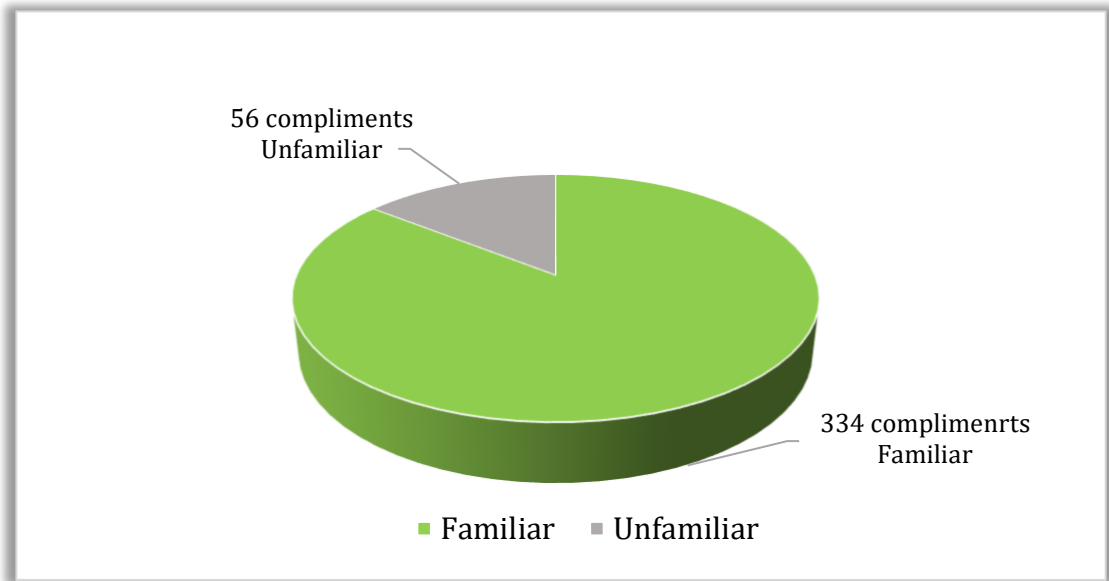


Chart 4.2: Occurrence of Compliment According to The Interlocutors' Relationship

#### 4.2.2 Topics of Compliments

The analysis of the data showed that compliments centred on five topics: *appearance, performance/skill, possession, personality* and *children*. The frequencies and percentages of the topics of the compliments are presented and discussed in Table 4.3. Moreover, the topics of the compliments are analysed and discussed with reference to gender, age and relationship.

Table 4.3: Frequencies and Percentages of Compliment Topics

| Topics | appearance     | performance<br>/skill | possession    | personality  | children     | Total         |
|--------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
|        | 146<br>(37.5%) | 107<br>(27.4%)        | 94<br>(24.1%) | 30<br>(7.7%) | 13<br>(3.3%) | 390<br>(100%) |

In order to classify compliment topics, information about the situational context such as the complimented item, place and interlocutors' relationship played an important role in helping the researcher put each compliment in its distinct category. In most cases, this was very straightforward—the compliments clearly fell into a single category. For example, *ilqa'ik merrah raai'a* 'your presentation is really great' and *tabkh-ik yejanin* 'your cooking is amazing' were grouped under the *performance/skill* category. Another compliment, *'aayun-ek merrah itjanin* 'your eyes are so beautiful' is a clear example of a compliment on *appearance* as it

describes the beauty of the complimentee's eyes, and so it was put under the *appearance* category.

On the other hand, some other examples were less straightforward, and to classify them correctly, it was necessary to examine the information about the situational context such as the complimented item, place and interlocutors' relationship. Some of the less straightforward examples were those compliments on make-up. 'Your make-up is nice', for example, could be considered a compliment on *appearance* if it reflects the beauty of the complimentee's face or a compliment on *possession* if it refers to female beauty products. This was determined after taking into account the information about the situational context in which the compliment took place. Similarly, *mubdi'aah fi almikyaj* 'your make-up is amazing' was a tricky compliment because it could be classified as a compliment on *appearance* or a compliment on *skill*. The contextual information provided by the fieldworker revealed that this compliment took place while preparing for a party and was paid to a make-up artist for her creativity in using make-up. Therefore, it was put in the *performance/skill* category.

Moreover, compliments on an outfit or any piece of clothing can be classified as compliments on *appearance* or *possession*. If the item was worn and reflected outer appearance, then it was classified as *appearance*. But if it was praised after been seen or noticed, for example, in a complimentee's wardrobe, then it was classified as *possession*. This was determined after closely examining the situational information provided for such a case.

In the following, complement topics categories are described and examples are given from Hijazi Dialect.

**Appearance:** indicates complimenting people on their personal and physical attributes including dressing styles, hairstyles and make up and other things related to outer appearance. Compliments could be on natural beauty as in the following example from the data:

- (1) " ما شاء الله، شعرك طويل وناعم "  
 ma sha' allah sha'ar-ik taweel wa na'aem  
 What willed Allah, hair-your long and soft  
 Masha'allah, your hair is long and soft.

This example took place in a café where a middle-aged female complimented her female friend on her long, soft hair, which is part of her outer appearance.

Compliments could also be centred on things the complimentee did to improve their looks such as:

- (2) " حرفيا الميك اب ولا غلطه "  
 harfyeen al-maik up wa la ghaltah  
 Literally the-make-up and no mistake.  
 Your make-up is literally perfect.

In this example, this compliment was given by a young female to her friend (young female) on her excellent make-up. This compliment event took place in a mall.

**Performance/skill:** is defined as 'those comments on commendable behaviour or a certain positive performance' (AlAmro, 2013, p. 13); for example:

- (3) " السلطه مره طعمه والسوس يجنن "  
 a-salatah merrah ti'amah wa a-ssos yejanin  
 The-salad very tasty and the-sauce madden  
 The salad is tasty and the sauce is great.

In example (3), the complimenter is a middle-aged male who complimented a restaurant chef (middle-aged male) on his skill at making a tasty salad and a great sauce.

**Possession:** refers to compliments on what someone owns such as cars, watches, handbags and phones. (4) is an example of such a category:

- (4) " ايش دي الماركه الحلوه "  
 eish di almarkah alhulwah  
 What this brand sweet  
 What a nice brand!

This compliment is about a pair of sunglasses. This compliment was given by a middle-aged male to his friend's (middle-aged male) sunglasses. The compliment

took place in a restaurant, and the complimented item was on a table. The interlocutors' relative status is equal.

**Personality:** refers to compliments on certain character features or personality traits such as intelligence, generosity, helpfulness and kindness. An example of this topic from the data is the following:

(5) " والله إنك كريم، ابن كريم "  
 wallah inak kareem, ibn kareem  
 By-Allah you generous, son generous  
 By Allah, you are genuinely generous

In this example, the complimenter is complimenting the complementee on a remarkable personality trait, which is generosity. This compliment took place at a family gathering where the complementee donated an amount of money to the family's budget. The interlocutors' relative status is equal in terms of age and financial means. The complimenter is an old man who praised another old man for his generosity.

**Children:** refers to compliments on children's beauty, good health, cuteness and good behaviour (Migdadi, 2003). The following is an instance of such a topic chosen from the data:

(6) " اسم الله عليه ما أحلاه "  
 ism allah 'ala-ih ma ahla-h  
 Name Allah on-him what sweet-he  
 Masha'allah, how pretty he is!

Example (6) took place in a café. The interlocutors were friends and had an equal relative status. The complimenter (old female) is complimenting the complementee (old female) on her child's beauty.

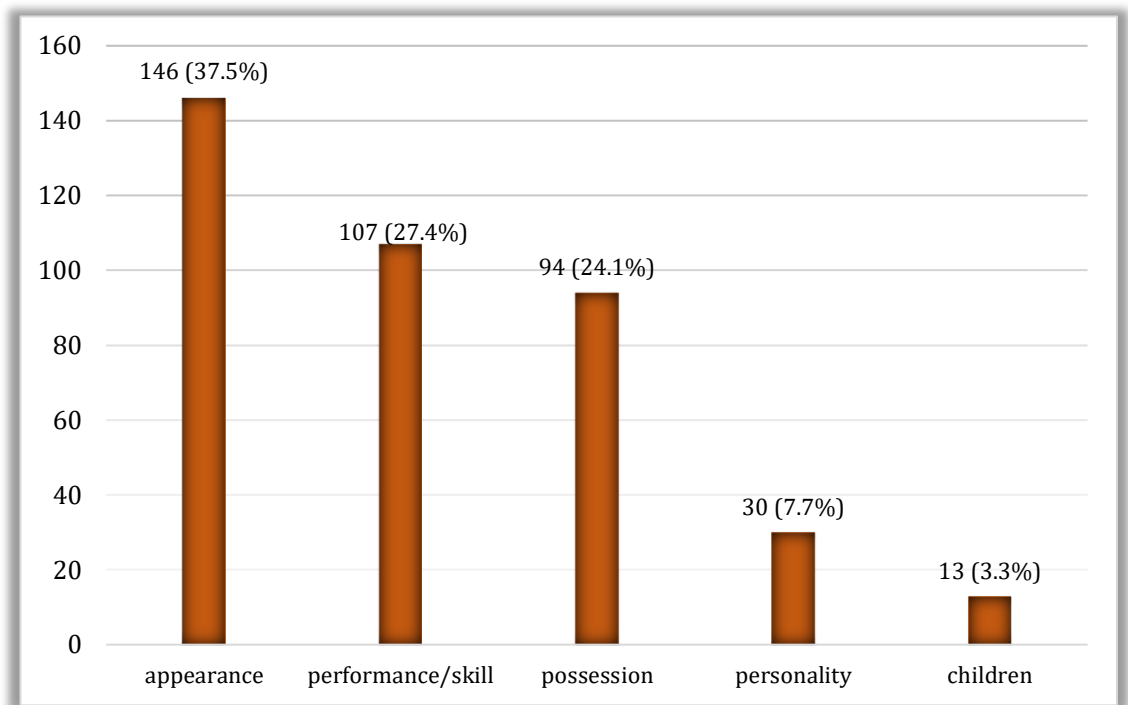


Chart 4.3: Distribution of Compliment Topics

Chart 4.3 shows that *appearance* is the most common compliment subject in the dataset with a total percentage of 37.5%. It is not surprising that appearance scored the highest percentage compared with the other topics because most studies on compliments revealed similar findings: 50.7% in New Zealand compliments (Holmes, 1986), 70 % in Nigerians compliments (Mustapha, 2003), 43% in Turkish compliments (Ruhi, 2001), and 45% in Jordanian compliments (Migdadi, 2003). Moreover, complimenting on appearance in the present study shows that compliments on ‘unnatural’ beauty (e.g., dress; make-up; wearing lenses) is more common than compliments on ‘natural’ beauty. In fact, only 45 (11.5%) compliments out of 390 were related to natural beauty. Personal interest in unnatural beauty can be associated with fashion and taste which tend to be very common and attract positive reactions and comments (Knapp et al., 1984). The second most salient topic in the data was *performance* with a percentage of 27.4%. *Possession* was ranked third with a percentage of 24.1% followed by *personality* which represented 7.7% of the database. Finally, the *children* topic had the lowest percentage at 3.3%.



#### 4.2.2a Topics and Gender

This section provides a discussion of the significant findings on gender behaviours in relation to giving compliments. As Table 4.4 below show, *appearance*, which was used frequently by Hijazi females, had the highest percentage (44.40%) with a total of 108 out of 243 compliments. The second most frequent topic for Hijazi women was *performance/skill* with a percentage of 24.30% followed by *possession* (23.10%). *Personality* and *children* had the lowest frequencies with percentages of 4.90% and 3.30% respectively.

Table 4.4: Frequencies and Percentages of Compliment Topics According to Complimenter's Gender

|        | appearance      | performance/skill | possession     | personality   | children     | Total         |
|--------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Male   | 38<br>(25.90%)  | 48<br>(32.60%)    | 38<br>(25.90%) | 18<br>(12.2%) | 5<br>(3.40%) | 147<br>(100%) |
| Female | 108<br>(44.40%) | 59<br>(24.30%)    | 56<br>(23.10%) | 12<br>(4.90%) | 8<br>(3.30%) | 243<br>(100%) |

On the other hand, 32.60% of the compliments were paid by male complimenters on the topic of *performance/skill*. This topic had the highest percentage compared to the other topics. *Appearance* and *possession* ranked the second top topics for Hijazi men with 25.90% for each one. Moreover, *personality* ranked third for Hijazi men with a percentage of 12.20%. *Children* had the least occurrence in Hijazi men's compliments with only 5 compliments out of 147, representing 3.40%.

According to these findings, it can be said that almost half of the Hijazi women's compliments were on *appearance* as the most frequent topic. The findings also revealed that both genders used the topic of *possession* to almost the same degree as 25.90% of Hijazi men used it and 23.10% of Hijazi women showed a preference for this topic. Moreover, both genders gave limited numbers of compliments on the topic of *children* with very close percentages 3.40% for men and 3.30% for women.

Table 4.5 below shows the breakdown of the occurrence of compliment topics based on the interlocutors' gender: same-gender and cross-gender interactions. In same-gender compliment exchanges, *performance/skill* in male-to-male interactions had the highest percentage which was 28.2% in comparison to the other topics followed by the topic of *possession* with a percentage of 27.3% and

then the topic of *appearance* with a percentage of 26.5%. In female-to-female interactions, *appearance* was on top with a percentage of 45.8% and a total of 88 compliments out of 192. The second most frequent topic was *performance/skill* (24.5%) followed by *possession* (22.4%). *Children* had the lowest number of compliments used by same-gender interactions (M-M and F-F) with only 5 compliments for each gender.

Table 4.5: *Frequencies and Percentages of Compliment Topics According to Interlocutors' Gender*

|     | appearance    | performance/skill | possession    | personality   | children    | Total         |
|-----|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| M-M | 31<br>(26.5%) | 33<br>(28.2%)     | 32<br>(27.3%) | 16<br>(13.7%) | 5<br>(4.3%) | 117<br>(100%) |
| M-F | 7<br>(23.3%)  | 15<br>(50.0%)     | 6<br>(20.0%)  | 2<br>(6.7%)   | 0<br>(0.0%) | 30<br>(100%)  |
| F-F | 88<br>(45.8%) | 47<br>(24.5%)     | 43<br>(22.4%) | 9<br>(4.7%)   | 5<br>(2.6%) | 192<br>(100%) |
| F-M | 20<br>(39.2%) | 12<br>(23.5%)     | 13<br>(25.5%) | 3<br>(5.9%)   | 3<br>(5.9%) | 51<br>(100%)  |

On the other hand, in cross-gender compliment exchanges, males used the *performance/skill* topic when giving compliments to females. This topic came on top of the preferences with a percentage of 50% followed by *appearance* (23.3%) and *possession* (20%). In male-to-female interactions, there was not any occurrence of compliments on *children*. On the contrary, the highest percentage of compliments in female-to-male interactions was for *appearance* (39.2%) representing 51 compliments. *Possession* was the second most salient topic with a percentage of 25.5% followed by *performance/skill* (23.5%). It can be concluded that compliments on *appearance* seem to be the favourite topic of compliments for Hijazi women, while Hijazi men seem to have an interest in paying compliments on others' *performance/skill*.

A chi-square analysis shows that the  $p$  value of the data shown in Table 4.4 is 0.001, which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This result reveals a significant correlation between compliment topics and gender in Hijazi dialect. Hijazi females' and males' preferences of topics contribute to significant gender differences. These findings are consistent with the general trend in Arab countries that women tend

to be judged for their appearance, whereas men are expected to be evaluated on their performance/skill especially in same-gender interactions (Migdadi, 2003). According to Manes (1983, p. 98) compliments on appearance are 'more than just a reflection of the importance of personal appearance for women in our society; they are a means of reinforcing that importance'. This might account for the large number of compliments given and received by Hijazi women on the topic of *appearance*. Another potential reason for this preference is given by Wolfson (1984) who thinks 'for a woman, looking attractive, wearing nice clothing or jewellery is simply one aspect of acting out a socially conditioned role' (p. 10).

For Brown and Levinson (1978), compliments serve as emotional speech acts or as Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). With this classification in mind, it can be said that the high occurrence of compliments on appearance in Hijazi women's data is an example of the function of compliments as emotional speech acts, whereas Hijazi men's preference for the topic of performance/skill is an example of the function of compliments as FTAs since assessment and judgement relate to this topic.

#### 4.2.2b Topics and Age

This section provides a discussion of the correlation between the complimenter's age and compliment topics. Compliment topics are distinct for three age groups, and statistically significant differences are observed. The chi-square result, based on the data illustrated in Table 4.6, equals ( $p = 0.00002$ ) which is less than  $p < 0.05$ . However, as shown in Chart 4.4, the young group tended to focus on the *appearance* topic with the highest percentage (45.30%) and a total of 111 out of 245 compliments. *Possession* recorded the second topic (24.90%) followed by *performance/skill* with a percentage of 22.10%. It is not surprising that personality (6.90%) and children (0.80%) had the lowest occurrence in the young generation compliments because such topics might not be in the young people's interests, unlike appearance and possession topics which are expected to catch the young people's attention. The young generation is most likely to be interested in new trends, technology and social media, and they are expected to develop a relationship with the other gender as potential marriage partners. Therefore, these interests have an impact on their preferences for these topics by giving compliments on appearance and possession.

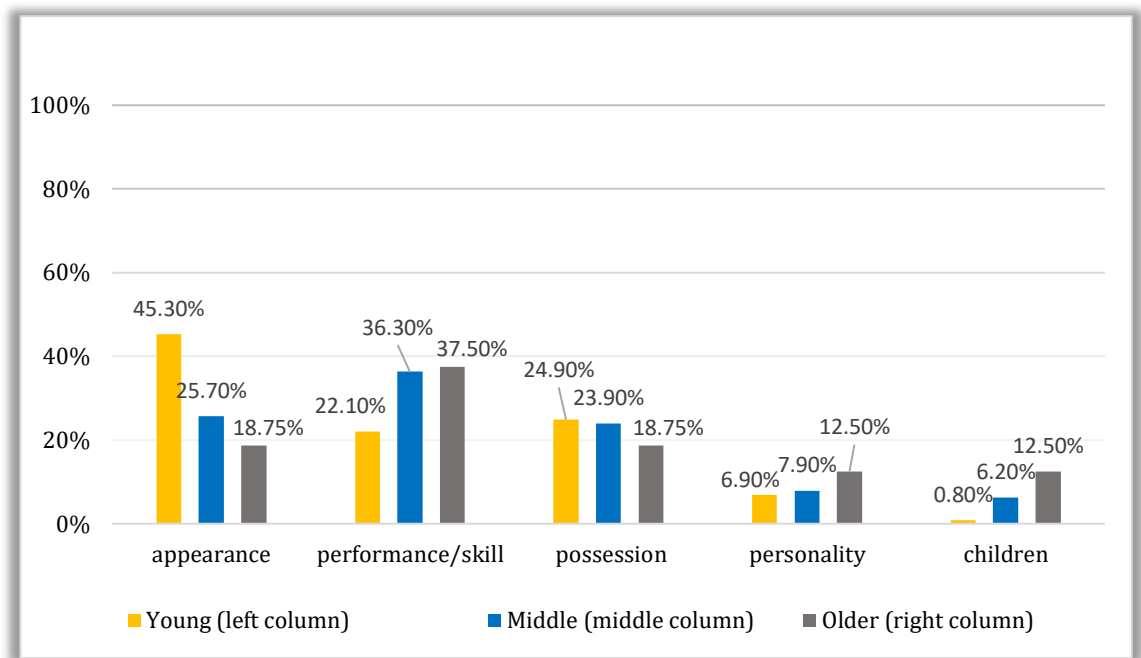


Chart 4.4: Distribution of Compliment Topics According to Complimenter's Age

Table 4.6: Frequencies and Percentages of Compliment Topics According to Complimenter's Age

|        | appearance     | performance/skill | possession    | personality  | children     | Total         |
|--------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Young  | 111<br>(45.3%) | 54<br>(22.1%)     | 61<br>(24.9%) | 17<br>(6.9%) | 2<br>(0.8)   | 245<br>(100%) |
| Middle | 29<br>(25.7%)  | 41<br>(36.3%)     | 27<br>(23.9%) | 9<br>(7.9%)  | 7<br>(6.2%)  | 113<br>(100%) |
| Older  | 6<br>(18.75%)  | 12<br>(37.5%)     | 6<br>(18.75%) | 4<br>(12.5%) | 4<br>(12.5%) | 32<br>(100%)  |

On the contrary, the middle and older generations gave the majority of compliments on performance/skill with percentages of 36.30% and 37.50%, respectively. Appearance recorded the second frequent topic used by middle-aged group with a percentage of 25.70% followed by possession (23.90%). Appearance and possession ranked the second frequent topics used by old people with the same percentage of 18.75%. Moreover, both groups paid more compliments on personality and children compared with those compliments used by the young generation. It can be said that since the middle and older generations have a higher social status than the younger generation, they are more likely to judge the skills,

performance and success of people favourably to inspire them to obtain greater achievements.

The findings of the present study overlap with the findings of Migdadi (2003) on Jordanian dialect, and AlAmro (2013) on Najdi dialect to some extent. *Appearance* was one of the top compliment topics for young and middle generations in Migdadi's and AlAmro's studies, while the current study showed that only *appearance* was favoured by the young group. The middle and old generations' preferred topic as the current study showed was *performance/skill* which was the most frequent topic used by old people according to Migdadi's study. These findings also differ from AlAmro's findings which showed that old people gave more compliments on personality. Moreover, the current study and Migdadi's study recorded that the topic of *children* was the least frequent topic for the three generations. These differences suggest that the usage of language differs from culture to culture and dialect to dialect.

Furthermore, the topics of compliments for the current study were examined and analysed based on interlocutors' age and gender as shown in Table 4.7 below. In same-gender interactions (M-M and F-F), young male (26 out of 68 compliments, 38.2%), young female (66 out of 128 compliments, 51.6%) and middle female (18 out of 50 compliments, 36%) tended to focus on appearance as the most favourable topic when they gave compliments. Middle-aged male complimenters used the performance/skill topic with the highest occurrence of 12 (35.3%) out of 34 compliments. As regards the older group, there was a significant finding on male-to-male interactions where the performance topic recorded 46.7% of the paid compliments as the highest percentage.

In cross-gender interactions, *possession* ranked the top topic with a percentage of 42.9% in young male-to-female exchanges followed by *appearance* (35.7%), whereas in young female-to-male interactions, *appearance* recorded the highest percentage of 40% followed by *possession* (28.6%). The middle male-to-female group gave more compliments on *performance/skill* with a significant percentage of 86.7% and a total of 13 out of 15 compliments. The middle female-to-male group paid more compliments on *appearance* with a percentage of 35.7%. The older

group, in both M-F and F-M interactions, recorded nearly unremarkable results; the total number of compliments in both groups were only 3 compliments. These differences and preferences in paying compliments among those age and gender groups were probably influenced by various interests, purposes, personal traits, social status and cultural values.

