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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to explore the cross-cultural similitudes and contrasts in compliment reactions among Saudi EFL learners (SNNSs) and American Native Speakers (ANSs). It is important in linguistic interaction between native and non-native English speakers to reflect the cultural values of compliment expressions as they are of wide variety in terms of their roles and usages. Intercultural competence is necessary to avoid communication failures, and at the same time, to establish a rich ground for expanded communication between native English speakers and their non-native speakers.

Keywords: compliment; intercultural competence; communication failure; saudi non-native speaker; american native speaker.

Classification: DDC Code: 401.43 LCC Code: P134

Language: English

London Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573333
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences

Volume 22 | Issue 10 | Compilation 1.0

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Pragmatic Competence and the Production of Compliment among Saudi EFL Learners and American Native Speakers

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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to explore the cross-cultural similitudes and contrasts in compliment reactions among Saudi EFL learners (SNNSs) and American Native Speakers (ANSs). It is important in linguistic interaction between native and non-native English speakers to reflect the cultural values of compliment expressions as they are of wide variety in terms of their roles and usages. Intercultural competence is necessary to avoid communication failures, and at the same time, to establish a rich ground for expanded communication between native English speakers and their non-native speakers. The data will be elicited through a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which is embraced and adjusted from Tamimi Sa'd (2015a). The questionnaire consists of 6 real-life academic situations, provoking the speech act of compliment. The data will be categorized as stated by Herbert's (1986) classification and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher believes significant differences are observed as well as similarities in the choice of compliment response types by both groups of SNNSs and ANSs, as well as male and female SNSs. Moreover, the results reveal some instances of miscommunication in intercultural interactions because the participants might follow their first cultural norms. Therefore, this paper will help to avoid pragmatic failures and improve language teaching and learning.

Keywords: compliment; intercultural competence; communication failure; saudi non-native speaker; american native speaker.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication with native speakers of another language involves learners memorizing vocabulary items and mastering grammatical rules. Gumperz (1972), Halliday (1973), Robinson (1972), Hymes (1974), Saville-Troike (1996), Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992) emphasize the importance of competing vocabulary, semantics, and syntactic levels, which are the pure levels of linguistics for learning another language, and also the communicative competence based on social norms, values, and relations between individuals. Yalden (1983) has summarized the three systems or aspects of language that any learner of a language should master: (1) formal system; (2) semantic system; and (3) sociolinguistic system. In the meantime, Gumperz (1972) distinguishes these systems into two main competences of language as follows:

> Whereas linguistic competence covers the speaker's ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, communicative competence describes his ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to him, forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behavior in specific encounters (205).

Empirical studies in interlanguage pragmatics (e.g. Thomas, 1983; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper, 1996, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001) indicate that even advanced language learners display pragmatic failure due to the recall of the standards of their native language. This might be

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misunderstood by the other language native speakers. That is why the reasons behind pragmatic failure in intercultural communication studies have a very important position. These studies eliminate the gap between native and non-native learners and also improve their systematic knowledge (interlanguage) of the second or foreign language and enable them to use it in real-life situations (socio-pragmatics) in order to acquire an appropriate semi-native language (see Barkhuizen, 2004).

II. RESEARCH AIMS

Since practical knowledge is an essential piece of language capability as characterized by Bachman (1990), studying variations in interlanguage pragmatics of the Saudi non-native speakers of English production of the discourse act of compliment responses needs more in-depth investigation. Therefore, this study plans to explore the discourse act of compliment responses by Saudi native and nonnative speakers of English and American native speakers in an attempt to bridge the gap between the groups under investigation and to point out the cultural similarities or differences in realizing the speech act of compliment responses. It also aims to examine the influence of mother tongue language on Saudi non-native speakers' proficiency in English on their use of this speech act. Moreover, this study intends to find out if there are gender differences among those learners.

III. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Previous studies have been done in the area of speech acts in general and speech act of compliments in particular. But to the researcher's knowledge, the area of discourse acts of compliment responses among Saudi learners is rare. Only a limited number of studies have examined other discourse acts (e.g., Bajri 2005 and 2008).

This research is an intercultural study of Saudis and Americans, focusing on the pragmatic aspect of the discourse act of compliment responses. Therefore, it will surely help to link these languages together and provide Saudi learners with linguistic as well as pragmatic knowledge while performing the speech act of compliment responses in the target language. This is to avoid communication breakdown. Moreover, it will shed some light on the similarities and differences in compliment response strategies among Saudi male and female learners. Finally, it is hoped that this study will be beneficial for pragmatic researchers who intend to conduct further studies on the speech act of compliment responses among different Arabic cultures.

IV. RESEARCH STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the cultural differences between Saudi non-native learners of English and the targeted language of English, this study finds it evident that they will face problems when they want to communicate with native speakers in real-life situations due to the cultural differences between their language and the objective language of English. Therefore, the divergence in the awareness of the discourse act norms of compliment responses between these two languages is a matter of concern in the present study, which will help in acquiring the pragmatic performance of this speech act. Wolfson (1981) emphasizes that "speech acts differ cross-culturally not only in the way they are realized but also in their distribution, their frequency of occurrence, and in the functions they serve" (123). Saudi learners have to be aware of how to develop these important things which are issued by Wolfson when addressing native interlocutors.

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Accordingly, this current study aims at:

- Examining realistic similitudes and contrasts in the realization types of the discourse act of compliment responses between SNNSs and ANSs.
- Investigating how the variables of gender and social status assume a part in the utilization of compliment responses.
- Identifying significant similarities or divergences between Saudi females and males

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in their use of the compliment response strategy types.

VI. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigates the compliment response behavior of Saudi EFL learners according to Herbert and Holmes's (1986) compliment responses taxonomy. Specifically, the present study is an attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

- What are the pragmatic similarities and differences in the realization types of the speech act of compliment responses between Saudi native speakers (SNSs) and American native speakers (ANSs)?
- Do variables such as interlocutors' gender and social status play a role in the use of compliment responses?
- Is there any substantial similarity or variance between Saudi females and males in their use of the compliment response strategy types?