Table 4.7: *Distribution of Compliment Topics According to Interlocutors' Age and Gender*

| M-M    | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
|--------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------|
| Young  | 26         | 14                | 20         | 8           | 0        | 68    |
| Middle | 5          | 12                | 10         | 5           | 2        | 34    |
| Older  | 0          | 7                 | 2          | 3           | 3        | 15    |
| M-F    | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
| Young  | 5          | 2                 | 6          | 1           | 0        | 14    |
| Middle | 1          | 13                | 0          | 1           | 0        | 15    |
| Older  | 1          | 0                 | 0          | 0           | 0        | 1     |
| F-F    | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
| Young  | 66         | 30                | 25         | 5           | 2        | 128   |
| Middle | 18         | 13                | 14         | 3           | 2        | 50    |
| Older  | 4          | 4                 | 4          | 1           | 1        | 14    |
| F-M    | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
| Young  | 14         | 8                 | 10         | 3           | 0        | 35    |
| Middle | 5          | 3                 | 3          | 0           | 3        | 14    |
| Older  | 1          | 1                 | 0          | 0           | 0        | 2     |

#### 4.2.2c Topics and Relationship

This section presents a discussion of the compliment topics and the relationship between the compliment exchangers in terms of familiar and unfamiliar. The chi-square test reveals that the  $p$  value of the data provided in Table 4.8 is less than 0.05 ( $p = 0.014$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) which indicates a significant correlation between compliment topics and interlocutors' relationship. Table 4.8 below shows that familiar interlocutors paid more compliments on *appearance* with a percentage of 38.10% than on *performance/skill* (26.90%) and on *possession* (25.10%). *Personality* and *children* for familiar compliment exchangers recorded the lowest occurrence with percentages of 6% and 3.90%, respectively.

Table 4.8: *Frequencies of Compliment Topics According to Interlocutors' Relationship*

|            | appearance      | performance/skill | possession     | personality    | children      | Total         |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| familiar   | 127<br>(38.10%) | 90<br>(26.90%)    | 84<br>(25.10%) | 20<br>(6%)     | 13<br>(3.90%) | 334<br>(100%) |
| unfamiliar | 19<br>(33.90%)  | 17<br>(30.40%)    | 10<br>(17.85%) | 10<br>(17.85%) | 0<br>(0%)     | 56<br>(100%)  |

Unfamiliar compliment exchangers tended to give more compliments on *appearance* with a percentage of 33.90% than on *performance/skill* (30.40%). *Possession* and *personality* ranked third with the same percentage of 17.85% for each one. The bar charts show that unfamiliar speakers' usage of *performance/skill* and *personality* topics exceeded familiar interlocutors' usage especially with the latter topic where the difference between them is almost three times. Holmes (1995) claimed that 'compliments on very personal topics [...] are appropriate only from intimates'. The current findings support this claim in which familiar speakers have no restrictions in paying more compliments on natural or unnatural appearance and friends' possessions.

Furthermore, compliment topics were analysed and discussed according to relationship and gender as shown in Table 4.9. In same-gender interactions, familiar male-to-male interlocutors paid more compliments on *possession* with a percentage of 30.5% and a total of 29 out of 95 compliments, followed by *appearance* (26.3%) and then *performance/skill* (25.3%). In familiar female-to-female interactions, *appearance* was on top of the topics with the highest frequency 83 (46.6%) out of 178 compliments, followed by *performance/skill* and *possession* with almost the same percentages of 23.6% and 23.03%, respectively. Moreover, unfamiliar male-to-male speakers gave more compliments on *performance/skill* with the highest percentage of 40.9%, whereas unfamiliar female-to-female interlocutors focused on *appearance* and *performance/skill* as the most frequent topics with the same percentage of 35.7%.

In cross-gender interactions, *performance/skill* ranked on top of the compliment topics among familiar male-to-female speakers with a percentage of 65%, whereas *appearance* was the most frequent topic used by unfamiliar male-to-female interlocutors with a percentage of 60%. With regard to female-male interactions,

familiar speakers paid more compliments on *appearance* (43.9%) 18 compliments out of 41 than on *performance/skill* (26.8%) and on *possession* (21.9%). However, unfamiliar female-male speakers tended to give more compliments on *possession* (40%) followed than on *personality* (30%). By looking at the distribution in table 4.9, it can be concluded that the *children* topic was used just by familiar speakers, and female complimenters used it more than male speakers (8 compliments out of 13). Different gender interests, interlocutors' relationships and sociocultural values might have contributed to these findings.

Table 4.9: *Distribution of Compliment Topics According to Interlocutors' Relationship and Gender*

| M-M        | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------|
| familiar   | 25         | 24                | 29         | 12          | 5        | 95    |
| unfamiliar | 6          | 9                 | 3          | 4           | 0        | 22    |
| M-F        | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
| familiar   | 1          | 13                | 5          | 1           | 0        | 20    |
| unfamiliar | 6          | 2                 | 1          | 1           | 0        | 10    |
| F-F        | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
| familiar   | 83         | 42                | 41         | 7           | 5        | 178   |
| unfamiliar | 5          | 5                 | 2          | 2           | 0        | 14    |
| F-M        | appearance | performance/skill | possession | personality | children | Total |
| familiar   | 18         | 11                | 9          | 0           | 3        | 41    |
| unfamiliar | 2          | 1                 | 4          | 3           | 0        | 10    |

#### 4.2.3 Syntactic Patterns of Compliments

This section presents a discussion of the syntactic patterns of 390 compliments paid in the Hijazi dialect. Compliments' syntactic patterns are investigated according to the complimenter's gender and age. Moreover, this section discusses the most frequent words used in paying compliments among Hijazi males and females.

In many languages and dialects (Wolfson, 1981; Holmes, 1988; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989; Migdadi, 2003; AlAmro, 2013), compliments are formulaic in that the vast majority of them have a limited set of syntactic patterns and lexical elements (discussed in detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.6). Similarly, in the present



research, 11 syntactic patterns have been identified as the most frequent patterns in the dataset. Together, these account for 88.90% of the data. Compliments with other patterns were coded as 'Others' (11.10%).

In the following, the eleventh structures are presented and listed from the most to the least occurring as shown in Table 4.10 below. The abbreviations (as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.10.1) NP= Noun Phrase, INT= Intensifier, ADJ= Adjective, PRO= Pronoun, VP= Verb Phrase, and DEM PRO= Demonstrative Pronoun were used to classify compliments according to their syntactic patterns. The examples below illustrate this point:

**Example:**

|                        |   |   |        |        |        |
|------------------------|---|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Syntactic Pattern      | → | (mashallah)                             | NP     | INT    | ADJ    |
| Transliteration        | → | ma sha' allah                           | akl-ik | merrah | ti'aim |
| Literal Translation    | → | What willed Allah food-your very tasty. |        |        |        |
| Functional Translation | → | Mashallah, your food is really tasty.   |        |        |        |

\*mashallah (ما شاء الله): May Allah's grace be upon you.

**Pattern 1:** (*mashallah*) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (*mashallah*)

Numbers (7), (8), (9) and (10) below are examples of pattern 1:

|     |                                       |            |        |         |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------------|--------|---------|
|     | ( <i>mashallah</i> )                  | NP         | (INT)  | ADJ     |
| (7) | ma sha' allah,                        | tabkh-ik   | merrah | ti'am   |
|     | (What willed Allah), cooking-your     |            | very   | tasty   |
|     | Mashallah, your cooking is very tasty |            |        |         |
|     | ADV                                   | NP         | (INT)  | ADJ     |
| (8) | harfyeen                              | jazmet-ik  | merrah | helwah  |
|     | Literally                             | shoes-your | very   | pretty. |
|     | Your shoes are literally pretty       |            |        |         |

|     |                                     |            |        |          |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------------|--------|----------|
|     | (INT)                               | NP         | (INT)  | ADJ      |
| (9) | wallah                              | shantat-ek | merrah | raheebah |
|     | By-Allah                            | bag-your   | very   | amazing  |
|     | By Allah your bag is really amazing |            |        |          |

|      |                                   |        |        |                      |
|------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------------|
|      | NP                                | ADJ    | INT    | ( <i>mashallah</i> ) |
| (10) | bashert-ik                        | baidha | merrah | mashallah            |
|      | Complexion-your                   | white  | very   | what willed Allah    |
|      | Your skin is very white Mashallah |        |        |                      |

|      |  |      |            |           |      |                   |
|------|--|------|------------|-----------|------|-------------------|
|      | <b>Pattern 2:</b> ( <i>mashallah</i> ) | what | NP         | (ADJ)     | DEM  | ( <i>ya wad</i> ) |
| (11) | ma sha' allah,                         | eish | a-ssyyarah | alfakhmah | di   | ya wad            |
|      | What willed Allah,                     | what | the-car    | fancy     | this | oh boy            |
|      | Mashallah, what a fancy car!           |      |            |           |      |                   |

|      |  |      |      |           |          |                   |
|------|--|------|------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
|      | <b>Pattern 3:</b> ( <i>mashallah</i> ) | what | DEM  | NP        | ADJ      | ( <i>ya wad</i> ) |
| (12) | ma sha' allah,                         | eish | di   | al-markah | alhulwah | ya wad            |
|      | What willed Allah,                     | what | this | the-brand | nice     | oh                |
|      | boy<br>Mashallah, what a nice brand!   |      |      |           |          |                   |

|      |                                     |            |       |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------|
|      | <b>Pattern 4:</b> ( <i>ya wad</i> ) | NP         | V     |
| (13) | ya wad                              | el-jakait  | yefuz |
|      | Oh boy                              | the-jacket | win   |
|      | Oh boy, the jacket is stunning      |            |       |

|      |                                 |                 |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
|      | <b>Pattern 5:</b> (I) love/like | NP              |
| (14) | habait-(I)                      | gasat sha'ar-ik |
|      | Loved-(I)                       | haircut-your    |
|      | I loved your haircut            |                 |

|      |                                    |         |
|------|------------------------------------|---------|
|      | <b>Pattern 6:</b> <i>Mashallah</i> | ADJ     |
| (15) | ma sha' allah                      | aneeqah |
|      | Mashallah                          | elegant |
|      | Mashallah you are elegant          |         |

**Pattern 7:** NP (DEM) PREP NP  
 (16) al-hala da fi galb-ek  
 The-sweet this in heart-your  
 This sweet is really delicious

**Pattern 8:** (PRO) NP (Superlative form)  
 (17) ant afdhal la'aeb  
 You best player  
 You are the best player

**Pattern 9:** (ya wad) NP DEM ADJ  
 (18) ya wad a-ssa'aah hadi hareegah  
 Oh boy the-watch this fiery  
 This watch is amazing

**Pattern 10:** DEM NP PREP DEM NP  
 (19) hada a-shabal min dak al-asad  
 This the-cub from that the-lion  
 Like father, like son

**Pattern 11:** (mashallah) V ADJ  
 (20) mashallah sayar helu  
 Mashallah became handsome  
 Mashallah you became handsome

Table 4.10: *Frequencies and Percentages of Compliments' Syntactic Patterns in the Hijazi Dialect*

| Compliments' Syntactic Patterns                                | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Pattern 1: (mashallah) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ<br>(mashallah) | 241       | 62%        |
| Pattern 2: (mashallah) what NP (ADJ) DEM (ya wad)              | 21        | 5.40%      |
| Pattern 3: (mashallah) what DEM NP ADJ (ya wad)                | 17        | 4.30%      |
| Pattern 4: (ya wad) NP V                                       | 15        | 3.80%      |
| Pattern 5: I love/like NP                                      | 15        | 3.80%      |
| Pattern 6: Mashallah ADJ                                       | 9         | 2.30%      |

|   |     |         |
|---|-----|---------|
| Pattern 7: NP (DEM) PREP NP                 | 8   | 2.10%   |
| Pattern 8: (NP) (V) (PRO) Superlative form  | 6   | 1.50%   |
| Pattern 9: ( <i>ya wad</i> ) NP DEM ADJ     | 5   | 1.30%   |
| Pattern 10: DEM NP PREP DEM NP              | 5   | 1.30%   |
| Pattern 11: ( <i>mashallah</i> ) V (NP) ADJ | 5   | 1.30%   |
| Pattern 12: Others                          | 43  | 11.10%  |
| Total                                       | 390 | 100.00% |

Table 4.10 shows that the first fifth patterns account for 79% and a total of 309 compliments. Pattern 1: **(*mashallah*) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (*mashallah*)** has the highest percentage of 62% as the most frequent pattern used in paying compliments among Hijazi speakers. This pattern is similar to the most widely used patterns in other languages, including of American English **NP *is/look* ADJ**, New Zealanders' English **NP BE (*looking*) (INT) ADJ** and Hawai'i Creole English **NP V ADJ**, except for the verb 'to be' which is not present in the Arabic, which does not require copular verbs (Nelson et al., 1993). This syntactic pattern was the most frequent pattern in some other Arabic dialects such as Jordanian Arabic (Migdadi, 2003) and Najdi Saudi Arabic (AlAmro, 2013), accounting for 64% and 25% respectively with subtle differences in the position or absence of *mashallah*.

Pattern (2) **(*mashallah*) what NP (ADJ) DEM** occurred 21 times (5.40%). This pattern is exclusively used in Hijazi dialect in which the DEM appears at the end of the compliment. On the other hand, pattern (3) **(*mashallah*) what DEM NP ADJ** which accounted for 4.30% was similarly used in some Arabic dialects such as Migdadi's (2003) and AlAmro's (2013), with frequencies of 9% and 12.3%, respectively. Patterns (4) and (5), as shown in Table 4.10 below, each occur at a rate of 3.80%. Pattern (4) **(*ya wad*) NP (INT) V** is used also in Jordanian Arabic (Migdadi, 2003) with slight differences, whereas pattern (5) **I love/like NP** is used frequently in English varieties such as in Manes and Wolfson (1981), and in Arabic dialects.

Five of these syntactic patterns include the word 'Allah' whose equivalent is missing in the syntactic patterns of other languages. The data here also reveal a higher usage of *mashallah* when compared to Egyptian and Jordanian syntactic

patterns. This might indicate that Hijazi speakers believe in, or pay attention to, the evil eye more than Egyptians and Jordanians. The usage of some syntactic patterns such as (1) and (3) overlaps with Jordanian, Egyptian and Najdi Arabic findings with differences in frequencies. Pattern (5) has an equivalent in English. Syntactic patterns (2), and (9) are exclusively used in Hijazi dialect compared with other Arabic dialects.

#### 4.2.3a Syntactic Patterns and Gender

This section presents the findings on the complimenter's gender as per the analysis of the syntactic patterns and discusses the similarities and differences between males and females in the use of the syntactic patterns which were identified.

As shown in Table 4.11, **(mashallah) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (mashallah)** is the most frequent pattern used by men (49%) and women (68%) in giving compliments. The pattern **(mashallah) what NP (ADJ) DEM (ya wad)** is the second most frequent pattern used by males with a frequency of 6.80%, while the same pattern is the third most common pattern used by females with a percentage of 4.50%. **(Mashallah) what DEM NP ADJ (ya wad)** is ranked third with a frequency of 5.40%, followed by **(ya wad) NP V** (4.80%). The phrase *ya wad* is used only in male-to-male exchanges. Though the totals are small, it appears that the pattern **(NP) (V) (PRO) Superlative form** is more commonly used by males. It occurred 5 times for men and only one time for women.

Table 4.11: *Frequencies of Compliments' Syntactic Patterns According to Speaker's Gender*

| Syntactic Patterns (Males)   | Frequency     | Syntactic Patterns (Females)                                       | Frequency     |
|--|---------------|--|---------------|
| P1. <i>(mashallah)</i> (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ <i>(mashallah)</i> | 72<br>(49%)   | P1. <i>(mashallah)</i> (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ <i>(mashallah)</i> | 165<br>(68%)  |
| P2. <i>(mashallah)</i> what NP (ADJ) DEM <i>(ya wad)</i>           | 10<br>(6.80%) | P2. (INT) (I) love/like NP   | 13<br>(5.30%) |
| P3. <i>(mashallah)</i> what DEM NP ADJ <i>(ya wad)</i>             | 8<br>(5.40%)  | P3. <i>(mashallah)</i> what NP (ADJ) DEM                           | 11<br>(4.50%) |
| P4. <i>(ya wad)</i> NP V   | 7<br>(4.80%)  | P4. <i>(mashallah)</i> what DEM NP ADJ                             | 9<br>(3.70%)  |
| P5. (NP) (V) (PRO) Superlative form                                | 5<br>(3.40%)  | P5. NP (INT) V   | 8<br>(3.30%)  |

|                                   |               |                          |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| P6. DEM NP PREP DEM NP            | 4<br>(2.70%)  | P6. <i>Mashallah</i> ADJ | 7<br>(2.90%)  |
| P7. ( <i>ya wad</i> ) NP DEM ADJ  | 4<br>(2.70%)  | P7. NP PREP NP           | 5<br>(2.10%)  |
| P8. NP DEM PREP NP                | 3<br>(2.10%)  | P8. VP N                 | 3<br>(1.20%)  |
| P9. ( <i>mashallah</i> ) V NP ADJ | 3<br>(2.10%)  | P9. V NP (INT) ADJ       | 2<br>(0.80%)  |
| P10. Others                       | 31<br>(21%)   | P10. Others              | 20<br>(8.20%) |
| Total                             | 147<br>(100%) | Total                    | 243<br>(100%) |

On the other hand, **(INT) (I) love/like NP** is the second most frequent pattern used by females (5.30%). It has appeared 13 times in female compliments, while it has occurred only 2 times in male compliments. **(Mashallah) what DEM NP ADJ** and **NP (INT) V** have almost the same frequency of 3.70% and 3.30%, respectively. Moreover, **mashallah ADJ** is used by females more often than males. It occurred 7 times for women and 2 times for men in this data set. Although both genders use some similar syntactic patterns in giving compliments, there are differences in the lexical items which will be discussed in Section 4.2.3c.

#### 4.2.3b Syntactic Patterns and Age

Age can be considered an important factor in the probability of usage of a specific syntactic pattern. This section provides an analysis of the most frequent syntactic patterns used by young, middle and old-aged people in giving compliments. As shown in Table 4.12, **(mashallah) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (mashallah)** is the most frequent pattern used by the three age groups, accounting for the highest percentages: young generation 65.3%, middle generation 55.8%, and older generation 56.3%. This pattern is the most common one in the data set. In other words, people usually express their admiration or appreciation by using clear and direct compliments which explicitly mention and discuss a quality of the addressed item, trait, or person.

**ADV NP (INT) ADJ**, as a sub-pattern of pattern 1, is used more frequently by the younger and older generations. The analysis shows that 7.4% of young people's compliments fall in this pattern, versus 6.3% in the older groups. This sub-pattern

starts with adverbs such as *harfyeen* 'literally' and *haqiqi* 'really'. The function of such adverbs is to confirm, with some exaggeration, the complimenter's admiration for the praised person or item. Moh'd Khatatbeh et al. (2018) examined exaggeration in Jordanian Arabic speakers' congratulatory expressions. They found that young people under 30 used exaggeration more than people over 30. Moh'd Khatatbeh et al. (2018, p. 32) stated that 'Arabs in general tend to exaggerate not only in congratulation but in other sociolinguistic functions, such as greeting, condolences and intimacy among many other expressions'. Moreover, this pattern is common especially among young females. The data show that 17 compliments out of 18 in this pattern were given by young females. The second top pattern used by the young generation is **(mashallah) what NP (ADJ) DEM (ya wad)** with a frequency of 5.7%, followed by **(ya wad) NP V** with a frequency of 5.3%.

Table 4.12: Frequencies and percentages of Compliments' Syntactic Patterns According to Speaker's Age

| Syntactic patterns   | Young          | Middle        | Older         |
|--|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| P1. <i>(mashallah)</i> (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ <i>(mashallah)</i> | 160<br>(65.3%) | 63<br>(55.8%) | 18<br>(56.3%) |
| P2. <i>(mashallah)</i> what NP (ADJ) DEM <i>(ya wad)</i>           | 14<br>(5.7%)   | 5<br>(4.4%)   | 2<br>(6.2%)   |
| P3. <i>(mashallah)</i> what DEM NP ADJ <i>(ya wad)</i>             | 10<br>(4.1%)   | 5<br>(4.4%)   | 2<br>(6.2%)   |
| P4. <i>(ya wad)</i> NP V   | 13<br>(5.3%)   | 2<br>(1.8%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   |
| P5. I love/like NP   | 9<br>(3.7%)    | 6<br>(5.3%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   |
| P6. <i>Mashallah</i> ADJ   | 4<br>(1.6%)    | 4<br>(3.5%)   | 1<br>(3.1%)   |
| P7. NP (DEM) PREP NP   | 4<br>(1.6%)    | 4<br>(3.5%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   |
| P8. (NP) (V) (PRO) Superlative form                                | 4<br>(1.6%)    | 2<br>(1.8%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   |
| P9. <i>(ya wad)</i> NP DEM ADJ                                     | 3<br>(1.3%)    | 2<br>(1.8%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   |
| P10. DEM NP PREP DEM NP  | 0<br>(0.0%)    | 2<br>(1.8%)   | 3<br>(9.4%)   |
| P11. <i>(mashallah)</i> V NP ADJ                                   | 4<br>(1.6%)    | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 1<br>(3.1%)   |
| P12. Others  | 20<br>(8.2%)   | 18<br>(15.9%) | 5<br>(15.7%)  |
| Total  | 245<br>(100%)  | 113<br>(100%) | 32<br>(100%)  |

On the other hand, the second most frequent pattern used by the middle generation is **I love/like NP**. This pattern represents 5.3% of this group's compliments with a total of 6 compliments (4 paid by females and 2 by males). This pattern does not exist in the older generation's data. However, **DEM NP PREP DEM NP** ranked second in older people's compliments. it occurred three times with a percentage of 9.4%. This pattern does not occur in young group's compliments. It represents common proverbs in the Hijazi dialect such as *Hada a-shabal min dak al-asad* 'like father like son.'

Table 4.12, shows that *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you', is used in 5 patterns and it occurs frequently in compliments. Complimenters tend to use this ritualistic phrase at the beginning or at the end of the compliments in order to drive the evil eye away according to the cultural and Islamic faith. That is to say, some Hijazi speakers believe that paying compliments attracts the evil eye which might bring harm to the complimented person or object; therefore, interlocutors resort to using such religious expressions in order to save each other's face and protect themselves from any unexpected threats that might affect the complimentee's negative face. *Mashallah*, besides other sociocultural phraseologies, is discussed in detail in Section 4.2.5.

#### 4.2.3c The Most Frequent Words Used in Paying Compliments

This section presents the most frequent positive semantic carriers that are used in giving compliments. The most frequent words are classified into adjectives, nouns, verbs and intensifiers as illustrated in Table 4.13 below. The distribution of the data shows that adjectives are the most frequent category of positive carrier used in Hijazi compliments with an occurrence of 261 times in all of the compliments. This finding is in partial agreement with Egyptian Arabic (Nelson et al., 1993) data in which 70% of adjectives were used for compliments and with Jordanian Arabic (Migdadi, 2003) in which 77% of compliments also involved adjectives. There were seven common adjectives used frequently by Hijazi speakers as shown in Table 4.13. These adjectives recorded the highest occurrence with a total percentage of 73.9%. That is to say, these adjectives were used in approximately three quarters of the compliments given in the dataset. *Helu/helwah* 'pretty, handsome, beautiful' is on top of the adjectives with the highest occurrence, 83



times (31.8%). This adjective was used by females more often than by males according to the data which show that women used *helu/helwah* 60 times (72.3%) whereas men used it only 23 times (27.7%). The second most frequent adjective is *ijnan* 'stunning' accounting for 13.1%. *Raw'ah/rai'a* 'wonderful' ranked third with a percentage of 8.1%. These two adjectives were also used more often in females' compliments than males' ones: approximately a two-third frequency for women. *Ti'aim* 'tasty' and *lazeez* 'delicious' ranked fourth and fifth with percentages of 6.5% and 5.3%, respectively. These two adjectives are commonly used in expressing how tasty the food is. *Ti'aim* 'tasty' is a unique adjective exclusively used by Hijazi speakers as in the following example:

- (21) "حقيقي أكلك مره طعم"  
 haqiqi akl-ik merrah ti'aim  
 Really food-your very tasty  
 Your food is really tasty

The sixth common adjective is *wala ghaltah* 'flawless', accounting for 4.9%. This adjective is used only by young males and females. *Fakhmah* 'fancy' is the seventh most frequent adjective with a percentage of 4.2%. This adjective is commonly used by males and is rarely used by females. The other adjectives recorded the least frequency in the entire dataset.

Some of these adjectives have significant relationships with the topics of the compliments. For example, in 117 male-to-male exchanges, *helu/helwah* 'pretty' mostly occurred with two topics which were appearance (58.8%) and possession (35.30%), *fakhmah* 'fancy' is associated only with possession (100%), and *fannan* 'professional' is associated with performance (100%). The following are two examples about how *fakhmah* and *fannan* were used:

- (22) "أيش السياره الفخمه دي"  
 eish a-ssyyarah al-fakhmah di  
 What the-car the-fancy this  
 What a fancy car!

- (23) "ياوادم، ولدك دا فنان ومحتترف كوره"  
 ya wad, walad-ek da fannan wa muhatarif koorah  
 Oh boy, son-your this artist and professional ball  
 Pal, your son is a professional player

In 192 female-to-female exchanges, *helu/helwah* 'pretty, beautiful' mostly appeared with two topics: appearance (68%) and possession (24%), while *ijnan* 'stunning' was mostly used in compliments on possession (45.5%) and appearance (31.8%). On the other hand, in 51 female-to-male encounters, *helu/helwah* was used more frequently to compliment on possession with a percentage of 50%, followed by appearance accounting for 30%. It is worth noting that females try to avoid complimenting males on their appearance. This can be attributed to the Islamic and cultural values in which it is not desirable for females to express their admiration for unfamiliar males' appearance.

The findings that Hijazi speakers used a small number of adjectives repeatedly in their compliment exchanges is similar results were found in other languages and dialects such as New Zealand (Holmes, 1988), American (Manes and Wolfson, 1980) Jordanian (Migdiadi, 2003) compliments. In these studies as in this one, the most frequent positive adjectives express generic positive meanings. In Hijazi, the adjective *helu/helwah* expresses a positive meaning in general, it lacks semantic specificity and the strong effect of specific adjectives such as *jathabah* 'gorgeous'. Some stronger adjectives were used by Hijazi people, but they rarely occurred in their compliment exchanges. *Aneeg/aneegah* 'elegant', *mubd'a/mubd'aah* 'creative' and *jathabah* 'gorgeous' are examples of such adjectives. Moreover, there are a limited number of adjectives which exclusively occurred in the Hijazi community, compared with other studies in Arabic dialects, such as *imrastak* 'neat', *mitantik* 'antique, chic' and *wakyah* 'beautiful'.

A limited number of English adjectives were used by young and middle-aged female Hijazi speakers: *cute*, *nice* and *amazing*. They occurred 16 times in the entire dataset, and 14 of those times were used by young females. (24), (25) and (26) below are examples of using such adjectives in compliments.

(24) "بنتك مره كيوت، ربي يحفظها"

bint-ik merrah. kyoot, rabb-i yehfadh-ha  
 Daughter-your very cute, God-my save-her  
 Your daughter is really cute, may Allah protect her

(25) "واو جاكيتك مره نايس"

wow jakait-ik merrah naves  
 Wow jacket-your very nice  
 Your jacket is very nice.

(26) "حرفيا الميك اب سو اميزنق"

harfyeen al-maik up so amazing  
 Literally the-make up so amazing  
 Literally your make up is so amazing

Code-switching was observed in some compliments that were given by young female speakers as some examples involved English words. The use of code-switching can be attributed to exposure to English movies and music as well as travelling abroad (AlAmro, 2013). Although compliments coloured with some English words are used in Saudi culture, it is not always desirable in Saudi culture to switch from the native language to a foreign language while speaking in Arabic. Some people might interpret this as showing off, and others might understand it as a lack of the speaker's knowledge of his/her mother tongue. Some people consider code switching 'a threat to Arabs and Muslims identity and marginalisation of the Arabic language as a language and culture' (Omar and Ilyas, 2018).

The second type of positive semantic carrier is nouns. The most frequent nouns in the dataset are six words which are demonstrated in Table 4.13. *Halawah* 'prettiness, handsomeness' was the most frequent noun which accounts for 16.8%, followed by *jamal* 'beauty' with a percentage of 12%. *Fakhamah* 'luxury' ranked third with a frequency of 7.2%. '*arees* 'groom', *gamar* 'moon' and '*asal* 'honey' occurred less frequently.

Table 4.13: *Distribution of the Most Frequent Words Used in Giving Compliments*

|              | Examples   | Frequency/<br>percentage |
|--------------|--|--------------------------|
| Adjectives   | helu/helwah: 'pretty, handsome, beautiful, nice' | 83 (31.8%)               |
|              | ijnan: 'stunning'                                | 34 (13.1%)               |
|              | raw'ah/rai'a: 'wonderful'                        | 21 (8.1%)                |
|              | ti'aim; 'tasty'                                  | 17 (6.5%)                |
|              | lazeez: 'delicious'                              | 14 (5.3%)                |
|              | wala ghaltah: 'flawless'                         | 13 (4.9%)                |
|              | fakhmah: 'fancy'                                 | 11 (4.2%)                |
|              | others   | 68 (26.1)                |
|              | <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>261 (100%)</b>        |
| Nouns        | halawah: 'prettiness, handsomeness'              | 21 (16.8%)               |
|              | jamal: 'beauty'                                  | 15 (12%)                 |
|              | fakhamah: 'luxury'                               | 9 (7.2%)                 |
|              | 'arees: 'groom'                                  | 5 (4%)                   |
|              | gamar: 'moon'                                    | 4 (3.2%)                 |
|              | 'asal: 'honey'                                   | 4 (3.2%)                 |
|              | others   | 67 (53.6%)               |
|              | <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>125 (100%)</b>        |
| Verbs        | yefuz: 'literal translation: win'                | 15 (31.9%)               |
|              | tale'a: 'have become'                            | 14 (29.8%)               |
|              | habait: 'loved'                                  | 10 (21.3%)               |
|              | yemawet: 'amaze (literally: 'deaden')            | 5 (10.6%)                |
|              | a'ajabni: 'liked'                                | 3 (6.4%)                 |
|              | <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>47 (100%)</b>         |
| Intensifiers | merrah: 'very, so'                               | 168 (79.6%)              |
|              | haqiqi: 'really'                                 | 15 (7.1%)                |
|              | warabi/wallah: 'by God'                          | 10 (4.7%)                |
|              | harfyeen: 'literally'                            | 9 (4.3%)                 |
|              | wow: 'wow'                                       | 9 (4.3%)                 |
|              | <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>211 (100%)</b>        |

Verbs were the least frequent category of positive semantic carrier as they occurred 47 times. Table 4.13 above shows that five verbs have been used in paying compliments. *Yefuz* 'win' is used 15 times (31.9%), followed by *tale'a* 'have

become' (29.8%). *Habait* 'loved' ranked third (21.3%), whereas *yemawet* 'amaze' accounted for 10.6%. *A'ajabni* 'liked' occurred 3 times with the lowest percentage of 6.4%. Compared to the American data (Manes and Wolfson, 1981) in which 86% of the compliments with verbal semantic carriers used *like* and *love*, the low percentage of 'loved' (21.3%) and 'liked' (6.4%) in the present study indicates that this kind of positive semantic carrier is not preferred by Hijazi speakers as much as it is preferred by Jordanian, Egyptian and Najdi speakers. The two verbs *habait* and *a'ajabni*, which correspond to the English verbs 'liked' or 'loved', were rarely used in Hijazi compliments, due to their envy-carrying meaning according to Hijazi people. Migdadi (2003) claims that this is because these verbs imply that the speaker wishes to have the object complimented; therefore, people avoid them in order not to threaten the addressee's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

There was a significant relationship between verbs, gender and age. *Habait* 'loved' was used only by females, and it occurred more frequently in young females' compliments with a percentage of 80% and only 20% in middle-aged females' compliments. *Yemawet* 'amaze' was used only by young females. *Yefuz* 'win' was used 10 times by young females, whereas it occurred 5 times in young males' interactions. It is noticeable that these verbs were commonly used by the Hijazi young generation, while they were rarely used by the Hijazi middle generation and were not used by the older generation. This might be attributed to that young generations tended to give unusual compliments in order to express their admiration and impress their addressees. Adverbs occurred rarely in the data with some verbs and at the beginning of the sentence before noun phrases as an adverb of comment. *Sarahah* 'honestly' and *harfyean* 'literally' are two examples of such adverbs. For example, *Sarahah, sa'at-ek merrah raw'aah* 'Honestly, your watch is very amazing'.

Intensifiers were commonly used by Hijazi speakers in giving compliments. Table 4.13 shows that intensifiers were used 211 times in the entire dataset. Five common intensifiers were used by the Hijazi sample of the present study. *Merrah* 'very, so' was used 168 times with the highest percentage (79.6%), followed by *haqiqi* 'really' (7.1%). *Wallah/warabi* 'by God' ranked third (4.7%). *Harfyean* 'literally' and *wow* 'wow' were the least frequent intensifiers with 4.3% for each.

Female speakers accounted for 72.9% of the intensifiers with a total of 154 times, whereas male speakers accounted for only 27.1%. *Merrah* 'very, so' was used frequently by females—124 times with a percentage of 73.8%, while it was used only 44 times (26.2%) by males. *Merrah* was used by young females with a percentage of 75%, whereas middle females used it 25 times with a percentage of 20.2%. It was rarely used by older females (4.8%). In males' compliments, *merrah* was commonly used by young males with a percentage of 65.9% followed by middle-aged males (29.5%). Furthermore, the intensifier *haqiqi* 'really' was commonly used by females (12 times) and only 3 times by males. *Haqiqi* 'really' appeared remarkably among young females (83.3%), followed by middle-aged females (16.7%). Interestingly, *harfyeen* 'literally' and *wow* only appeared in compliments paid by young (18-35) females.

The occurrence of many intensifiers in the compliments of the sample of the study suggests that compliments serve to laud the addressee as well as fostering harmony with him/her. By strengthening the praise, the complimenter seeks to show the addressee that the compliment's literal sense is appropriate, and that it is not just a token of solidarity. It is a sign that the relationship is also strong. Such a function of compliments has been emphasized by data collected from other languages such as South African English (Herbert, 1990), Polish (Jaworski, 1995), Chinese (Yuan, 1998) and Jordanian Arabic (Migdadi, 2003).

#### **4.2.4 Direct and Indirect Compliments**

This section provides an analysis and discussion of the occurrence of direct/explicit and indirect/implicit compliments in the Hijazi dialect. Compliments in the current research, as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.9.3, were classified into explicit and implicit compliments. Explicit compliments refer to 'a direct positive comment in which the form contains at least one positive semantic carrier' (Sun, 2002, p. 24). The following is an example of an explicit compliment:

- (27) "صراحه شنتطتك مره حلوه"  
 sarahah shantat-ik merrah hulwah  
 Honestly bag-your very beautiful  
 Honestly, your bag is very beautiful.

On the other hand, implicit compliments can be defined as 'a general statement without a positive semantic carrier, where the addressee is not directly (addressed) but the positive meaning can be inferred from what is said in a particular context' (Yuan, 2002, p. 192). (28), (29) and (30) below are examples of implicit compliments:

(28) " ممكن تسلفني وجهك ذا الأسبوع "

mumkin tisallef-ni wajh-ek tha al-asboo'a

Possible loan-me face-your this the-week

Can I borrow your face for a week?

(29) " أشكر أبوك اللي عقد خطبة أمك "

ashkur aboo-k elli 'agad khotbat omm-ik

Thank father-your who knotted engagement mother-your

I would like to thank your father who chose your mother for wife

(30) " ما شاء الله، اللهم صل على النبي، الله يحفظ ابنك "

mashaallah , allahuma salli 'ala a-nabi, Allah yahfad ibn-ek

What willed allah, Allah pray on the-prophet, Allah save son-your

Mashallah, Allah's prayers be upon the prophet, may Allah protect your son!

In example (28), a young male implicitly complimented another young male on his natural appearance. The complimenter expressed his admiration for the complimentee's attractiveness in an indirect way. Example (29) was used by a young male speaker to praise a young girl's beauty without complimenting her directly. In this example, the speaker thanked the girl's father who married her mother in order to have gorgeous kids like her. Example (30) is a supplication, and it was used by middle and older speakers when they saw a beautiful child or when they admired the child's attitude. In that example, the speakers did not use direct adjectives or verbs to express their admiration.

When giving compliments, Hijazi speakers used explicit compliments far more frequently than they used implicit compliments. Table 4.14 below shows that the majority of compliments were explicit and accounted for 378 compliments. However, the occurrence of implicit compliments was limited. Only 12 implicit

compliments were recorded. Similar findings were found in previous studies such as a Japanese study (explicit 67% vs. implicit 33%) (Adachi, 2011), an Egyptian study (explicit 63% vs. implicit 27%) (Nelson et al., 1993), a Jordanian study (explicit 88% vs. implicit 12%) (Migdadi, 2003) and a Najdi study (explicit 93.5% vs. implicit 6.4%) (AlAmro, 2013). The occurrence of a limited number of implicit compliments in the Hijazi dialect may suggest that Hijazi people prefer to praise each other openly and directly. This might be attributed to the social function of compliments which serve to foster harmony between compliment exchangers.

Table 4.14: *Occurrence of Explicit and Implicit Compliments in Hijazi Dialect*

|            | Explicit compliment | Implicit compliment |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Occurrence | 378                 | 12                  |

#### **4.2.5 Sociocultural Phraseologies in Giving Compliments**

This section provides an analysis and discussion of the most common sociocultural phraseologies used in paying compliments in the Hijazi dialect. It also presents a classification of these phraseologies with some examples and discusses the occurrence of these expressions with regard to gender and age.

##### *4.2.5a Classification of Sociocultural Phraseologies*

A close examination and analysis of the compliments resulted in classifying the phrases used in them into three types which represent new findings. These are:

- Religious phrases

These are religious expressions such as *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you' and *allahuma salli 'ala a-nabi* 'Allah's prayers be upon the prophet' which are used to praise a person or an item. According to the data of the study, such expressions were used at the beginning or at the end of the compliment. (31) and (32) below are examples of how these expressions were used in giving compliments:

(31) " ما شاء الله أسنانك مره بيضاء "

ma sha allah asnan-ik merrah baidha  
 What willed allah teeth-your very white  
 Mashallah your teeth are very white



In this example, the complimenter (young female) is complimenting her friend (young female) on having white and clean teeth by starting the compliment with a religious phrase 'Mashallah'.

- (32) " اللهم صل على النبي، ايش الحلاوه دي "      eish      alhalawah      di  
 allahuma Sali 'ala a-nabi,      Allah's prayers be upon the prophet, what      sweetness      this  
 Mashallah, how beautiful you are!

In this example, the complimenter (middle-aged male) is complimenting the complimentee (middle-aged male) on her beauty by starting the compliment with a religious phrase 'Mashallah'. The two interlocutors were friends.

These religious phrases, as well as other examples, demonstrated in Table 4.15, functionally mean *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you'. Some Hijazi speakers believe that paying compliments attracts the evil eye which might cause the complimented person or object some harm. Therefore, they resort to using such religious expressions to save each other's face and protect each other from any threats to the complimentee's negative face. This faith that results in using such expressions, especially *tabarak allah* 'bless Allah', is encouraged by Islamic rules, especially when a person admires other people's appearance, performance or possessions.

- Proverbs

*Proverbs* refers to those common utterances that people use to compliment each other. The following is an example of an Arabic proverb used in paying compliments:

- (33) " اقلب القدر على فمها؛ تطلع البنت مثل أمها "      Iqleb al-qidir 'ala fam-ha; tatla'a al-bint mithl umma-ha.  
 Turn the-pot on mouth-its, appear the-girl like mother-her  
 Like mother, like daughter.

In example (33), the complimenter (middle-aged female) is using a well-known Arabic proverb to compliment the complimentee (middle-aged female) on having a beautiful daughter, like herself, hence like mother, like daughter.

- Swear words

The swear-word type refers to compliments which involve the use of offensive words such as *yal'aan shakl-ik* 'damn' and *bala f-shakl-ak* 'ordeal in-form-your' (see Table 4.15 for more examples). The literal translations of these swear words are completely different from their intended meanings, which show admiration for something or someone in an exaggerated way. The appropriate functional translations of these swear words can be 'oh my god', 'go to hell' or 'what is this!'. Please consider the following examples:

- (34) " يلعن شكلك، عيونك مره تجنن "  
 yal'aan shakl-ik, 'aayun-ik merrah itjanin  
 Damn form-your, eyes-your so madden  
 Oh my God! Your eyes are so beautiful

In this example, the complimenter (young male) is starting the compliment with a swear phrase 'Damn your shape' to compliment his friend (young male) on having attractive eyes. This compliment took place on the corniche. Both interlocutors had an equal status in terms of age and conduct. They behave similarly towards each other. This type of compliment which includes swear words or phrases is very common among young friends.

- (35) " بلاء فشكلك! ايش السيارة الفخمة "  
 bala f-shakl-ak, eish a-ssyarah al-fakhmah  
 Ordeal in-form-your, what the-car the-fancy  
 Go to hell! What a fancy car!

In this example, the complimenter (young male) is starting the compliment with a swear phrase 'Go to hell' to compliment his friend (young male) on having a fancy car. This compliment took place at the complimentee's house.

Animal names are used in some Hijazi compliments, such as in *ya hayawan* 'oh animal' and *ya kalb* 'oh dog'. These are classified as swear words because calling a man a *dog* might be understood as an insult in Saudi and Arab culture. However, their usage mostly expresses how close the interlocutors and signify some good traits like loyalty, as the following example shows:

(36) " أنت كلب! في الوفاء "  
 ant kalb! fi alwafa  
 You dog! In faithfulness  
 You are as faithful as a dog

In this example, the complimenter is starting the compliment by apparently cursing his/her friend or calling him/her names 'You, dog!' while the complimenter is actually praising the complementee for being as loyal or faithful as a dog. This compliment occurred between young males and interlocutors that have an equal status interaction. It seems that dogs in Arab and Western cultures are associated with loyalty and faithfulness to people.

Table 4.15: *Examples and Occurrence of the Most Common Sociocultural Phraseologies*

|                     | Examples  |  |  | Total |
|---------------------|---|--|--|-------|
| 1.Religious phrases | "ما شاء الله"<br>ma sha allah<br>what willed Allah<br>*Mashallah<br><b>(48 times)</b>   | "تبارك الرحمن"<br>tabarak a-rrahman<br>Bless the merciful<br>*Mashallah<br><b>(3 times)</b>                                    | "اسم الله"<br>ism allah<br>Name of Allah<br>*Mashallah<br><b>(5 times)</b> | 78    |
|                     | "تبارك الله"<br>tabarak allah<br>Bless Allah<br>*Mashallah<br><b>(10 times)</b>   | " اللهم صل على النبي "<br>allahuma salli ‘ala a-nabi<br>Allah’s prayers be upon the prophet<br>*Mashallah<br><b>(12 times)</b> |  |       |
| 2. Proverbs         | " هادا الشبل من داك الأسد " <b>(4 times)</b><br>ha'da a-shabal min dak al-asad<br>This cub from that lion.<br>Like father, like son.  |  |  | 9     |
|                     | " الصمت في حرم الجمال جمال " <b>(2times)</b><br>a-ssamt fi harem al-jamal jamal<br>the-silence in campus the-beauty beauty<br>Your beauty leaves me speechless/ I am speechless   |  |  |       |
|                     | " اقلب القدر على فمها؛ تطلع البنت مثل أمها " <b>(1 time)</b><br>Iqleb al-qidir ‘ala fam-ha; tatla’a al-bint mithl umma-ha<br>Turn the-pot on mouth-its, appear the-girl like mother-her.<br>Like mother, like daughter. |  |  |       |
|                     | " لا فض فوك " <b>(1 time)</b><br>la fadha foo-k<br>Not break up mouth-your<br>Well-said!  |  |  |       |
|                     | " الحي يحييك " <b>(1 time)</b><br>al-hai yehyee-k<br>The-living enliven-you.  |  |  |       |

|  | You look awesome!   |  |   |    |
|--|---|--|---|----|
| 3. Swear words   | " يخرّب بيتك،<br>yekhrib beit-ik,<br>Destroy house-your.<br>**Oh, my God!/ what is this!!<br><b>(4 times)</b> | " يلعن شكاك "<br>yal'aan shakl-ik<br>damn form-your<br>**Damn!<br><b>(8 times)</b> | " بلاء فشكاك! "<br>bala fshakl-ak<br>Ordeal in-form-your<br>your<br>**Go to hell!/ damn you<br><b>(6 times)</b> | 21 |
|  | " يا حيوان " <b>(2 times)</b><br>yahayawan<br>Oh animal.<br>**Oh animal                                       | " كلب " <b>(1 time)</b><br>kalb<br>dog.<br>**dog                                   |   |    |
| * Mashallah means that may Allah's grace be upon you.<br>** meaning differs according to contexts. |   |  |   |    |

#### 4.2.5b Sociocultural Phraseologies, and Gender and Age

This section provides an analysis of the frequencies of religious phrases, proverbs and swear words in the Hijazi compliments. It also discusses the occurrences of these phraseologies with reference to the complimenter's gender and age.

The findings arrived at after closely examining 390 compliments, as seen in Table 4.15 and Table 4.16, show that religious phrases occurred 78 times in Hijazi compliments, 20% of the entire data. *Mashallah* occurred 48 times in giving compliments, in 61.5% of compliments with religious phrases. *Allahuma salli 'ala a-nabi* 'Allah's prayers be upon the prophet' ranked second with a frequency of 12 times, followed by *tabarak allah* 'bless Allah' accounting for 10 times.

The usage of proverbs was limited as they occurred only 9 times with a percentage of 2.3%. *Like father, like son*, as explained in Table 4.15 above, was the most frequent proverb accounting for 4 times out of 9. As for swear words, they occurred 21 times in Hijazi compliments with a percentage of 5.4%. *Yal'aan shakl-ak* 'damn form-your' used more frequently with a frequency of 8 times out of 21, followed by *bala f-shakl-ak* 'ordeal form-your' with a frequency of 6 times.

Table 4.16 shows the similarities and differences in using sociocultural phraseologies by both genders. Upon examining 147 compliments paid by males, it was found that religious phrases were used 29 times with a percentage of 19.7%, whereas these expressions occurred 49 times (20.2%) in 243 compliments given

by females. There is no significant difference in using religious phrases between both genders. The usage of proverbs by men was a little higher than women's usage; accounting for 6 times (4.1%) and 3 times (1.2%), respectively. In contrast, swear words were used by females more than males. These swear words occurred 14 times (5.8%) in compliments given by females and 7 times (4.8%) in males' compliments. Swear words only occurred in same-gender exchanges, unlike religious phrases and proverbs which occurred in both same-gender and cross-gender interactions.

Table 4.16: *Distribution of the Most Frequent Sociocultural Phraseologies Used in Giving Compliments*

| gender  | Age    | Number of<br>complimen | Religious<br>Phrases | Proverbs | Swear<br>Words |
|---------|--------|------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|
| Males   | Young  | 82                     | 6                    | 0        | 7              |
|         | Middle | 49                     | 14                   | 2        | 0              |
|         | Older  | 16                     | 9                    | 4        | 0              |
| Total   |        | 147                    | 29                   | 6        | 7              |
| Females | Young  | 163                    | 25                   | 0        | 13             |
|         | Middle | 64                     | 15                   | 3        | 1              |
|         | Older  | 16                     | 9                    | 0        | 0              |
| Total   |        | 243                    | 49                   | 3        | 14             |

Moreover, age plays an important role in using sociocultural phraseologies in praising people. Table 4.16 shows that religious phrases were used 31 times (12.6%) out of 245 compliments paid by the Hijazi young generation. The middle generation used religious expressions in 29 compliments out of 113, with a percentage of 25.7%. Remarkably, the older generation used these expressions in more than half of their compliments with a frequency of 18 times (56.2%) out of 32. Proverbs were not recorded in the young generation's compliments. They only occurred 5 times in middle-aged group and 4 times in the older group. Swear words were used most apparently by Hijazi young speakers accounting for 20 times out of 21, and almost two thirds of them were used by young females as shown in Table 4.16. Hijazi middle and older generations did not use any swear

words as the data showed. Based on these findings, it can be suggested that Hijazi young, like young people anywhere, are more affected by new trends and social media in which such phrases are used than middle and older generations. The youth may also want to leave their marks on compliments by using unusual words which describe their feelings exaggeratedly.

The reason of the frequent usage of religious phrases in the Hijazi compliments can be attributed to the fear of threatening the complimentee's face because of envy. According to Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, when the compliment expresses envy of the object of compliment, this act will be face-threatening to the addressee. However, the envy communicated by the compliment in instances such as (31) and (32), if at all it exists, is countered by these religious phrases which make the compliment sound positive rather than threatening to the complimentee's face. Because Hijazi people are Muslims who seek Allah's help in their daily interactions, the negative effect of envy-carrying praise can be lessened by such religious expressions especially 'in societies where envy is very strong' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 252). In such societies, when people use religious phrases such as *mashallah* and invocations such as 'may Allah protect you' or 'may Allah bless you' in compliment exchanges, they can talk more freely and respond spontaneously while mitigating the potential effect of the evil eye.

### 4.3 Summary

This chapter provided the data analysis of 390 compliments paid by Hijazi speakers. The influence of gender, age, and relationship on compliment topics, syntactic patterns, and sociocultural phraseologies was investigated. The findings showed that Hijazi speakers paid more compliments on *appearance*. It was also found that *performance/skill* was the most frequent compliment topic used by men, whereas women paid more compliments on *appearance*. Moreover, the findings showed that *appearance* was the most frequent topic used by the young group, whereas *performance/skill* was frequently used by the middle and older groups. The analysis showed that there were 11 syntactic patterns which were identified as the most frequent patterns used in the dataset. It was found that **(*mashallah*) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (*mashallah*)** is the most frequent pattern used by people with a percentage of 62%. The findings showed that adjectives

were the most frequent positive semantic carriers used when giving compliments as they occurred 261 times in the dataset. In addition, words such as *merrah* 'very', *haqiqi* 'really', and *harfyeen* 'literally' were the most frequent intensifiers in compliments. This chapter also examined the sociocultural phrases which were used in paying compliments on different occasions. *Mashallah*, 'may Allah's grace be upon you', *allahuma salli 'ala a-nabi* 'Allah's prayers be upon the prophet', and *tabarak allah* 'bless Allah' were the most commonly used examples of sociocultural phrases. These religious phrases were used quite frequently as some Hijazi speakers hold a religious belief that giving compliments may attract the evil eye which, in turn, might harm the complimented person or object. The following chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the findings on the compliment responses given by the sample of the current study.

## **Chapter Five: Hijazi Compliment Responses**



## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the compliment responses used in the Hijazi dialect. This analysis is based on 482 responses, which were extracted from 390 compliment exchanges collected in the Hijazi dialect. These encounters included 390 compliments and 390 responses, in which 482 response strategies were observed. That means some complimentees' responses consisted of more than one response strategy (discussed in detail in Section 5.8). In analysing 482 responses, Herbert's (1986) categorization of compliment responses, as discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.9.4, was adopted with some modifications. Herbert's classification consisted of three macro-level categories: Agreement, Non-agreement, and Other Interpretations, with twelve micro-level categories. (See Appendix 3.) The dataset of the current research was examined and classified into 15 categories as shown in Table 5.1. Moreover, compliment response strategies were analysed and discussed based on gender, age and relationship. The responses were also examined in terms of their occurrence with the compliment topics. The findings are presented and discussed in the order of the following research questions:

- **How do Hijazi speakers typically respond to compliments?**

1. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by Hijazi males and females when responding to compliments?
2. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by different age groups?
3. Which strategies of compliment responses are used by familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors?

## 5.2 Compliment Response Strategies

This section presents definitions of the three macro categories: Agreement, Non-agreement and Other Interpretations, and the fifteen micro-level categories that were used in classifying Hijazi responses to compliments (See Table 5.1). Some examples from the Hijazi dialect are provided to illustrate these categories.

**A. Agreement:** An agreement is a remark that agrees with the given compliment (Migdadi, 2003). Seven micro categories, which are appreciation token, praise

upgrade, comment history, reassignment, return compliment, offering, and invocation and blessing, were classified under the category of *Agreement*.

**A.1 Appreciation tokens:** These are expressions that show compliment respondents are grateful for the compliments. *Shukran*, *mashkoor*, *tiislam* and *habeebi* ‘thanks’ are the most frequent tokens. (37) below is an example of *shukran* and (38) explains how *habeebi* might be used in a compliment exchange as a verbal acceptance of the compliment:

| (37) Compliment:  | Response:                                |
|---|--|
| "قهوتك مره تفوز"<br>gahwat-ik merrah tufuz<br>Coffee-your very win<br>Your coffee is amazing. | "شكرا"<br>shukran<br>Thanks<br>Thank you |

| (38) Compliment:  | Response:                                       |
|---|---|
| "صفحتك بانستقرام مره عاجبتني"<br>safhit-ek be-instagram merrah. 'aajbatn-i<br>Page-your in-Instagram very Liked-me<br>I like your Instagram page a lot. | "حبيبي"<br>habeeb-i<br>sweetheart-my<br>Thanks. |

**A.2 Praise upgrade:** This category can be defined as those responses ‘In which the hearer accepts the compliment and asserts that the complimentary force is insufficient’ (Herbert, 1986, p. 78). Example (39) below is an example of this type:

| (39) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| "مره حببت قصة شعرك"<br>merrah habait-I gasat sha'ar-ik<br>Very loved-I haircut hair-your.<br>I really loved your haircut. | "القصة عاديه، أنا اللي محليتها"<br>al-gasah 'aadyyah, ana elli imhalyet-ha<br>The-haircut normal, I who made-it-beautiful.<br>It's normal! It's me who made it beautiful. |

**A.3 Comment history:** This type refers to responses in which the complimentee makes a comment on the complimented topic/object in order to move the focus away from the addressee by referring to the past (Herbert, 1986). The following is an example of such responses:

| (40) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| "الجاكيت حقك بطل مره"<br>al-jakait hag-ek batal merrah<br>The-jacket right-your hero very<br>Your jacket is really great. | "أخذته من بول اند بير"<br>akhathat-ah min pull and bear<br>I took-it from pull and bear<br>I got it at Pull and Bear. |

**A.4 Reassignment:** This type refers to responses in which the addressee accepts the compliment, but the complimentary force is directed to a third person or item (Herbert, 1986). (41) and (42) below are two instances of such responses:

| (41) Compliment:   | Response:   |
|--|---|
| "حرفيا ريحة عطرك جميله"<br>harfyea reheat 'aitr-ik jamilah<br>Literally smell perfume-your beautiful.<br>The smell of your perfume is literally beautiful. | "هدية ماما بمناسبة التخرج"<br>hadyyat mama bi-munasabat a-ttakharuj<br>Gift mama with-occasion the-graduation.<br>It's mama's gift for my graduation. |

| (42) Compliment:   | Response:  |
|--|--|
| "الميك أب حلو مره"<br>al-maik up hulu merrah<br>The-make-up sweet very.<br>Your make-up is really beautiful. | "الميك اب ارتست مو طبييعيه"<br>al-maik up artist mo tabee'ayeah<br>The-make-up artist not natural.<br>The make-up artist is very talented. |

**A.5 Return compliment:** This category can be defined as those compliments which are given in response to other compliments. Simply, the praise is returned to the complimenter. The following is an example of returning compliments:

| (43) Compliment:   | Response:  |
|--|--|
| "ساعتك حلوه"<br>sa'at-ek hulwah<br>Watch-your sweet.<br>Your watch is beautiful. | "عيونك الحلوه يا حلو"<br>'aayun-ek alhulwah yahulu<br>Eyes-your sweet, Oh sweet.<br>Your eyes are beautiful. |

**A.6 Offering:** This type refers to responses in which the complimentee offers the praised object to the complimenter. Offering the complimented item to the speaker might be unusual in Western culture, but in Arab culture this response is often expected, and it can be interpreted as part of the social values that govern Arab

societies in general. (44) below is an example of offering the complimented object by the complimentee:

| (44) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| " روجك حلو وثابت "<br>roaj-ik hulu wa thabit<br>Rouge-your sweet and fixed.<br>Your rouge is beautiful and lasts. | " دحين أعطيك واحد زيوه "<br>dahheen a'atee-k wahid zayy-oh<br>Now give-I-you one like-it.<br>I will give you one like it now. |

**A.7 Invocation and Blessing:** This type refers to expressions and utterances which involve supplications and blessings. These invocations are related to Allah. They are consistent with Islamic teachings that a person will never be a good Muslim unless he/she wishes others what he/she wants for him/herself. *Allah yebar-ik fee-k* 'may Allah bless you', *allah yes'ad-ak* 'may Allah please you', *Allah yejz-ak khair* 'may Allah reward you' and *Allah yekrem-ak* 'may Allah honour you' are some examples of those supplications. (45) and (46) below are examples of invocations and blessings:

| (45) Compliment:  | Response:  |
|---|--|
| " أحب سواليك مره تجنن "<br>ahib suwaleef-ik merrah itjanin<br>Love-I stories-your very madden.<br>I love your amazing talk. | " الله يبارك فيك "<br>allah yebarik fee-k<br>Allah bless in-you.<br>May Allah bless you. |

In example (45), the complimenter (young female) praised one of her relatives (old woman) for her amazing talk, to which the complimentee responded with a prayer 'May Allah bless you.' This kind of prayer is very common among old people in Saudi culture as a response to compliments.

| (46) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| " ما شاء الله، ايش الكاريزما هادي "<br>ma sha allah, eish alkarizma hadi<br>What willed Allah, what charisma this.<br>Mashallah. How charismatic you are! | " الله يكرمك "<br>allah yekrem-ak<br>Allah honour-you.<br>May Allah honour you. |

Example (46) took place at the university. The complimenter is a university doctor (middle-aged male) who praised the complimentee's (young male student) charisma after presenting his project. They had a high-low status since the

complimenter is in a position of power invested in him by his academic status. In this situation, the complimentee responded with a prayer *allah yekrem-ak* 'May Allah honour you.' which also reflects this kind of status between them in Saudi culture.

**B. Non-agreement:** Non-agreement refers to those responses in which the complimentee does not agree with preceding praise. Question, disagreement, qualification and no acknowledgement were classified under this macro category.

**B.1 Question:** This type includes responses in which the complimentee questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of the compliment (Herbert, 1986, p. 78).

Please consider the following example:

| (47) Compliment:  | Response:  |
|---|--|
| "ريحة عطرك تموت"<br>reheat 'aitr-ik itmawet<br>Smell perfume-your deaden.<br>Your perfume smells amazing. | "من جد؟"<br>min jid?<br>From seriousness<br>Are you serious? |

**B.2 Disagreement:** This type can be defined, according to (Herbert, 1986, p. 78), as those responses 'In which the speaker asserts that the object complimented is not worthy of praise; the first speaker's assertion is in error'. In such a situation, the complimentee disagrees with the complimenter. (48) below is an example of disagreement.

| (48) Compliment:   | Response:  |
|--|--|
| "الجزمه تفوز"<br>al-jazmah tufuz<br>The-shoes win.<br>Your shoes are stunning. | "بالعكس ما عجبتني"<br>bi-l'aks ma 'ajabetn-i<br>With-opposite not like-me<br>On the contrary, I don't like them. |

**B.3 Qualification:** This type refers to those utterances in which the addressee qualifies the original assertion, usually with contrastive markers like *but* and *though* or hedges like *well* (Herbert, 1986, p. 78). In example (49) below, the complimentee agrees with the idea that changing their hair colour is good, but he/she believes that choosing another colour would be nicer. In the following example, the complimentee used 'if' to qualify the complimenter's assertion.

| (49) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| " لون شعرك يموت، مره حلو "<br>loan sha'ar-ik yemawet, merrah hulu<br>Colour hair-your deaden, very sweet.<br>The colour of your hair is really amazing. | " لو بني كان أحلى "<br>lo bonni kan ahla<br>if brown was nicer<br>If it were brown, it would be nicer |

**B.4 No acknowledgment:** This refers to those compliment exchanges in which the complimentee gave no response [silence] or changed the topic. The following is an example of this category.

| (50) Compliment:  | Response:              |
|---|------------------------|
| " عيونك حلوه يا عسل "<br>'aayun-ik hulwah ya 'asal<br>Eyes-your sweet Oh honey.<br>How beautiful your eyes are! | [Silence; No response] |

This example took place at a cafe between two unfamiliar interlocutors. There is no relationship between them as they are complete strangers. The complimenter is a young male who complimented a young female on her beautiful eyes. The complimentee responded with silence, and this might happen in Saudi culture especially when a male stranger praises a girl for her beauty.

**C. Other Interpretations:** This macro category consists of four micro categories which are: Evil-eye (envy) protection, joking, request interpretation and non-verbal responses.

**C.1 Evil-eye (envy) protection:** This type involves responses in which the complimentee asks the complimenter to say some religious phrases such as *mashallah* 'may Allah's grace be upon you', *ithker allah* 'mention Allah' and *salli 'ala a-nnabi* 'pray on the-prophet' or to say short verses from the Holy Quran in order to drive the evil eye away. (51) and (52) below are examples of this type.

| (51) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| " العن شكلك، ايش السياره الفخمه "<br>al'aan shakl-ak, eish assyyarah alfakhmah<br>Damn form-your, what car fancy.<br>Oh my God! What a fancy car! | " قول ما شاء الله "<br>gol ma sha' allah<br>Say what willed Allah.<br>Say masha' allah. |

| (52) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| "شنتطاك مره حلوه"<br>shanatat-ik merrah hulwah<br>Bag-your very sweet.<br>Your bag is really beautiful. | "صل على النبي"<br>salli 'ala a-nabi<br>Pray on the-prophet<br>Say masha' allah. |

**C.2 Joking:** This type refers to humorous utterances said by the addressee to make the situation funny. In example (53) below, a male speaker praises indirectly another male for his handsomeness and the addressee responded in a humorous way:

| (53) Compliment:   | Response:   |
|--|---|
| "ممكن تسلفني وجهك دا الأسبوع"<br>mumkin tisallefn-i wajh-ek da al-asboo'a<br>Possible loan-me face-your this the-week.<br>Can I borrow your face for a week? | "ما يركب عليك"<br>ma yarkab 'ala-ik<br>Not ride on-you.<br>It wouldn't fit you. |

In this example, a young man is complimenting the complimentee (young man) on having a handsome face to which the complimentee responds with a joke or witty remark meaning that his handsome face is peculiar to him only and that the complimentee cannot have a handsome face like his.

**C.3 Request interpretation:** This category refers to responses in which the complimentee interprets the compliment as an indirect way for asking a favour or doing something rather than just giving a simple compliment. In example (54) below, the complimentee interpreted his friend's compliment as doing something for him, and in instance (55) the addressee expected that the complimenter wanted some information about the perfume.

| (54) Compliment:   | Response:   |
|--|---|
| "تصدق إنتا أحسن صديق"<br>itsadeg inta ahsan sadeeg<br>Believe you better friend<br>Believe it or not. You are the best friend. | "بسرعه ايش تبغى أجيب لك"<br>bi-sur'aah eish tyebgha ajeeb l-ak<br>With-speed what (you want) (I get) for-you<br>Come on, tell me! What do you want me to get you? |

| (55) Compliment:   | Response:  |
|--|--|
| "ريحة عطرك روعه"<br>reheat 'aitr-ik raw'aah<br>Smell perfume-your wonderful.<br>Your perfume smells amazing. | "برسل لك صورته"<br>barsil l-ik sort-ah<br>Send-I to-you picture-its.<br>I will send you a photo of it. |

**C.4 Non-verbal responses:** This type refers to any non-verbal expressions that might appear on the face such as a smile, a laugh or a blush. In the following example two non-verbal responses were noticed on the complimentee's face.

| (56) Compliment:   | Response:                                |
|--|--|
| "شفتي حلى ياكل حلى"<br>shift-i hala yakul hala<br>Saw-you sweets eat sweets.<br>You are extremely sweet. | [مخرج + ابتسامه]<br>[embarrassed+ smile] |

### 5.3 Occurrence of Response Strategies in Hijazi Dialect

This section provides an analysis and discussion of the occurrence of response strategies among Hijazi people. Table 5.1 below shows that there was a range of different response types that used by Hijazi people when responding to compliments. Based on the macro level category, it is worth noting that *agreement* was the most frequent category used by Hijazi people with 392 responses out of 482 and a percentage of 81.30%. *Non-agreement*, which consists of four micro categories, represented 7.6% with a total of 37 responses. *Other interpretations*, including four categories, were used 53 times with a percentage of 11.10%.

The occurrence of agreement as the most common category is consistent with the findings of previous studies. For instance, Herbert (1990) reported that agreement was the most frequent category used in South African and American English data with percentages of 88.3% and 65.6%, respectively. In Jordanian Arabic (Migdadi, 2003) and Najdi Arabic (AlAmro, 2013), agreement also ranked first with the highest percentages of 81% and 88%, respectively. It seems that speakers in Western and Arab societies tend to avoid disagreement with each other as a kind of showing politeness. According to Leech (1983), to achieve the agreement maxim, people need to maximize agreement and minimize



disagreement when they engage in communication. In this regard, the agreement maxim can be seen as exerting pressure on complimentees to accept compliments. It is not surprising, then, that agreement was the most frequent response in compliment exchanges as the complimenter aims also to establish solidarity with the complimentee who, in turn, shows solidarity by agreeing with the complimenter (Herbert, 1989).

Table 5.1: *Frequencies and Percentages of Compliment Response Strategies in Hijazi Dialect*

| Compliment Response Strategy |                            | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Macro-level category         | Micro-level category       |           |            |
| Agreement                    | Appreciation Token         | 114       | 23.60%     |
|                              | Praise Upgrade             | 28        | 5.80%      |
|                              | Comment History            | 37        | 7.70%      |
|                              | Reassignment               | 38        | 7.90%      |
|                              | Return compliment          | 74        | 15.30%     |
|                              | Offering                   | 10        | 2.10%      |
|                              | Invocation and Blessing    | 91        | 18.90%     |
| Non-Agreement                | Question                   | 21        | 4.30%      |
|                              | Disagreement               | 8         | 1.60%      |
|                              | Qualification              | 3         | 0.60%      |
|                              | No Acknowledgment          | 5         | 1.10%      |
| Other interpretations        | Evil-eye (envy) protection | 29        | 6.10%      |
|                              | Joking                     | 3         | 0.60%      |
|                              | Request Interpretation     | 5         | 1.10%      |
|                              | Non-verbal Responses       | 16        | 3.30%      |
| Total                        |                            | 482       | 100.00%    |

Chart 5.1 shows that *appreciation token* was the most frequent micro-level response strategy used by Hijazi people, accounting for the highest percentage of 23.60%, followed by *invocation and blessing* with a percentage of 18.90%. *Return compliment* ranked third with a frequency of 74 responses (15.30%). These three strategies occurred almost in half of the collected data. This could mean that the

complimentees felt obliged, at least, to accept the compliments as a sign of respecting, and not ignoring, the complimenter. Other Hijazi speakers used *appreciation tokens* or *returning compliments plus invocations and blessings* in order to create harmony between them and the complimenter. The frequent usage of *invocation and blessing* strategy reflects the adherence of Hijazi speakers to the Islamic traditions and how these phrases are deeply steeped in Hijazi compliment responses.

Moreover, the agreement maxim and the modesty maxim can be seen in returning the compliment to the speaker. In such a situation, the agreement maxim obliges the complimentee to agree with the complimenter, but at the same time, the modesty maxim interferes to force the complimentee to minimize self-praise by returning the compliment to the complimenter. (57) is an example of such a situation:

| (57) Compliment:   | Response:  |
|--|--|
| <p>" لا فض فوك، كذا الكلام ولا بلاش "</p> <p>la fadha foo-k ki-da al-kalam wella balash</p> <p>Not break up mouth-your, like-this the-talk or nothing.</p> <p>Well-said! You either talk like this or you don't talk at all!</p> | <p>" تسلم، منك نتعلم "</p> <p>tislam, minn-ak ni-t'allam</p> <p>Be safe, from-you we-learn.</p> <p>Thank you. I learn from you/<br/>I am not your match.</p> |

In this example, the complimenter (middle-aged male teacher) is complimenting the complimentee (young-man student) on his wise speech during a discussion. This situation refers to a high-low status between the teacher who is in a position of power and the student who is in a weak position. The complimentee responded with thanking his teacher for this compliment and returning a compliment with a more modest response 'I learn from you'. This type of modest responses is very common in Saudi culture as it is encouraged by Islam.

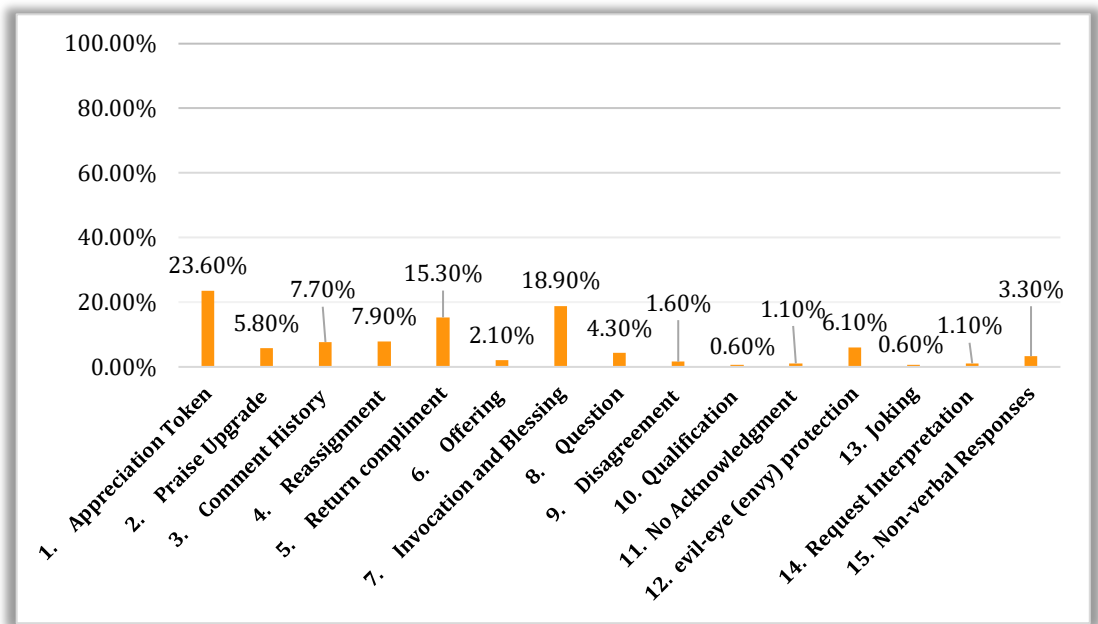


Chart 5.1: Distribution of Compliment Response Strategies in Hijazi Dialect

*Reassignment* and *comment history* ranked fourth and fifth with percentages of 7.90% and 7.70%, respectively. The next common response, as shown in Chart 5.1 and Table 5.1, is *evil-eye (envy) protection* with a frequency of 29 times and a percentage of 6.10%. This strategy ranked first in the *Other Interpretations* macro-level category. In compliment exchanges where this strategy is used, complimentees see such compliments as face-threatening (threatening their negative face) or they feel that complimenter envy them and desire the complimented object, be it possession, personality or performance. To protect themselves from the evil eye, complimentees use semantic formulas in their responses to compliments which could be interpreted as threatening the complimenter's negative face. (51) and (52), mentioned in section 5.2, are examples of such situations.

The next most common strategy was *praise upgrade* which accounts for 5.80% of the entire data. The limited occurrence of such a strategy might be attributed to the Hijazi speakers' adherence to Islamic teachings which encourage Muslims to be modest. However, the praise upgrade strategy breaks the modesty maxim as well as the social and Islamic values which urge speakers to be modest and avoid conceit. There is a common Islamic belief in Saudi culture that complimenting people in their presence is not advisable because this might cause them to be

arrogant, especially when the compliments are related to personal qualities. In this specific respect, it was narrated that when people of Mecca praised Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, saying ‘you are the best, you are the master and the son of master’, he was said to have hated that and asked the people to call him ‘the slave of God’ (Yahya and Ad-Dimashqi, 1990). The remaining micro-level categories recorded only 14.70% of the entire data. These categories are *question* (4.30%), *non-verbal responses* (3.30%), *offering* (2.10%), *disagreement* (1.60%), *no acknowledgement* (1.10%), *request interpretation* (1.10%), *qualification* (0.60%) and *joking* (0.60%).

#### 5.4 Response Strategies and Gender

This section provides a discussion of the correlation between response strategies and gender in the Hijazi community. A close examination of 211 (43.8%) males’ and 271 (56.2%) females’ responses (as shown in Table 5.2) was conducted in order to show how men and women responded to compliments. The chi-square analysis shows that the  $p$  value of the data shown in Table 5.3 below is 0.0006, which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates a significant correlation between the response strategies and gender in the Hijazi dialect.

Table 5.2: Frequencies of Compliment Responses According to Gender

| Gender                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Males’ responses to Males     | 148       | 30.7%      |
| Males’ responses to Females   | 63        | 13.1%      |
| Females’ responses to Females | 238       | 49.4%      |
| Females’ responses to Males   | 33        | 6.8%       |
| Total                         | 482       | 100%       |

The way males and females respond to compliments varies from culture to culture. In the dataset, as demonstrated in Table 5.3, it is worth noting that *invocation and blessing* was the most frequent strategy used by males with a frequency of 56 out of 211 responses and a percentage of 26.5%. The second frequent strategy used by males was *appreciation token*, constituting 19.9%, followed by *return compliment* with a percentage of 18%. *Comment history* and *evil eye (envy) protection* ranked fourth with the same percentage of 7.6% for each one of them.

Table 5.3: *Frequencies of Compliment Response strategies According to Gender*

| Compliment Response Strategy | Males      | Females    |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Appreciation Token           | 42 (19.9%) | 72 (26.6%) |
| Praise Upgrade               | 12 (5.7%)  | 16 (5.9%)  |
| Comment History              | 16 (7.6%)  | 21 (7.8%)  |
| Reassignment                 | 7 (3.3%)   | 31 (11.4%) |
| Return compliment            | 38 (18%)   | 36 (13.3%) |
| Offering                     | 4 (1.9%)   | 6 (2.2%)   |
| Invocation and Blessing      | 56 (26.5%) | 35 (12.9%) |
| Question                     | 7 (3.3%)   | 14 (5.2%)  |
| Disagreement                 | 5 (2.4%)   | 3 (1.1%)   |
| Qualification                | 1 (0.5%)   | 2 (0.7%)   |
| No Acknowledgment            | 1 (0.5%)   | 4 (1.5%)   |
| Evil-eye (envy) protection   | 16 (7.6%)  | 13 (4.8%)  |
| Joking                       | 1 (0.5%)   | 2 (0.7%)   |
| Request Interpretation       | 3 (1.4%)   | 2 (0.7%)   |
| Non-verbal Responses         | 2 (0.9%)   | 14 (5.2%)  |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 211 (100%) | 271 (100%) |

On the other hand, females used *appreciation token* most frequently, and it was on top of their usage with a frequency of 72 out of 271 responses and a percentage of 26.6%. *Return compliment* was the second most frequent strategy with a percentage of 13.3%, followed by *invocation and blessing* accounting for 12.9%. The fourth common strategy used by females was *reassignment* with a percentage of 11.4%. By comparing the females' usage of this strategy with the males' usage, it is clear that males used it less frequently than females. *Comment history* ranked fifth with a percentage of 7.8% which is similar to the males' usage. *Evil eye (envy) protection* ranked sixth with a percentage of 4.8%.

*Question*, *no acknowledgement* and *non-verbal responses* were used by females more frequently than males, accounting for (F: 5.2% vs M: 3.3%); (F: 1.5% vs M: 0.5%); (F: 5.2% vs M: 0.9%) respectively. These differences are not surprising because females tend to question compliments and would like compliments to be

honest expressions of admiration (Migdadi, 2003). Moreover, the high rate of *no acknowledgement* and *non-verbal responses* strategies might be attributed to the fact that it is socially undesirable for women to respond to strangers, particularly male strangers. On the other hand, males used *disagreement* and *request interpretations* more frequently than females with percentages of (M: 2.4% vs F: 1.1%) and (M: 1.4% vs F: 0.7%), respectively. These differences can be attributed to the fact that men, unlike women, show their disagreement with compliments, and they interpret compliments as a need for doing favours or doing something special for the complimenter, especially if the complimenter is a friend.

Furthermore, the response strategies for the current research were examined and analysed based on the interlocutors' gender as shown in Table 5.4 below. The findings show that males' responses in same-gender and cross-gender interactions focused on *invocation and blessing* as the most frequent strategy, accounting for 27.1% and 25.4%, respectively. *Appreciation token* ranked second in both genders' interactions with percentages of 20.3% and 19%, respectively. *Return compliment* was the third frequent strategy used by males in same and cross gender exchanges.

On the other hand, females' preferred strategy in same-gender and cross-gender interactions was *appreciation token* recording the highest occurrences of 24.8% and 39.4%, respectively. *Return compliment* ranked second in female-to-female responses with a percentage of 14.3%, whereas the *invocation and blessing* strategy was the second most frequent strategy used in female-to-male responses accounting for 15.1%. According to these results, it can be said there are no significant differences in comparing the top preferred strategies used by same-gender with cross-gender interlocutors. What is noticeable is that the *evil eye (envy) protection* strategy was commonly used in same-gender interactions, and it was rarely used in cross-gender exchanges. It was used only once in male-to-female responses. This might be interpreted as the complimentee feels more comfortable to ask the complimenter from the same gender to say Islamic expressions such as *gol mashallah* 'say mashallah' and *ithkir rabb-ik* 'mention Allah' which he/she thinks drive the evil eye away.

Table 5.4: *Compliment Response strategies According to Same-Gender and Cross-gender interlocutors*

| Compliment Response Strategy | M-Responses-M | F-Responses-F | M-Responses-F | F-Responses-M |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Appreciation Token           | 30 (20.3%)    | 59 (24.8%)    | 12 (19%)      | 13 (39.4%)    |
| Praise Upgrade               | 6 (4.1%)      | 12 (5.1%)     | 6 (9.5%)      | 4 (12.1%)     |
| Comment History              | 9 (6.1 %)     | 19 (8 %)      | 7 (11.1 %)    | 2 (6.1 %)     |
| Reassignment                 | 4 (2.7%)      | 30 (12.6%)    | 3 (4.8%)      | 1 (3%)        |
| Return compliment            | 27 (18.2%)    | 34 (14.3%)    | 11 (17.4%)    | 2 (6.1 %)     |
| Offering                     | 3 (2.1%)      | 6 (2.5%)      | 1 (1.6%)      | 0 (0.0%)      |
| Invocation and Blessing      | 40 (27.1%)    | 30 (12.6%)    | 16 (25.4%)    | 5 (15.1%)     |
| Question                     | 5 (3.3%)      | 13 (5.5%)     | 2 (3.2%)      | 1 (3%)        |
| Disagreement                 | 3 (2.1%)      | 3 (1.3%)      | 2 (3.2%)      | 0 (0.0%)      |
| Qualification                | 0 (0.00%)     | 2 (0.8%)      | 1 (1.6%)      | 0 (0.00%)     |
| No Acknowledgment            | 1 (0.6%)      | 2 (0.8%)      | 0 (00%)       | 2 (6.1 %)     |
| Evil-eye (envy) protection   | 15 (10.1%)    | 13 (5.5%)     | 1 (1.6%)      | 0 (0.0%)      |
| Joking                       | 1 (0.6%)      | 2 (0.8%)      | 0 (0.0%)      | 0 (0.0%)      |
| Request Interpretation       | 3 (2.1%)      | 2 (0.8%)      | 0 (0.0%)      | 0 (0.0%)      |
| Non-verbal Responses         | 1 (0.6%)      | 11 (4.6%)     | 1 (1.6%)      | 3 (9.1%)      |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 148 (100%)    | 238 (100%)    | 63 (100%)     | 33 (100%)     |

### 5.5 Response Strategies and Age

This section discusses how addressees from different age groups responded to compliments. A dataset of 482 responses was investigated and analysed. These data were collected from three different generations which were distributed as follows: young generation 345 (71.6%) responses, middle generation 107 (22.2%) responses, and older generation 30 (6.2) responses (See Table 5.5). The findings show that these three different age groups vary in their preferences for responding to compliments. Moreover, the result of the chi-square test reveals that the  $p$  value

of the data shown in Table 5.6 is 0.02 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which indicates a significant correlation between age groups and response strategies.

Table 5.5: *Frequencies of Compliment Responses According to Age*

| Age          | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Young        | 345       | 71.6%      |
| Middle       | 107       | 22.2%      |
| Older        | 30        | 6.2%       |
| <b>Total</b> | 482       | 100%       |

Table 5.6 below shows that the young generation tended to use *appreciation token* most frequently, recording the highest percentage of 23.8%. The second most frequent strategy used by young people was *return compliment* with a percentage of 15.9%, followed by *invocation and blessing* which accounted for 14.8%. With regard to the middle generation's usage, *appreciation token* ranked first as the most frequent strategy accounting for 25.2%, followed by *invocation and blessing* with a percentage of 21.5%. *Return compliment* was the third top strategy used by the middle group with a percentage of 15%. With respect to the older generation's responses, it is noticeable that more than the half of their responses were focused on *invocation and blessing* with a percentage of 56.6%. *Appreciation token* ranked second with a percentage of 16.7%, followed by *return compliment* accounting for 10%. These results show that all age groups' top preferences were centred on *agreement* as a macro category. This can be regarded as an indication of showing respect for the complimenters and not ignoring them.

Table 5.6: *Frequencies of Compliment Response strategies According to Age*

| Compliment Response strategy | Young      | Middle     | Older     |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Appreciation Token           | 82 (23.8%) | 27 (25.2%) | 5 (16.7%) |
| Praise Upgrade               | 22 (6.4%)  | 6 (5.6%)   | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Comment History              | 25 (7.4%)  | 10 (9.4%)  | 2 (6.7%)  |
| Reassignment                 | 27 (7.8%)  | 9 (8.4%)   | 2 (6.7%)  |
| Return compliment            | 55 (15.9%) | 16 (15%)   | 3 (10%)   |
| Offering                     | 8 (2.3%)   | 2 (1.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)  |



|                            |            |            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Invocation and Blessing    | 51 (14.8%) | 23 (21.5%) | 17 (56.6%) |
| Question                   | 19 (5.5%)  | 2 (1.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Disagreement               | 7 (2%)     | 1 (0.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Qualification              | 1 (0.3%)   | 2 (1.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| No Acknowledgment          | 4 (1.1%)   | 1 (0.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Evil-eye (envy) protection | 23 (6.7%)  | 5 (4.7%)   | 1 (3.3%)   |
| Joking                     | 2 (0.6%)   | 1 (0.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Request Interpretation     | 4 (1.1%)   | 1 (0.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Non-verbal Responses       | 15 (4.3%)  | 1 (0.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| <b>Total</b>               | 345 (100%) | 107 (100%) | 30 (100%)  |

Among the rest of these strategies, four have significant differences in the three generations. First, *praise upgrade* was commonly used by young and middle people with percentages of 6.4% and 5.6%, respectively. This strategy did not occur in the older generation's responses. It can be understood that self-praise is not a feature of responses given by the elderly in Hijazi and Saudi culture. This can also be attributed to the Islamic rules which encourage Muslims to be humble, and Hijazi older people tend to be more conservative than the other generations in Hijaz. Second, *question* and *non-verbal responses* were commonly used by the young generation, but they rarely occurred in the middle group's compliments and never in the older generation's compliments. This can be explained by the suggestion that the young generation would like to test how sincere the compliment was by questioning the speaker. The young generation might also be more to express emotion than the other groups, and those non-verbal responses appeared clearly on their faces compared with the middle and older groups.

Third, *Evil-eye (envy) protection* was used more frequently by the young generation (6.7%) than the middle generation (4.7%) and the older generation (3.3%). The high occurrence of this strategy in the young group might be interpreted as that Hijazi young speakers might be more sensitive to, and afraid of, the evil eye. This supports the idea that compliments may serve as an envy of the complimentee or the complimented object. This does not mean that the middle and older generations do not believe in the evil eye (envy). The infrequency of this strategy in their responses is because most compliments paid to them already included

Islamic expressions that are believed to guard against the evil eye. So, there is no need to ask the complimenter to say them.

### 5.6 Response Strategies and Relationship

This section provides an analysis of the usage of response strategies by familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors. A dataset of 411 (85.3%) responses collected from familiar speakers and 71 (14.7%) responses gathered from unfamiliar interlocutors was examined in order to see their preferences for responding to compliments (see Table 5.7). The chi-square result shows that there was a statistically significant correlation between response strategies and interlocutors' relationships, as the  $p$  value of the data shown in Table 5.8 is 0.002, which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Table 5.8 below shows that in compliment exchanges between familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors the complimentees tended to use *appreciation token* in responding to compliments, recording the highest occurrence with percentages of 21.9% and 33.8%, respectively. *Invocation and blessing* ranked second for both groups with percentages of 17.5% and 26.8% respectively, followed by *return compliment* strategy with percentages of 14.6% and 19.7%, respectively. These results show that both familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors used the same response strategies in the top three strategies. Unfamiliar groups exceeded familiar groups in the percentages of usage.

Table 5.7: *Frequencies of Compliment Responses According to Relationship*

| Relationship | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Familiar     | 411       | 85.3%      |
| Unfamiliar   | 71        | 14.7%%     |
| <b>Total</b> | 482       | 100%       |

*Praise upgrade* and *question* strategies were commonly used in exchanges between familiar speakers, and that they were not used in unfamiliar interactions. This is not surprising as complimentees will not be expected to self-praise themselves in front of strangers. The next noticeable strategy is *evil-eye (envy) protection*. This strategy was used more frequently by familiar speakers (6.7%) than by unfamiliar interlocutors (2.8%). The infrequency of this strategy in unfamiliar interactions might be attributed to the idea that asking strangers to say Islamic expressions

which would drive the evil eye away might be understood as threatening the complimenter's negative face. Therefore, complimentees avoided using this strategy.

Table 5.8: *Frequencies of Compliment Response Strategies According to Relationship*

| Compliment Response Strategy | Familiar   | Unfamiliar |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Appreciation Token           | 90 (21.9%) | 24 (33.8%) |
| Praise Upgrade               | 28 (6.8%)  | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Comment History              | 35 (8.5%)  | 2 (2.8%)   |
| Reassignment                 | 34 (8.3%)  | 4 (5.7%)   |
| Return compliment            | 60 (14.6%) | 14 (19.7%) |
| Offering                     | 10 (2.4%)  | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Invocation and Blessing      | 72 (17.5%) | 19 (26.8%) |
| Question                     | 21 (5.1%)  | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Disagreement                 | 8 (1.9%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Qualification                | 3 (0.7%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| No Acknowledgment            | 2 (0.5%)   | 3 (4.2%)   |
| Evil-eye (envy) protection   | 27 (6.7%)  | 2 (2.8%)   |
| Joking                       | 3 (0.7%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Request Interpretation       | 5 (1.2%)   | 0 (0.0%)   |
| Non-verbal Responses         | 13 (3.2%)  | 3 (4.2%)   |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 411 (100%) | 71 (100%)  |

### 5.7 Response Strategies in Relation to Compliment Topics

This section provides a discussion of the correlation between response strategies and compliment topics. 482 responses were analysed and classified in terms of their occurrence with the compliment topics. Table 5.9 below shows the breakdown of the occurrence of the responses as follows: *appearance* (184 responses), *performance\skill* (128 responses), *possession* (116 responses), *personality* (39 responses) and *children* (15 responses).

The findings revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between response strategies and compliment topics, as the  $p$  value of the data in Table 5.9 equals 0.00000001 ( $p < 0.05$ ). In analysing 184 responses to compliments on

*appearance*, the results showed that *appreciation token* was the most frequent strategy recording the highest occurrence 37 times (20.11%). *Return compliment* was the second common strategy accounting for 17.93%, followed by *reassignment* (10.87%) and *comment history* (10.33%). *Invocation and blessing* ranked fifth with a percentage of 9.78%, followed by *evil-eye (envy) protection* accounting for 6.25%.

In investigating 128 responses given to compliments on *performance/skill*, the results showed that *appreciation token* was the most frequent strategy used by the complimentees with an occurrence of 41 times (32.03%). The second most frequent strategy was *invocation and blessing* (19.53%), followed by *praise upgrade* (11.72%).

By looking at *possession, personality* and *children*, it was remarkable that *invocation and blessing* was the most frequent strategy accounting for 19.83%, 38.46% and 66.67%, respectively. The occurrence of *invocation and blessing* with all the topics used demonstrates Hijazi speakers' adherence to Islamic traditions, as well as the fact that these expressions are profoundly embedded in Hijazi compliment responses. Moreover, *evil-eye (envy) protection* appeared with almost all the topics, and this is not surprising as the fear of the evil eye (envy) is common in Saudi Hijazi culture. The evil eye is found in Islam which advises people to mention Allah in order to drive the evil eye away. Therefore, complimentees might ask the complimenters to say some Islamic phrases such as *mashallah*, 'may Allah's grace be upon you' and *tabarak allah* 'bless Allah' to protect themselves from any potential envy which might come from the complimenters.

Table 5.9: *Frequencies of Compliment Response strategies According to Compliment topics*

| Response Strategy  | Appearance     | Performance/Skill | Possession     | Personality    | Children      |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Appreciation Token | 37<br>(20.11%) | 41<br>(32.03%)    | 21<br>(18.10%) | 13<br>(33.33%) | 2<br>(13.33%) |
| Praise Upgrade     | 11<br>(5.98%)  | 15<br>(11.72%)    | 2<br>(1.72%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)  |
| Comment History    | 19<br>(10.33%) | 6<br>(4.69%)      | 12<br>(10.34%) | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)  |
| Reassignment       | 20<br>(10.87%) | 6<br>(4.69%)      | 11<br>(9.48%)  | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 1<br>(6.67%)  |
| Return compliment  | 33<br>(17.93%) | 13<br>(10.16%)    | 21<br>(18.10%) | 7<br>(17.95%)  | 0<br>(0.00%)  |

|                            |               |                |                |                |                |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Offering                   | 2<br>(1.09%)  | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 8<br>(6.90%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| Invocation and Blessing    | 18<br>(9.78%) | 25<br>(19.53%) | 23<br>(19.83%) | 15<br>(38.46%) | 10<br>(66.67%) |
| Question                   | 8<br>(4.35%)  | 8<br>(6.25%)   | 5<br>(4.31%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| Disagreement               | 5<br>(2.72%)  | 3<br>(2.34%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| Qualification              | 3<br>(1.63%)  | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| No Acknowledgment          | 4<br>(2.17%)  | 1<br>(0.78%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| Evil-eye (envy) protection | 12<br>(6.52%) | 5<br>(3.91%)   | 10<br>(8.62%)  | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 2<br>(13.33%)  |
| Joking                     | 3<br>(1.63%)  | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| Request Interpretation     | 0<br>(0.00%)  | 1<br>(0.78%)   | 2<br>(1.72%)   | 2<br>(5.13%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| Non-verbal Responses       | 9<br>(4.89%)  | 4<br>(3.13%)   | 1<br>(0.86%)   | 2<br>(5.13%)   | 0<br>(0.00%)   |
| <b>Total</b>               | 184<br>(100%) | 128<br>(100%)  | 116<br>(100%)  | 39<br>(100%)   | 15<br>(100%)   |

### 5.8 Number of Strategies Used in Responding

This section examined Hijazi compliments' responses in terms of how many response strategies were used in each response. The dataset of 482 responses was examined and classified into a single response (one strategy) and a complex response (two strategies). Table 5.10 below reveals that Hijazi people used single responses more frequently than complex responses. The single response type was used in almost two-thirds (61.8%) of the entire data, accounting for 298 responses. Moreover, the examination shows that 184 responses, which were used in pairs, constituting 92 complex responses, were used less frequently by Hijazi people, accounting for 38.2%.

Similar findings were arrived at in Farghal and Al-Khatib's (2001) data on Jordanian college students, accounting for (single response: 70.94% vs complex response 27.06%) and Farghal and Haggan's (2006) data on Kuwaiti college students, accounting for (simple response: 56.2% vs complex response (two parts) 36.4%). Farghal and Haggan (2006) and Farghal and Al-Katib (2001) argued that choosing single-strategy compliment responses denotes decisiveness, while selecting complex responses suggests reinforcement.

Table 5.10: Frequency and Percentage of Responses Used as Single and Complex Responses

| Single Response (one strategy) | Complex Response (two strategies) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 298 (61.8%)                    | 184=92*2 (38.2%)                  |
| Total: 482 (100%)              |                                   |

Further examination was conducted for 92 complex responses in order to show which complex response was used most frequently by Hijazi people. As discussed earlier, each complex response consisted of two response strategies. As shown in Table 5.11 below, it is worth noting that the *appreciation token + return compliment* complex response was used frequently, recording the highest percentage of 27.1%. (58) below is an example of this complex response:

| (58) Compliment:  | Response:  |
|---|--|
| "ما شاء الله ذوقك مره حلو"<br>ma sha' allah, thog-ik merrah hulu<br>What willed Allah, taste-your very sweet.<br>Masha' allah, your taste is really good. | "تسلمي، أنتي أحلى"<br>tislami, anti ahla<br>Be safe, you more beautiful.<br>Thank you. You are more beautiful. |

*Invocation and blessing + return compliment* ranked second with a percentage of 18.5%, followed by *appreciation token + invocation and blessing*, accounting for 16.3%. Examples (59) and (60) below demonstrate these complex responses respectively:

| (59) Compliment:  | Response:   |
|---|---|
| "حقيقي الأثاث والتصميم مره حلو"<br>haqiqi al-athat wa attasmeem merrah hulu<br>Really the-furniture and design merrah sweet.<br>Really the furniture and design are so beautiful. | "ربي يبارك فيك، عيونك الحلوه"<br>rabb-i yebarik feek, 'aayun-ik alhulwah<br>God-my bless you, eyes-your sweet.<br>May Allah bless you! Your eyes are beautiful. |

| (60) Compliment:   | Response:   |
|--|---|
| "أسلوبك مره راقى"<br>ausloob-ek merrah raqi<br>style-your very elegant.<br>Your conduct is really elegant. | "تسلم، الله يكرمك"<br>tislam, allah yekrem-ak<br>Be safe, Allah honour-you.<br>Thank you. May Allah honour you. |

These three complex responses form almost two-thirds (61.9%), accounting for 57 out of 92 complex responses. By looking at the rest of the complex responses, it can be said that *invocation and blessing* strategy was used frequently with another response strategy. Using this strategy may contribute to strengthening the relationship between the interlocutors. It can also be an indicator of accepting praise and showing comfort to the speaker. Moreover, the majority of these complex responses centred on the *agreement* macro category. The rest of the complex responses occurred less frequently in the Hijazi compliments' responses.

Table 5.11: *Breakdown of Complex Responses That Used in Hijazi Dialect*

| Complex Response                               | Frequency and Percentages |
|--|---------------------------|
| appreciation token + return compliment         | 25 (27.1%)                |
| invocation and blessing + return compliment    | 17 (18.5%)                |
| appreciation token + invocation and blessing   | 15 (16.3%)                |
| appreciation token + non-verbal response       | 6 (6.5%)                  |
| question + disagreement                        | 5 (5.4%)                  |
| evil-eye (envy) protection + comment history   | 3 (3.2%)                  |
| praise upgrade + non-verbal response           | 3 (3.2%)                  |
| appreciation token + praise upgrade            | 2 (2.2%)                  |
| invocation and blessing + offering             | 2 (2.2%)                  |
| question + comment history                     | 2 (2.2%)                  |
| evil-eye (envy) protection + reassignment      | 2 (2.2%)                  |
| return compliment+ non-verbal response         | 2 (2.2%)                  |
| invocation and blessing + praise upgrade       | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| appreciation token + request interpretation    | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| invocation and blessing + reassignment         | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| invocation and blessing + comment history      | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| evil-eye (envy) protection + return compliment | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| comment history + non-verbal response          | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| question + offering                            | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| question + praise upgrade                      | 1 (1.1%)                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>92(100%)</b>           |

## 5.9 Summary

In this chapter, 482 compliment responses given by the Hijazi speakers were examined with reference to gender, age and relationship. The chapter also reviewed macro categories which included *agreement*, *non-agreement* and *other interpretations*. Each of these macro categories was defined and further classified into micro categories. These responses were classified and investigated based on 15 micro categories. The findings showed that the most frequent macro category used in the dataset of the study was *agreement* with a percentage of 81.30%. In addition, as per the micro-level categories, it was found that *appreciation token* was the most frequent response strategy with a percentage of 23.60%, followed by *invocation and blessing* with a percentage of 18.90%. With respect to the gender and response strategies, the findings showed that the most frequent strategy used by males was *invocation and blessing* with a percentage of 26.5%, whereas *appreciation token* was the most frequent strategy used by females. Moreover, the findings showed that *appreciation token* was most frequently used by the young generation. With regard to compliment topics and response strategies, the findings showed that the most frequent strategy was *appreciation token* which appeared with the compliment topics of *appearance* and *performance/skill* with a percentage of 20.11% and 32.03% respectively. *Invocation and blessing* was the most frequent strategy which occurred with the compliment topics of *possession*, *personality* and *children* accounting for 19.83%, 38.46% respectively. The following chapter is the last chapter and will provide a conclusion for the study as well as making implications and suggestions for future studies.



## **Chapter Six: Conclusion and Implications**

## **6.1 Introduction**

The manner in which a speech act is performed may be influenced by cultural norms and values. In this thesis, an attempt has been made to shed light on the impact of Hijazi Saudi culture on giving compliments and responding to them. The main purpose of this study was to examine the sociolinguistic aspects of compliment exchanges in the Hijazi Arabic dialect and to see if the complimenting behaviour was influenced by social factors such as gender, age and relationship. This chapter will present a summary of the main findings on compliments and compliment responses. In addition, theoretical implications will be considered to help comprehend the sociolinguistic aspects of the complimenting behaviour in the Hijazi dialect. Finally, the chapter will conclude with some thoughts and suggestions for further research on areas similar to the area of the present study.

## **6.2 Compliments**

A dataset of 390 compliments was examined in order to answer the research questions which were centred on the impact of gender, age and relationship on compliments' topics, compliments' syntactic patterns, directness and indirectness, and the sociocultural phraseologies used in giving compliments. The following paragraphs summarize the main findings which are related to the usage of compliments in the Hijazi dialect.

Generally, in same-gender exchanges, compliments occurred far more frequently (309 times) than in the cross-gender exchanges (81 times). This finding is consistent with Herbert's (1990) findings on American English compliments and Holmes' (1988) findings on New Zealand English compliments, both of which found that compliments were less common in cross-gender exchanges, with 47% for American compliments and 37% for New Zealand compliments. Moreover, in the current research, women were more likely to give and receive praises than men. This conclusion is consistent with findings from previous studies in other languages, including American English (e.g., Wolfson, 1983; Herbert, 1990), New Zealand English (Holmes, 1988), and Chinese (Yuan, 1998). Regarding the occurrence of compliments and the complimenters' age, the findings showed that the young group (18-35) paid 245 compliments out of 390 and received 275. The findings revealed that 334 of compliments in the Hijazi community were given

among familiar interlocutors, whereas 56 of compliments were given between unfamiliar speakers. This finding is consistent with findings from other compliment studies (e.g., Wolfson, 1989b; Holmes, 1995; Nelson et al., 1993; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989).

With regard to the topics of compliments, the findings showed that the most frequent topic used by Hijazi speakers was *appearance*, recording the highest percentage of 37.5% followed by performance (27.4%) and possession (24.1%). Appearance recorded the most frequent topic in the majority of previous studies; for example, 50.7% in New Zealand compliments (Holmes, 1986), 70 % in Nigerian compliments (Mustapha, 2003), 43% in Turkish compliments (Ruhi, 2001), and 45% in Jordanian compliments (Migdadi, 2003). The topics of compliments differed depending on the complimenter's gender. The results revealed that Hijazi women gave more compliments, almost half of their data, on *appearance*, whereas Hijazi men pay more compliments on *performance/skill*. According to Holmes (1995), one motivation for men to give more compliments on *performance/skill* is that giving compliments on *appearance* might be embarrassing for some men. Age had an impact on Hijazi people's topics of compliments. The study revealed that the young group tended to focus on the *appearance* topic with the highest percentage of 45.30%. On the contrary, *performance/skill* was the most frequent topic used by the middle and older generations with percentages of 36.30% and 37.50%, respectively. Regarding topics of compliments and interlocutors' relationships, both familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors gave the majority of their compliments on *appearance* and *performance/skill*.

Regarding the syntactic patterns of compliments, 11 syntactic patterns with a total of 88.90% in the dataset have been identified as the most common patterns. The findings showed that **(*mashallah*) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (*mashallah*)** recorded the highest usage among Hijazi people with a percentage of 62%. This pattern looks similar to the pattern of American English **NP *is/look* ADJ**, and this syntactic pattern was used frequently in some other Arabic dialects with subtle differences (Migdadi, 2003; Alamro, 2013). Moreover, this pattern was the most frequent pattern in the dataset used by Hijazi men (49%) and women (68%) in giving compliments. **(*Mashallah*) what NP (ADJ) DEM (*ya wad*)** was the second

most common pattern used by males with a frequency of 6.80%, whereas **(INT) (I) love/like NP** was the second most frequent pattern used by females (5.30%). Age was a significant factor in determining the likelihood of using a particular syntactic pattern. The most common pattern among all three age groups was **(mashallah) (ADV) (INT) NP (INT) ADJ (mashallah)**, which accounted for the highest percentages: the young generation 65.3%, the middle generation 55.8%, and the older generation 56.3%. **(Mashallah) what NP (ADJ) DEM (ya wad)** was recorded as the second frequent pattern used by the young generation, **I love/like NP** ranked second in the middle group data, and **DEM NP PREP DEM NP** recorded the second place in the older group's usage.

Discussing compliment patterns in the Hijazi dialect contributes to showing the similarity between them and the praise structures in other Arabic dialects. This study also found some patterns in the Hijazi dialect, such as **(mashallah) what NP (ADJ) DEM (ya wad)** and **(ya wad) NP DEM ADJ**, that were not mentioned in previous Arabic studies. The study also shows how syntactic patterns can differ in use among males and females, as well as among young people and the elderly. This study will thus be beneficial for future comparative gender studies in Arabic dialects. Moreover, the presence of discourse markers, such as *mashallah* in compliments, aids in understanding the importance of religious phrases and the concept of the 'evil eye' in Hijazi compliment exchange.

The most frequent positive semantic carriers used in giving compliments were also investigated in this study. The results showed that adjectives were the most common carriers used in compliments with a frequency of 261 times in the dataset. *Helu/helwah* 'pretty, handsome, beautiful' was on top of the adjectives that were used by Hijazi speakers. This adjective was used by females more often than males (72.3% vs. 27.7%). *Ijnan* 'stunning', *raw'ah/rai'a* 'wonderful', *ti'aim* 'tasty', *lazeez* 'delicious', *wala ghaltah* 'flawless', and *fakhmah* 'fancy' were the most common adjectives used in the dataset. *Ti'aim* 'tasty' was a unique adjective exclusively used by Hijazi speakers. Moreover, there were a limited number of adjectives which exclusively occurred in the Hijazi community such as *imrastak* 'neat', *mitantik* 'antique, chic' and *wakyah* 'beautiful'. The most frequent nouns used in the dataset were *Halawah* 'prettiness, handsomeness', accounting for

16.8%, followed by *jamal* 'beauty' (12%) and *fakhamah* 'luxury' (7.2%).

Intensifiers were frequently used by Hijazi speakers when complimenting each other. Words such as *merrah* 'very', *haqiqi* 'really', and *harfyeen* 'literally' were on top of the intensifiers used in compliments. The results showed that females used 72.9% of the intensifiers, while males used only 27.1%. Furthermore, *harfyeen* 'literally' and *wow* were used only by young females. Verbs were the least common semantic carrier in the current study, appearing only 47 times. *Yefuz* 'win', *habait* 'loved', and *yemawet* 'amaze' were examples of the verbs that were used in giving compliments. *Habait* and *yemawet* were used only by females.

Compliments were examined in terms of explicitness and implicitness. The findings revealed that 96.9% of the Hijazi compliments were explicit. The majority of implicit compliments (11 out of 12) occurred between same-gender interlocutors. Nine out of twelve implicit compliments were given by young speakers. The occurrence of a restricted number of implicit praises would indicate that Hijazi speakers prefer to give compliments openly and directly. This may be ascribed to the social role of compliments which serve to encourage harmony between the complimenter and the complimentee.

Compliments were investigated in terms of sociocultural phrases that were used in giving compliments. These phrases were classified into religious phrases, proverbs, and swear words. *Mashallah*, 'may Allah's grace be upon you', *allahuma salli 'ala a-nabi* 'Allah's prayers be upon the prophet', and *tabarak allah* 'bless Allah' were the most common examples of such religious phrases. These phrases were used frequently as some Hijazi speakers believe that giving compliments attracts the evil eye which might harm the complimented person or object. As a result, they resort to using such Islamic expressions to save each other's face and prevent any potential threats to the complimentee's negative face. The usage of proverbs was limited, as they were used only nine times. Men used proverbs more than women. These proverbs were only observed in the middle and older groups' compliments. The results revealed that swear words such as *yal'aan shakl-ak* 'damn form-your' and *yekhrīb beit-ik* 'destroy house-your' occurred 21 times in Hijazi compliments. Swear words only occurred in same-gender interactions, unlike religious phrases and proverbs which were used in both same-gender and

cross-gender exchanges. These swear words were commonly used by young speakers (20 times out of 21), and this might indicate that the youth want to use unusual phrases in order to express their admiration exaggeratedly.

### 6.3 Compliment Responses

In this study, 482 responses were investigated in order to find which response strategies were used frequently in the Hijazi dialect. Also, the correlations between gender, age and relationship, and response strategies were closely examined.

The findings showed that *agreement*, based on the macro level category, was the most frequent category used by Hijazi people in responding to compliments with a percentage of 81.30%. This result is consistent with findings of previous studies such as South African and American English (Herbert, 1990), Jordanian Arabic (Migdadi, 2003) and Najdi Arabic (AlAmro, 2013). The *Non-agreement* category represented only 7.6% of the Hijazi responses. It seems that people, in Western and Arab societies, tend to avoid disagreement in responding to compliments as a way of showing politeness. Leech (1983) suggested that to obtain the agreement maxim, people should increase agreement and decrease disagreement when engaging in communication. Furthermore, based on the micro-level categories, *appreciation token* was on top of the response strategies accounting for the highest percentage of 23.60%, followed by *invocation and blessing* (18.90%) and *return compliment* (15.30%). The frequent usage of *invocation and blessing* strategy reflects Hijazi speakers' adherence to Islamic traditions and how firmly these phrases are embedded in Hijazi compliment responses. The *Praise upgrade* response strategy had a limited occurrence representing 5.80% of the entire data. This limited frequency might be attributed to the Hijazi speakers' commitment to Islamic teachings which encourage Muslims to be humble.

With regard to the gender and response strategies, the findings revealed that *invocation and blessing* was the most frequent strategy used by males accounting for 26.5%, followed by *appreciation token*. *Appreciation token* was on top of the females' strategies. It was used in responding to compliments and recorded the highest percentage of 26.6%. *Return compliment* was the second most frequent strategy used by females. *Reassignment* occurred more frequently in females'

responses than in males' responses. Furthermore, these strategies were examined based on the interlocutors' gender. Males' responses in same-gender and cross-gender interactions were focused on *invocation and blessing* as the most frequent strategy. On the contrary, *appreciation token* was the most frequent strategy used by females in same-gender and cross-gender interactions. *Return compliment* ranked second in female-to-female responses, whereas the *invocation and blessing* strategy was the second most frequent strategy used in female-to-male responses. Moreover, it is worth noting that the *evil eye (envy) protection* strategy was frequently used in same-gender interactions, and it rarely occurred in cross-gender exchanges. This could be interpreted as the complimentee feels more at ease asking the complimenter of the same gender to say Islamic phrases like *gol mashallah* 'say mashallah' and *ithkir rabb-ik* 'mention Allah', which the complimentee believes will ward off the evil eye.

Age had an impact on the Hijazi compliment responses. The results showed that the young generation used *appreciation token* most frequently, recording the highest percentage of 23.8%, followed by *return compliment*. *Appreciation token* ranked first as the most frequent strategy in the middle generation's responses, followed by the *invocation and blessing* strategy. More than half of the older generation's responses were focused on *invocation and blessing*. The majority of all generations' responses were centred on the *agreement* category, and this can be regarded as paying attention to the speakers rather than ignoring them. Furthermore, the *praise upgrade* strategy was used only by young and middle generations. The *Evil-eye (envy) protection* strategy was used more frequently by the young generation than the middle generation and the older generation.

Response strategies were examined based on the interlocutors' relationship. *Appreciation token* was the most frequent strategy which occurred in compliment exchanges between familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors, followed by *invocation and blessing*. Moreover, *praise upgrade* and *question* strategies occurred only in exchanges between familiar speakers. This is not surprising as complimentees were not expected to self-praise themselves in front of strangers. The *Evil-eye (envy) protection* strategy was used more frequently by familiar speakers than by unfamiliar interlocutors. Asking strange complimenters to say Islamic expressions

which would drive the evil eye away might threaten the complimenter's negative face. As a result, complimentees avoided using this strategy with unfamiliar speakers.

With regard to compliment topics and response strategies, the results showed that *appreciation token* was the most frequent strategy which appeared with *appearance* and *performance/skill* with a percentage of 20.11% and 32.03%, respectively. *Invocation and blessing* was the most frequent strategy which occurred with *possession, personality* and *children* accounting for 19.83%, 38.46% and 66.67%, respectively. Moreover, *evil-eye (envy) protection* was used with almost all the topics, which demonstrates that Hijazi people are cautious about envy.

Hijazi responses were examined in terms of how many strategies were used in each response. Responses were classified into a single response (one strategy) and a complex response (two strategies). The findings showed that the single response type was used in almost two thirds (61.8%) of the entire data. As regards the complex responses, the findings showed that the *appreciation token + return compliment* complex response was on top of Hijazi people's preferences, recording the highest percentage of 27.1%. *Invocation and blessing + return compliment* ranked second with a percentage of 18.5%. Moreover, the *invocation and blessing* strategy occurred frequently with another strategy. The use of this method may contribute to strengthening the interlocutors' relationship.

## **6.4 Implications**

Based on the findings of the present research, three broad implications which can provide contributions to the field of sociolinguistics arise.

### **6.4.1 Cultural Implications**

As Sapir asserts 'language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the textures of our lives' (1921, p. 207), this thesis showed how some complimenting behaviours were impacted by Islamic and Arabic norms in the Hijazi Saudi dialect. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this research contributes to providing a



profound understanding of the evil eye phenomenon which was common in compliment exchanges among Hijazi people. Prophet Muhammed is reported to have said 'The evil eye is a fact, and if anything were to overtake the divine decree and change it, it would be the evil eye' (Annisabori, 2018, p. 864). The prophet also advised 'would one of you knowingly kill his brother? Why don't you ask Allah to bless your brother when you see something (of him) that you like?' (Annisabori, 2018, p. 870). This thesis sheds light on how some Hijazi people were influenced by Islamic beliefs in giving compliments and how using some Islamic phrases may drive the evil eye away and mitigate threatening the complimentee's face. This research revealed that some religious expressions such as *mashallah*, 'may Allah's grace be upon you' *tabarak Allah* 'bless Allah' and *allahuma salli 'ala a-nabi* 'Allah's prayers be upon the prophet' are culturally and religiously recommended to be used by complimenters in order to protect the complimentee's face and maintain solidarity between compliment givers and compliment receivers. Knowing such sociolinguistic aspects of compliments and compliment responses is very important, especially to non-Arabs, as successful communication lies in understanding when and how to compliment, besides being aware of the hearer's cultural background.

Furthermore, Arab generosity can be observed in compliment exchanges through some response strategies such as offering what they are complimented on to the complimenter. In some situations, Hijazi people offer the complimented object to the complimenter by using some phrases such as *ma tighla alaik* 'you deserve it; take it' and *khud-ha hadyyah* 'take it as a gift'. The offering strategy might be confusing and troubling especially for non-native speakers of Arabic. Such a behaviour is a symbolic convention. In many cases, the complimentee who makes the offering does not expect the complimenter to accept it and take it. Therefore, knowing an appropriate and effective expression such as 'it fits you more', 'you always are generous' or 'may Allah bless you' will enable both interlocutors to avoid embarrassment, and the dialogue will flow smoothly.

By discussing the compliment exchanges between males and females, this study contributes to correcting some misconceptions about interaction between males and females in Arab and Muslim countries which hold that such interaction is

forbidden or does not exist. A more objective statement would be that cross-gender interaction between male and female Muslim Arabs depends on the situation. Frequent cross-gender interactions are very likely to occur in professional situations, but social interaction is carefully managed and depends on the interlocutors' relationship, the purpose of interaction and the level of conservatism.

By shedding light on the above significant aspects, it can be said that this thesis, culturally and linguistically, contributes to various sub-fields of linguistics, including speech act studies, linguistic politeness, cross-cultural studies, language variations and language and gender studies.

#### ***6.4.2 Methodological Implications***

The previous studies on compliment exchanges used elicitation and observation methods in gathering data such as questionnaires, interviews and note taking tools. Each researcher chose a tool that would help him/her achieve the purpose of his/her study. However, this thesis provided an insight into the data collection methods particularly in Arabic language where the language that people speak in everyday life interactions, 'dialect', differs from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) which is the formal language used in oral and written discourse such as education, the media and literature. This research encourages the use of the observation method in studying an Arabic dialect and investigating its features and usage based on its speakers' natural communication. Doing so helps in reflecting the actual usage of the language in the targeted society and culture. It also helps observe non-verbal communication aspects such as head nodding, blushing and smiling. However, it should be borne in mind that researchers should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each method (For more details about data collection methods, and the advantages and disadvantages of observation-notetaking tool, see Chapter three, Sections 3.4, 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study in the Hijazi dialect focusing on compliments and compliment responses. By observing naturally occurring data, the researcher created a colloquial Hijazi Saudi dataset which could contribute to building a professional written and audio corpus for Arabic dialects. Doing so will

make it easy for researchers to compare lexical and other linguistic features among different Arabic dialects.

### ***6.4.3 Pedagogical Implications***

For someone to be a competent speaker in complimenting, or any type of speech act related to compliments, he/she needs both grammatical knowledge of, and sociolinguistic competence in, compliments and compliment responses (Canale and Swain 1980). Arabic curricula in Saudi Arabia are written in Modern Standard Arabic because it is the language used in formal education. As most textbooks do not incorporate naturally occurring data extracted from dialects, they do not function as a realistic language model (Golato, 2002). This research might be a potential contribution to designing new curricula which can also include colloquial examples of some dialects that people use in daily life. It might also help Arabic language institutes to develop some teaching materials which focus on practicing speech acts such as thanking and complimenting. Doing so will help learners of Arabic as a second language avoid confusion between the language they learn at institutes and the actual language they hear and use in Saudi society. Also, discussing sociolinguistic differences between Arabic learners and their teachers is an efficient approach to minimizing communication failures.

### **6.5 Challenges and Limitations**

The present study faced a number of challenges which led to certain limitations. The most important of these challenges, which had an impact not only on the researcher but also on the whole world at large, was Covid-19. The researcher himself was infected with Covid-19 roughly six months after the virus broke out. That, in turn, affected the progress he made in analysing the data and writing up the research.

Another challenge was the treatment and analysis of naturally occurring data which were collected from a dialect that was not the dialect of the researcher. In the dataset, the researcher had difficulty understanding some Hijazi words. So, his assistants, the fieldworkers who speak the Hijazi dialect, helped him understand the meaning of those words. Another challenge was the translation of a colloquial

spoken dialect from Arabic into English. To overcome this challenge, the data were translated into English literally, word-by-word, and functionally when possible.

Another limitation encountered by the researcher had to do with the age of the fieldworkers. The majority were young people between the ages of 23 and 35. This might have had an impact on data collection as the analysis showed that the majority of compliment exchanges were among the young generation (18-35). Another limitation was related to the occurrence of implicit compliments in the dataset. Although the researcher trained the fieldworkers very well, the number of implicit/indirect compliments was limited. This might indicate that some fieldworkers did not recognise some implicit compliments and so they missed writing them down.

## **6.6 Suggestions for Future Research**

Giving compliments and responding to them, as well as the use of other speech acts, are relatively new topics which still need further research in Arabic dialects and other dialects of other languages. The findings of the present study cannot be generalized to include other Arabic speaking countries or even other dialects inside Saudi Arabia because they were based on data collected from the Saudi Arabian Hijazi dialect. Examining compliments and compliment responses in other Saudi dialects such as Janoubi, Qassimi and Hasawi may provide a full understanding of the sociocultural norms accepted in Saudi Arabia in general and show variations among these dialects.

Regarding the Hijazi dialect, further research can be conducted to investigate the impact of other variables such as interlocutors' educational level and occupation on compliments. The present study examined 390 compliments and 482 compliment responses, further research with a broader sample is recommended so as to overcome some limitations recognized by the present study such as age (middle and older groups), as discussed above. A bigger sample would give a higher chance of collecting cross-gender exchanges (M-F and F-M), which could improve the relative generalizability of the findings.

Further research can be conducted on compliments or other speech acts, such as giving refusals and apologies in another Saudi dialect in order to enrich the Saudi literature. Other comparative-contrastive studies can be conducted to investigate the dialects of Arabian Peninsula countries and the Arabic dialects of North African countries in relation to compliments or other speech acts. Finally, some studies can be conducted to compare the Arabic language with other languages such as English and Spain in terms of compliments and compliment responses in order to highlight similarities and differences between them.

### **6.7 Summary**

This chapter served as a concluding chapter of the thesis, and as such it provided a somewhat brief summary of the various elements of the thesis. It started with a short introduction about the cultural and sociolinguistic aspects of the topic of Hijazi compliments and compliment responses. A summary of the most important findings on compliments and compliment responses was also provided. A detailed discussion of the cultural, methodological and pedagogical implications which would provide contributions to the fields of pragmatics and sociolinguistics was presented. The chapter emphasized the idea that culture and its constituent elements such as religion and social norms play an important role in compliment exchanges and how they are shaped or formed. The researcher promoted the use of the observation method for studying and investigating the characteristics of Arabic dialects. He also encouraged educators and decision-makers responsible for designing curricula in Saudi Arabia to include or refer to the most prevalent dialects in Saudi Arabia, and the findings of the current study can help provide them with a starting point. A discussion of the major challenges encountered by the researcher and the limitations of the study was provided in this chapter. Finally, some suggestions for future research on a similar topic to the topic of the current thesis were made based on the findings which the researcher arrived at.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1

### Research Tool

جدول 3.3 : أداة جمع البيانات

| أداة بحث   |   |
|--|---|
| <p>اسم الباحث الميداني (جامع البيانات):</p> <p>التاريخ:</p>  | <p>اسم الباحث الميداني (جامع البيانات):</p> <p>التاريخ:</p>   |
| <p>معلومات عن الشخص الممدوح</p> <p>الرد على المدح:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>أي رد غير لفظي:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>  | <p>معلومات عن الشخص المادح</p> <p>المدح/ الإطراء/ الثناء:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>أي حركة غير لفظية:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>             |
| <p>الجنس: <input type="checkbox"/> ذكر <input type="checkbox"/> أنثى</p> <p>العمر: <input type="checkbox"/> 55+ <input type="checkbox"/> 55-36 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-18</p>                          | <p>الجنس: <input type="checkbox"/> ذكر <input type="checkbox"/> أنثى</p> <p>العمر: <input type="checkbox"/> 55+ <input type="checkbox"/> 55-36 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-18</p> |
| موضوع المدح:   |   |
| <p>موقع المدح في المحادثة: <input type="checkbox"/> فاتحة المحادثة <input type="checkbox"/> ضمن المحادثة <input type="checkbox"/> خاتمة المحادثة</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> غير ذلك ، حدد : .....</p> |   |
| صلة العلاقة بين المتحاورين:  |   |
| معلومات عن المحادثة:   |   |
| <p>1. المكان:.....</p> <p>2. الوقت:.....</p> <p>3. موضوع المحادثة:.....</p>  |   |
| هل تعتقد أن المدح لم يكن صادقا؟  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> نعم <input type="checkbox"/> لا   |   |
| لماذا؟ .....   |   |

**Table 3.3:** A Translated Copy of the Arabic Research Tool

| Research Tool  |   |
|--|---|
| Name of fieldworker (data collector):  | Date:   |
| <b>Information on complimenter</b>   | <b>Information on complementee</b>  |
| Exact compliment:  | Exact compliment responses:   |
| .....  | .....   |
| .....  | .....   |
| Any nonverbal element:   | Any nonverbal response:   |
| .....  | .....   |
| Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female  | Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female                           |
| Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-55 <input type="checkbox"/> +55  | Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-55 <input type="checkbox"/> +55 |
| Compliment topic:  |   |
| Linguistic context: <input type="checkbox"/> conversation opener <input type="checkbox"/> within conversation <input type="checkbox"/> conversation closer |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other; specify: .....   |   |
| Relationship between interlocutors:  |   |
| Setting:   |   |
| 1. Place:.....   |   |
| 2. Time:.....  |   |
| 3. Conversation Topic:.....  |   |
| Do you think the compliment was insincere?   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |   |
| Why? .....   |   |

## Appendix 2

### Role-Playing situations Used in Training Fieldworkers

| No. | Role-playing situation  |
|-----|---|
| 1   | A young man is visiting his male friend who shows him his new laptop. The visitor comments on the laptop.   |
| 2   | A middle-aged woman and a young woman are meeting in a family gathering. The middle-aged woman compliments the young woman on her new handbag.          |
| 3   | A middle-aged daughter comments on her mother's cooking.  |
| 4   | A middle-aged woman is introduced to a young woman with her 2-year-old daughter. She comments on the little girl.                                       |
| 5   | A young male is visiting his middle-aged sister who offers him coffee and home made cookies. The young male praised his sister's cookies.               |
| 6   | A young man gave a welcome talk in a wedding party, one of the guests (old man) meets him and praises his wonderful words.                              |
| 7   | A middle-age woman visits her female friends in her flat for the first time. The guest pays a compliment on the furniture and flat design.              |
| 8   | Two young men who are meeting their male friend in a café; they comment on his little son who has grown remarkably since they last saw him.             |
| 9   | Two male friends are at a hotel's reception; one of them is wearing sunglasses. A middle-aged female receptionist gives a compliment on his sunglasses. |
| 10  | A young female compliments her female friend on her new watch.  |
| 11  | Two young female friends are meeting in an engagement party; one praised her friend's good looking (beauty).  |
| 12  | A middle-aged female, who works in a hospital, meets her male colleague in the afternoon break; she praised his presentation this morning.              |

### Appendix 3

#### Herbert's Taxonomy of Compliment Responses (Herbert, 1986, p. 79)

| Response Type                   | Example  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>A- Agreement</b>             |  |
| <i>1- Acceptances</i>           |  |
| Appreciation Token              | Thanks; thank you; [smile].                        |
| Comment Acceptance              | Thanks, it's my favorite too.                      |
| Praise Upgrade                  | Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it? |
| <i>2- Comment History</i>       | I bought it for the trip to Arizona.               |
| <i>3- Transfers</i>             |  |
| Reassignment                    | My brother gave it to me.                          |
| Return                          | So's yours.  |
| <b>B- Non-Agreement</b>         |  |
| <i>1- Scale Down</i>            | It's really quite old.                             |
| <i>2- Question</i>              | Do you really think so?                            |
| <i>3- Non-acceptances</i>       |  |
| Disagreement                    | I hate it.   |
| Qualification                   | It's all right, but Len's is nicer.                |
| <i>4- No Acknowledgement</i>    | [Silence]  |
| <b>C- Other Interpretations</b> |  |
| <i>1- Request</i>               | You wanna borrow this one too?                     |

## Appendix 4

### The certificate of approval for Ethical Review



Social Sciences & Arts C-REC  
c-recss@admin.susx.ac.uk

| Certificate of Approval             |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Reference Number</b>             | ER/FA276/4  |
| <b>Title Of Project</b>             | An Intra-lingual Study of the Act of Complimenting in Hijazi Colloquial Dialect of Saudi Arabic |
| <b>Principal Investigator (PI):</b> | FAHHAD EID F ALQAHTANI  |
| <b>Student</b>                      | FAHHAD EID F ALQAHTANI  |
| <b>Collaborators</b>                |   |
| <b>Duration Of Approval</b>         | 3 months and 18 days  |
| <b>Expected Start Date</b>          | 01-Jan-2020   |
| <b>Date Of Approval</b>             | 12-Dec-2019   |
| <b>Approval Expiry Date</b>         | 30-Mar-2020   |
| <b>Approved By</b>                  | Vacancy   |
| <b>Name of Authorised Signatory</b> | Liz McDonnell   |
| <b>Date</b>                         | 12-Dec-2019   |

\*NB. If the actual project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the expected start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures.

**Please note and follow the requirements for approved submissions:**

**Amendments to protocol**

- \* Any changes or amendments to approved protocols must be submitted to the C-REC for authorisation prior to implementation.

**Feedback regarding the status and conduct of approved projects**

- \* Any incidents with ethical implications that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported immediately to the Chair of the C-REC.

**Feedback regarding any adverse(1) and unexpected events(2)**

- \* Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences and Arts C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence.

**Monitoring of Approved studies**

The University may undertake periodic monitoring of approved studies. Researchers will be requested to report on the outcomes of research activity in relation to approvals that were granted (full applications and amendments).

**Research Standards**

Failure to conduct University research in alignment with the Code of Practice for Research may be investigated under the Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research or other appropriate internal mechanisms (3). Any queries can be addressed to the Research Governance Office: rgoffice@sussex.ac.uk

(1) An "adverse event" is one that occurs during the course of a research protocol that either causes physical or psychological harm, or increases the risk of physical or psychological harm, or results in a loss of privacy and/or confidentiality to research participant or others.

(2) An "unexpected event" is an occurrence or situation during the course of a research project that was a) harmful to a participant taking part in the research, or b) increased the probability of harm to participants taking part in the research.

(3) <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/rqi/policy/research-policy>

## Appendix 5

### Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment Form

#### **Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment**

This form is provided to assist you in the planning process for your proposed travel overseas as part of University-related activities.

It has been designed to help you identify the steps you need to take to ensure your trip is safe and successful; it also assists the University to comply with legal, ethical and social obligations in respect of activities associated with the University.

**This assessment relates solely to Overseas travel, any other risks associated with the fieldwork activities must be assessed separately – see UCEA Fieldwork Guidance;**

<http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/Publications/>

Before completing the form please refer to the guidance document Guidelines for Completing the University's Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment;

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/1-2-16-1-2.html>

#### **COMPLETING THIS FORM**

##### **PART 1 – To be completed by ALL**

*\*Except those who are registered as a distant learning student, who plan to do research fieldwork outside the UK in their normal place of residence (home country), where NO travel warnings have been issued. See guidance note for more information.*

**PART 1 & 2 – To be completed when** you are travelling to a country or region where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office have advised:

- ☐ Against all travel
- ☐ Against all travel to parts of the country
- ☐ Against all but essential travel
- ☐ Against all but essential travel to parts of the country, or
- ☐ You are aware that you will be going to places that you believe may be of higher risk

**The University considers that these areas are of higher risk and therefore both you and the University need to take all reasonable and practicable steps to reduce the risk to you while you are travelling.**


**PART 1 – To be completed by ALL\***

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>NAME</b>  | Fahhad Alqahtani  |  |
| <b>School/ Department</b>  | School of English/Linguistics Department  |  |
| Does this risk assessment relate to a single trip or are you planning multiple trips associated with the same business / research activities   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single Trip   | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Trips<br>*(Risk Assessment valid for 1 year from date of first trip) |
| <b>Where are you travelling to?</b><br>Country, Region & Town  | Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Makkah Region, Jeddah City.  |  |
| <b>When will you be travelling?</b><br><br>*For multiple trips, please list all the places you are planning to travel and the estimated dates you will be away.  | 01/01/2020  |  |
| <b>Does this Country/Region appear on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website advising against travel?</b><br><a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk">www.fco.gov.uk</a>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No<br>*if 'YES' then you <b>must</b> complete Part 2 of this form.                         |  |
| <b>What is the purpose of this trip / these trips?</b><br>(e.g. Fieldwork, Conference, Recruitment, other)   | The purpose is to conduct the fieldwork of my research in order to collect natural data related to the Hijazi dialect.                                      |  |
| <b>Why is this travel essential?</b>   | Because the fieldwork, as the main part of my research, will provide me with the data that I need for investigating complement exchanges in Hijazi dialect. |  |
| <b>How long will you be there?</b>   | Three months  |  |
| <b>Have you travelled here before?</b><br>On how many previous occasions? Please specify if you have extensive knowledge of the country you are visiting (gained from residence, citizenship or work experience there) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No<br><br>My home country.   |  |
| <b>Contact Information</b>   |   |  |
| Mobile Number if applicable  | 07490793068700966551165504  |  |
| Main Address & Telephone number  | 21 Bodiham House, Davigdor Road, Hove, BN3 1WQ  |  |
| Additional Addresses & Telephone Number  |   |  |
| <b>What form of transport will you use whilst in the destination country?</b>  |   |  |
| If driving a vehicle do you have an appropriate driving licence?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |  |
| <b>At any point will you be travelling alone?</b>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |  |
| If yes, please refer to the UCEA fieldworking guidelines.  |   |  |
| <b>Have you or will you be arranging insurance with the University Insurance Office (insurance@sussex.ac.uk)?</b><br><i>If no insurance can be obtained then staff will not be permitted to travel.</i>                | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No<br><br>If there are any restrictions please outline them here:                          |  |
| <b>Health Checks and Vaccinations identified to be necessary.</b> (Advice available from FCO or GP)<br>- Include any details and dates here of inoculations / malaria medication courses etc.                          | N/A   |  |
| <b>Any other health-related information you may think is relevant</b>  | N/A   |  |

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <i>This information will enable us to provide you with any further support you may need.</i>    |                                  |
| <b>Next of Kin</b><br>Please provide information of who to contact in the event of an emergency | Aljazi ☐<br>☐<br>00966550655519☐ |

**Part 1 sign-off (only if you are not completing Part 2)**

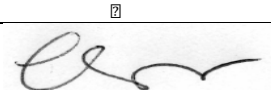
The information given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge and in the event of subsequent alterations I will ensure that it is updated as necessary.

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Name :</b>    | Fahhad ☐ Alqahtani  |
| <b>Signature</b> |  |
| <b>Date</b>      | 15/10/2019  |
|                  |   |

**STUDENTS:** Send the form to your Supervisor for checking and signature

**STAFF:** Send the form to your line manager for checking and signature

**SIGNATURES**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Supervisor Signature (Students) or Line Manager Signature (Staff)</b> |  |
| Assessment & Recommendations:  |  |
| Name of Supervisor / Line Manager  | <b>Dr. Charlotte Taylor</b><br>☐   |
| Signature of the Supervisor / Line Manager                               |  |
| Date   | <b>18/10/2019</b>  |



## Appendix 6

### A summary of the Previous Studies on Compliments and Compliment Responses

| Article title   | Authors | Year of publication | Journal                            | Topic (e.g. compliments / compliment responses) | Language            | Research question  | sample size + Type of data (e.g. elicited / observed) | Method of data collection (e.g. field notes, role plays etc)  | Method of data analysis+variables  | Main findings   |
|---|---------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| Sex-based Differences in Compliment Behavior                | Herbert | 1990                | <i>Language in society</i>         | compliments and compliment responses            | American English    | not explicitly stated (focusing on sex-based differences in compliments and compliment responses)  | observed (1062 compliment events)                     | Field notes (note-taking): fieldworkers were university students; data were collected within the student community such as classrooms, dining halls, student union and so on. | compliment responses strategies, gender, focus, syntactic structures                     | 1. Different compliments were received and given by women. Females accepted compliments that were given by males more often than those ones paid by females.<br>2. Females were more likely to use the syntactic pattern I like/love, which accounted for more than 90% of the first-person compliments.<br>3. I love was used only by women to other women.<br>4. In cross-gender interactions, second-person-focused compliments were frequently used.<br>5. Males used third-person-focused compliments 60% of the time compared to women's 20% usage.   |
| Compliments and Compliment Responses in New Zealand English | Holmes  | 1986                | <i>Anthropological Linguistics</i> | compliments and compliment responses            | New Zealand English | not explicitly stated (This paper explores complimenting behaviour in New Zealand. It is a wide-ranging exploration covering the functions of compliments and their structure as well as some aspects of the sociolinguistic distribution of complimenting behaviour)  | observed (517 compliment exchanges)                   | Field notes (note-taking)   | compliment topics, compliment responses strategies, gender, status, syntactic structures | 1. NP BE (N/ ) ADJ was the most popular pattern among New Zealanders.<br>2. Women tended to use I love/like more than men.<br>3. Females focused on personal focus.<br>4. Regarding the compliments, 95% were on a person's looks, ability, or possession, with the first two constituting 83 percent of the data.<br>5. Acceptance is the most frequent response (61 percent), followed by deflection (29 percent).<br>6. Only 10% of compliments were rejected, indicating that this is an unusual occurrence for New Zealanders.<br>7. Men avoided compliments more often than women and gave more praise for their abilities and personalities. |
| Paying Compliments: A Sex-Preferential Politeness Strategy  | Holmes  | 1988                | <i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>       | compliments and compliment responses            | New Zealand English | Do women and men have different preferences among the formulas available for expressing compliments? Do higher status men receive more compliments than higher status women? Do female complimenters tend to direct their compliments 'upwards' more often than male complimenters? Do both sexes accept compliments equally graciously? | observed (484 compliment responses)                   | note-taking   | compliment topics, compliment responses strategies, FTA, syntactic structures, gender    | 1. women use compliments to each other significantly more often than they do to men or men do to each other.<br>2. women use a syntactic form which strengthens the positive force of the compliment significantly more often than men do, whereas men use a form which attenuates or hedges on compliment force significantly more often than women do.<br>3. women compliment each other on appearance more than on any other topic.<br>4. compliments on possessions are used significantly more often between males.<br>5. women of higher status are more likely to receive compliments than higher status men.                                |

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| The Sociology of Compliment Work: an ethnographic study of Polish and English compliments | Herbert        | 1991 | <i>Multilingual</i>          | compliments and compliment responses | Polish and American English | it explores the syntactic structures and compliment topics in Polish and English      | observed (400 compliments+ compliment responses)     | note-taking   | syntactic structure, compliment Topics                        | <p>1. The majority of Polish compliments at the syntactic level fell into three patterns, which are similar to American structures.</p> <p>2. There were six adjectives that were commonly used in the Polish compliments.</p> <p>3. By comparing Polish and American data, we found that Polish praises included fewer verbs and adverbs than American compliments.</p> <p>4. American compliments included a first, second, and third person focus, whereas Polish speakers tended to employ more second person-centered compliments.</p> <p>5. In both cultures, the most often discussed topic was appearance.</p> <p>6. Unlike in English, there is a significant relationship between the speech act of complimenting and the act of congratulating in Polish.</p> |
| Compliment Topics and Gender  | Parisi & Wogan | 2006 | <i>Women and Language</i>    | compliments                          | American English            | it investigates the relationship between compliment topics and gender                 | (270 compliments) were collected by college students | recording (14 students collecting compliments on or near the college's campus)  | compliment topics; gender                                     | <p>1. compliment topics varied by gender.</p> <p>2. females received a significantly higher proportion (60.53%) of compliments on appearance from males than males received from females (29.27%).</p> <p>3. females gave males a higher proportion of compliments on skill than performance because giving compliments on appearance might be too forward or leading to unwanted attention.</p> <p>4. Culture imposes on its speakers to compliment females on appearance and males on skills.</p>  |
| German Compliment Responses   | Golato         | 2002 | <i>Journal of Pragmatics</i> | compliment responses                 | German & American English   | it compares German and American compliment responses given among families and friends | 50 compliment sequences                              | videotaping & audio taping (The data were taken from a corpus of 25 hours of non-elicited videotaped dinner-table conversations and 6 hours of audiotaped telephone conversations between close friends and family members. | compliment responses strategies; Conversational Analysis (CA) | <p>Germans seem to display a greater variety of acceptance/agreement responses than Americans. Judging from my data, Germans do not use appreciation tokens to acknowledge compliments, but instead sometimes give an assessment of a compliment, something that has not been reported for Americans.</p>  |

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| Compliments A Descriptive Taxonomy   | Kinapp et al           | 1984 | <i>Journal of Communication</i>                         | compliments and compliment responses | American English                           | 1. What is the content and form of a compliment?<br>2. What is the content and form of a reply to a compliment?<br>3. What types of compliments and compliment replies occur most<br>4. Who gives compliments to whom?<br>5. How are compliments delivered?<br>6. What relationships exist among the major components of compliment episodes-the compliment, the reply, the actors, and the manner of delivery? | 884 compliments and CIs  | Interviewing              | compliment topics; compliment responses strategies; syntactic structure; status; age; gender   | 1. The most common compliments were for appearance and performance.<br>2. In terms of structure, direct compliments were the most common form.<br>3. A correlation existed between the topics of compliments and the adjectives used.<br>4. Speakers of the same gender and close acquaintances were more likely to compliment one another than speakers in more distant relationships.                                 |
| Compliment-Rejection Versus Compliment Avoidance: Listener-Based Versus Speaker-Based Pragmatic Strategies | Herbert & Straight     | 1989 | <i>Language and Communication</i>                       | compliment responses                 | American English and South African English | not explicitly stated (it investigates the compliment responses' strategies in American and South African English)  | (1062 American compliments; 492 South African compliments)   | note-taking               | CIs Strategies   | 1. Americans complimented people more frequently than South Africans.<br>2. In South Africa, people were more likely than Americans to accept compliments. This trend, according to the authors, is a result of the many roles that each culture's praises serve.   |
| Egyptian and American compliments: A cross-cultural study  | Nelson, Bakary & Batil | 1993 | <i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i> | compliments                          | Egyptian Arabic & American English         | not explicitly stated (it investigates the compliment topics and syntactic structure in Egyptian and American cultures)   | 1. Interview (60 Egyptian compliments and 60 American compliments)<br>2. Questionnaire asking for the subjects' preference for direct or indirect compliments (240 Egyptian students and 240 American students). | Interview + Questionnaire | compliment topics categories; syntactic structures; relationship; gender; compliment frequency | 1. In both cultures, appearance was the most frequently used topic.<br>2. Egyptians gave more compliments on personality, while Americans paid compliments on work and skills.<br>3. Compliments are of the adjectival form in both America and Egypt.<br>4. The Egyptian praises were longer and included comparisons, metaphors, and marriage phrases.<br>5. Both pupils preferred complimenting each other directly. |

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| Compliment and Compliment Responses in Kunming Chinese              | Yuan                | 2002 | <i>Pragmatics</i>            | compliments+ compliment responses | Mandarin dialect spoken in Kunming, China | 1. How do speakers of Kunming Chinese compliment? What are their compliments like in general?<br>2. How do speakers of Kunming Chinese respond to compliments?<br>3. Is the DCT a valuable and reliable data gathering method as natural data? Are natural data as described as people think?  | elicited + observed, (17 informants responded to DCT+ 256 compliment events were written down in notebooks)   | DCT questionnaires (oral and written) + natural observations | Compliments, syntactic patterns, semantic formulas and response strategies. | 1. Explicit compliments were used more frequently than the implicit ones.<br>2. The majority of compliments are delivered in the second or third person.<br>3. Speakers were more willing to accept compliments indirectly.<br>4. Smiling was expressed in a quarter of the responses.  |
| The Role of Compliment Topics in Compliment response                | Katsuta             | 2012 | <i>PDxScholar (thesis)</i>   | compliments+ compliment responses | English American and Japanese             | 1. What response strategies are used by American and Japanese college students when responding to a compliment in a casual conversation?<br>2. What similarities and differences are observed between the two groups in the content and sequencing of compliment responses?<br>3. Does compliment response in each language group vary depending on the topic of the compliment? | elicited+ observed, (60 discussion leaders' were asked to bring one friend for a thirty-minute conversation at a coffee shop or other casual meeting place. They were asked to give compliments to their friends and the conversation will be recorded during the conversation) | Recorded conversation  | compliment topics + compliment responses strategies                         | 1. The American speakers were more likely to accept the compliments (67.5%) whereas Japanese rejected (21.7%) and avoided (44%).<br>2. The English speakers avoided (31.7%) and rejected (0.8) of the compliments.<br>3. There was a positive relationship between the topic of the compliment and the response strategies.   |
| Jordanian College Students' Responses to Compliments: A pilot study | Fajthai & Al-Khatib | 2001 | <i>Journal of Pragmatics</i> | compliment responses              | Jordanian Arabic                          | not explicitly stated (it investigates Jordanian undergraduate students' responses)  | observed (268 compliment responses)   | note-taking  | compliment responses' strategies' gender                                    | 1. Students favor simple compliment responses (72.94%) much more often than they do complex responses.<br>2. The gender of speaker was found to play a role in the process.<br>3. Male complimentees tended to utilize more simple responses when they were complimented by males rather than females and they tended to opt for exclusively non-verbal responses when complimented by females more than when complimented by males.<br>4. Male used acceptances more than females. |



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| Complimenting in Jordanian Arabic: A Socio-pragmatic Analysis               | Megdadi           | 2003 | <i>PhD Dissertation (Productcom)</i>                                 | compliments+         | Jordanian Arabic                                 | 1. Do men and women give and respond to compliments differently? If so, how?<br>2. Do people of different age groups give and respond to compliments differently? If so, how?<br>3. Do traditional and non-traditional people give and respond to compliments differently? If so, how?                                  | observed (835 compliments & compliment responses)        | note-taking (fieldworkers)                       | (10) | topics, syntactic patterns, positive semantic carriers, the format of compliments, and the types of compliment responses. | 1. Males and females used compliment responses differently; men tended to use more blessings and disagreements, while females preferred questions.<br>2. A strong relationship existed between social factors and compliment events.<br>3. Speakers who were similar to each other in terms of age, gender, and traditionalism complimented each other more than those who were not.<br>4. Females and young speakers gave explicit compliments.<br>5. Appearance was the most frequent topic. |
| Compliment Behaviour in Bilingual Kuwaiti College Students                  | Farghal & Haggan  | 2006 | <i>International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism</i> | compliment responses | Kuwaiti speakers learning English (EFL learners) | not explicitly stated. (It investigates compliments paid by Kuwaiti undergraduates to their peers and their responses)  | 632 compliment responses                                 | note-taking                                      |      | CRs strategies  | 1. Compared to studies conducted in English, bilingual speakers displayed a higher percentage of acceptance responses.<br>2. There was a transfer of mother tongue behaviours in the students' compliment behaviours, including ritualised expression in job responses and offering.   |
| Just Say 'Thank You': A Study of Compliment Responses                       | Al-Falasi         | 2007 | <i>The Linguistics Journal</i>                                       | compliment responses | Emirati Arabic                                   | 1. What are the similarities and differences in compliment responses between female NNS and Emirati female NNS of English?<br>2. When speaking in English, will Emirati females' compliment responses be closer to Arabic or English?<br>3. Does language proficiency play a role in their use of compliment responses? | not mentioned. (only females)                            | discourse completion task (test) DCT + interview |      | CRs strategies  | 1. Arabic phrases and strategies were transferred into the target language, which is English.<br>2. 'I'm ashamed' was used to show appreciation.<br>3. The usage of a longer compliment response to demonstrate the sincerity of the compliment acceptance.<br>4. Some complimentees replied to the compliments by using some jokes.   |
| A Study of Compliment Responses in English among Iraqi Postgraduates at USM | AbdulSattar & Lah | 2008 | <i>unpublished doctoral dissertation</i>                             | compliment responses | Iraqi Arabic+ English                            | When speaking in English, will Iraqi postgraduates' compliment responses be closer to Arabic or English?  | elicited (25 Iraqi university students learning English) | DCT  |      | CRs strategies  | In the student compliment responses, pragmatic transfer was observed in the extensive usage of thank you and the utilisation of offers (offering the object of the compliment).  |

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| Compliment Behavior: Strategies and Realizations in English and Arabic: A Case Study of Female Students of the English Department, King Saud University | Ensaff | 2005 | unpublished thesis              | compliments+ compliment responses | Saudi Arabic+ English | <p>1. What are the basic compliment strategies in English and Arabic?</p> <p>2. What are the combinations of the basic compliment strategies in English and Arabic?</p> <p>3. What are the modifications to the basic compliment strategies in English and Arabic?</p> <p>4. What are the basic compliment response strategies in English and Arabic?</p> <p>5. What are the combinations of the basic compliment response strategies in English and Arabic?</p> <p>6. What are the modifications to the basic compliment response strategies in English and Arabic?</p> <p>7. How is compliment behavior affected by the context of situation in English and Arabic?</p> <p>8. Are compliments performed directly or indirectly?</p> <p>9. Do Saudi female learners of English perceive and respond to compliments appropriately in English?</p> | elicited (50 female students; 600 compliments & responses) | DCT        | compliment topics, syntactic structures, Cbs' strategies  | <p>1. Nice, beautiful, good, great, and pretty were the adjectives used most frequently.</p> <p>2. The most often used topics were personality and achievement.</p> <p>3. Of all the compliments, the following syntactic structures accounted for 65%:</p> <p>NP BE (really) ADJ</p> <p>I (really) like/love NP or Pro NP BE (really) a ADJ NP</p> <p>4. In Arabic and English, respectively, intensifiers made up 26% and 18% of the total.</p> <p>5. Acceptance accounted for 30% and 33% in Arabic and English, respectively.</p> <p>6. In Arabic data, non-acknowledgment did not occur, although it did in English data just once.</p> <p>7. In both languages, students used direct compliments (84 percent in Arabic and 75 percent in English).</p>   |
| The Sociolinguistics of Compliment Behavior in Najdi Saudi Arabic   | Alamro | 2013 | Phd Dissertation (ProQuest.com) | compliments+ compliment responses | Najdi Saudi           | <p>1. What are the syntactic patterns and the topics of compliments used by the different age groups and different genders?</p> <p>2. What strategies are used by Najdis when they compliment and respond to compliments?</p> <p>3. Do males and females use different strategies in giving and responding to them? If so, what strategies are used by them when they pay and respond to compliments?</p> <p>4. Do age, gender and relationship affect compliments and compliment responses produced by Najdis? If so, how might the social variables affect the compliment and compliment responses?</p>   | observed (592 compliments and compliment responses)        | not-taking | compliment topics, Cbs' strategies, syntactic structure, explicit and implicit compliments, gender, age, interlocutors' relationship, compliment length | <p>1. Najdi speakers are likely to implicitly accept the compliments.</p> <p>2. Compliments occurred more frequently among interlocutors of the same gender, age and social relationship.</p> <p>3. Men focused on personality and performance whereas the majority compliments of women's compliments focused on appearance.</p> <p>4. Women's compliments are lengthier than men's.</p> <p>5. Women also used more invocation, appreciation tokens, praise upgrade, relationship and returned more compliments than men.</p> <p>6. Young and middle-aged speakers paid more compliments on appearance while the older group focused on personality and performance.</p> <p>7. Middle-aged group and the older group used more non-acknowledgment than the young generation.</p> <p>8. Unfamiliar speakers paid more compliments on performance and their compliment responses contained primarily invocation and blessing.</p> |

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|---|---------|------|--|---------------------------|---|---|---|-------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Compliments: a mirror of cultural values  | Manes   | 1983 | Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition            | compliments               | American English  | not stated.   | not stated.                               | not stated. | not stated.               | compliment topics   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The majority of compliments were on one's appearance (clothes, haircuts).</li><li>2. Skill is the second most common category of compliment (for example, a well done job, a good meal, a skillfully played game).</li><li>3. The majority of compliments on appearance and possessions are offered and accepted by casual acquaintances, coworkers, and friends, particularly women.</li></ol>   |
| Compliments in Cross-Cultural Perspective   | Wolfson | 1981 | Tesol Quarterly                                      | compliments               | American English/ non-native speakers (Iranian and Arabic speakers) | not explicitly stated (examining and describing compliments in American English and comparing it with complimenting behavior in other cultures) | observed                                  | note-taking |                           | compliments, semantics and syntactic structures             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The adjectival type constituted 80% of all praises in the corpus.</li><li>2. The semantic positive verbs were dominated by the two verbs 'like' and 'love'.</li><li>3. Iranian and Arab speakers used proverbs and ritualised expressions to express their appreciation for one another.</li></ol>  |
| The Complimenting Speech Act Among Chicano Women  | Yanez   | 1990 | Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic issues | compliments and responses | Spanish (Chicano women from southern New Mexico )                   | not explicitly stated   | observed                                  | not-taking  |                           | compliment topics, syntactic structures, and CRs strategies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Chicano women had relatively limited usage of syntactic structures (to be, to look, to like).</li><li>2. The most frequently complimented topic was children. This illustrates how important the family institution is to Chicano culture.</li><li>3. Code-switching is not as common as one may anticipate.</li></ol>  |
| Compliment responses among British and Spanish university students: A contrastive study | Lorenzo | 2001 | Journal of Pragmatics                                | compliment responses      | British and Spanish   | not explicitly stated   | elicited (over 1000 compliment responses) | DCT         | CRs Strategies and gender |   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Compared to Spanish women, men used more upgrading compliments.</li><li>2. The British data did not contain an upgrade compliment.</li><li>3. Spanish speakers asked for the compliments to be repeated. Among British speakers, this tendency was not present.</li><li>4. To prevent self-praise, particularly on intelligence and natural talent, both groups utilised the reassignment strategy.</li><li>5. The sincerity of compliments was more frequently questioned by British speakers.</li></ol> |

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| A Sociolinguistic Investigation of Compliments and Complement Responses among Young Japanese | Adachi  | 2011 | <i>unpublished thesis/ University of Edinburgh</i>  | compliments and responses            | Japanese  | The principal question is: What do compliments socially and linguistically involve in a non-Western, non-English-speaking community, that is, among young Japanese? (There are many sub-questions on pp. 7-8) | 40 hours of recorded conversations (369 compliments and 210 complement responses)  | recording conversations                               | syntactic structures, complement topics, CRS strategies and status | 1. Most of the Japanese compliments were of adjectival type and they were located in predicate positions.<br>2. Present tense constructions were used more than past or future constructions.<br>3. The most common topic was performance (58%).<br>4. Most of the compliments occurred between interlocutors of the same status (60%).<br>5. Most of the speakers evaded compliments (51.5%). The second preferred strategy was acceptance (35%) |
| Pragmatic and Cultural Considerations of Complement Responses among Malaysian-Malay Speakers | Othman  | 2011 | <i>Asiatic</i>                                      | compliments and complement responses | Malaysia  | not explicitly stated (it investigates the complement responses' strategies in American and South African English)  | Over 1000 compliments were paid by a group of student assistants in order to elicit responses. Each assistant was asked to carry a notebook and record the complement responses. Only 876 were used for the analysis | fieldwork and immediate recall using note-taking tool | complement topics, CRS strategies and interlocutors' relationship  | 1. Compliments are accepted and appreciate rather than rejected.<br>2. There was a relationship between the topic of compliments and complement responses.<br>3. Relationship between interlocutors influenced response strategies.<br>4. the more distant the relationship, the more likely the compliments would be accepted. Intimacy resulted in compliments rejections.  |
| Moving away from traditional modesty: On responding to compliments                           | Shehzad | 2010 | <i>Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences</i> | compliment responses                 | Pakistani | not explicitly stated (This research revolves around the government officers of different grades who were given eight different scenarios whereby they were complimented)                                     | elicited   | DCT (written)   | CRS Strategies   | 1. Modesty generally considered to be prevalent in the Pakistani society.<br>2. Speakers used acceptance responses (68.5%).   |



|   |                           |      |  |                      |                                    |  |  |   |                |   |
|---|---------------------------|------|--|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------|---|
| Compliment response strategies in Mandarin Chinese: Politeness phenomenon revisited | Chen                      | 2003 | <i>Studies in English Literature and Linguistics</i> | compliment responses | Mandarin Chinese                   | 1. What strategies are used by Mandarin Chinese speakers in Taiwan when they respond to compliments in the situation in which the complimenter is of equal status and of higher status relative to the responder respectively? Does each strategy carry equal weight? 2. How might the social variable of status relationships affect the selections of compliment response strategies? 3. Are there cross-cultural similarities and differences as well as intra-cultural or intra-lingual variations among speakers in the Chinese speech communities? | elicited (60 college students/ 745 responses)  | DCT (written)   | CRS Strategies | 1. The Accepting strategy is more frequently used in the situation in which the complimenter is of equal status while the Rejecting strategy is more frequently used in the situation in which the complimenter is of higher status.  |
| Arabic and English Compliment Responses: Potential for Pragmatic Failure            | Nelson, Al Batal & Echols | 1996 | <i>Applied Linguistics</i>                           | compliment responses | American English & Syrian Arabic   | not explicitly stated (It investigated similarities and differences between Syrian and American compliment responses)  | 87 American and 52 Arabic compliment responses | Interview (the interviewer is complimenting the interviewee during the interview) | CRS Strategies | 1. There were similarities and differences between the two cultures with regard to compliment response strategies.<br>2. Both cultures either accepted or mitigated compliments. In American data, 50% was coded as acceptances. In Syrian data, 67% was coded as acceptances.<br>3. <i>Thank you</i> was used more by the American speakers. |
| Muy a tus ordenes: compliment responses among Mexican-American bilinguals           | Valdes &                  | 1981 | <i>Language in Society</i>                           | compliment responses | English-Spanish (American-Mexican) | not explicitly stated  | observed                                       | recordings and observations of social gatherings                                  | CRS Strategies | 1. Bilinguals used a greater variety of acceptance responses than their counterparts (monolinguals).<br>2. they used a great amount of codeswitching.   |

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| A Study of Compliments from a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Japanese vs. American English                           | Daikuhara 1986 | <i>Penn Working Papers in Educational Linguistics</i>       | compliments & compliment responses | American English & Japanese compliments in Japanese and compared them with the work of Manes and Wolfson 1981)   | observed (115 compliments & compliment responses) | not-taking                      | compliment topics, CRs strategies, syntactic structure | 1. Ability and achievement was the most preferred topic.<br>2. <i>No OR that's not true</i> was the most frequent type of response to compliments among Japanese.<br>3. The syntactic structure "I like/love NP" was not used by Japanese Speakers.<br>4. Japanese very seldom compliment their spouse, parents or children in front of a third party, as a result, they were shocked when American people praise their families in public.<br>5. Laughter following a response shows that most of the responses may be regarded as a friendly joke. |
| Compliments and responses during Chinese new year celebrations in Singapore. International Pragmatics Association | Lee            | 2009<br><i>International Pragmatics Association</i>         | compliments & compliment responses | Singapore Chinese exchanges among Singapore Chinese during the Chinese new year  | observed (157 complimenters and 166 recipients)   | tape-recording and jotting down | compliment topics, CRs strategies                      | 1. Married females pay and receive most compliments.<br>2. the most common compliment topic centers on children's academic achievement and potential career success rather than appearance or possessions.<br>3. Most responses are of the non-acceptance type with downgrading.   |
| Study of compliment speech act realization patterns across gender in Persian                                      | Yousefvari     | 2010<br><i>Arizona Working Papers in SLA &amp; Teaching</i> | compliment responses               | Persian<br>1. How differently do Persian speakers and English speakers respond to compliments?<br>2. Does gender difference affect the compliment response patterns of Persian speakers? | elicited (540 examples)                           | DCI                             | CRs strategies, gender                                 | 1. The general tendency of Persian speakers to respond to a compliment with an agreement. They also tended to express their modesty, which is deeply rooted in their culture.<br>2. Results indicate a significant effect of gender on compliment responses.<br>3. Males were most likely to reject a compliment and scaling down the received compliment; in contrast, females tended to respond with acceptance or surprise to a compliment.   |

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| Compliment Responses by College Male and Female Filipino Second Language Learners of English | Masculine and female | 2018 | <i>Corpus Pragmatics</i>                             | compliment responses               | Filipino                     | 1. How do Filipino students respond to compliments in English on the macro level of accept, reject, and evade? 2. What CRs do they use to respond to compliments in English on the four situational aspects of character, ability, appearance, possession? 3. What micro strategies do they use to accept, reject, and evade compliments in English? 4. How do they accept, reject, and evade compliments in English on the four situational aspects of character, ability, appearance, possession? 5. How do Filipino male and female students respond to compliments in English? | elicited (101 male & 807 CRs)                  | DCT | CRs strategies, gender   | 1. On the macro-level, majority of the CRs fell under the accept category. The prevalent recurrent pattern used in accepting CRs was combination/modification that appeared to serve the function of avoiding self-praise; it was also the most used CR pattern in rejecting and evading CRs that could appear as FTAs to the receiver and therefore required some face work to deal with.<br>2. On the micro-level, majority of the responses consisted of combinations of micro-level strategies and modifications that avoided self-praise.<br>3. On the aspect of gender, the most observable macro-strategy was accept which was used by more than majority of both the male and female respondents |
| A Sociolinguistic Investigation of Compliments and Responses among Young Saudis              | Alqarni              | 2017 | <i>unpublished thesis/ Western Sydney University</i> | compliments & compliment responses | English (Saudi EFL students) | 1. What are the semantic and structural forms used by young Saudis to express compliments and compliment responses in English? 2. How does the topic of a compliment affect the way in which young Saudis express compliments in English? 3. What are the differences between male and female EFL learners regarding compliments and compliment responses in English?  | elicited (80 Saudi EFL male & female students) | DCT | 1. Compliments (coded using unbound semantic formulas or the bound semantic method)<br>2. CRs (categorised according to agreement and non-agreement formulas.) | 1. The findings show that giving "explicit compliments" was the most frequently used compliment strategy (68.37%).<br>2. The most frequently word used in compliments was "congratulations" (27.65 %).<br>3. There are no significant differences between males and females in the choice of compliment strategies.<br>4. The data shows that male participants employed more "acceptance" strategies than females when responding to compliments.<br>5. Male participants used more "appreciation token" strategies than females.<br>6. Female participants used slightly more "comment acceptance" strategies than males.<br>7. There are no significant   |

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| Compliments in Taiwan and Mainland Chinese: The influence of region and compliment topic                  | Lin, Woodfine Id & Ren, W | 2012 | <i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>                            | compliments                        | Taiwan Chinese and Mainland Chinese | 1. To what extent does the overall preference for compliment strategies by Taiwan Chinese differ from that by Mainland Chinese?<br>2. With regard to situational variation, when giving compliments in appearance/possession and performance/ability situations, to what extent do compliment strategies by Taiwan Chinese differ from those by Mainland Chinese? | elicited (60 Mainland Chinese and 60 Taiwan Chinese)   | DCT           | Compliments topics, region                         | 1. Both groups used explicit compliments more than implicit compliments.<br>2. Compliments in Taiwan and Mainland Chinese have been influenced by western cultures. 3. <i>Appearance</i> was perceived as an appropriate topic by both Taiwan and Mainland Chinese respondents to compliment their peers. |
| A comparative study of the compliments and compliment responses between English and Persian TV interviews | Behnam & Amizadeh         | 2008 | The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies | compliments & compliment responses | American English and Persian        | not explicitly stated (This study examines the similarities and differences in the compliments and compliment responses of English and Persian TV interviews)   | eight video-taped and transcribed interviews of Oprah Winfrey's programs with celebrities from MBC4 channel and eight Persian interviews conducted by the Iranian TV host Reza Rashid Pour with eight Iranian celebrities. (42 English compliment sequences and 42 Persian | TV interviews | compliment topics, compliment responses strategies | 1. Both cultures compliment more <i>ability</i> and <i>personality</i> .<br>2. Compliments were used for introducing guests.<br>3. Both groups did not reject the compliments.  |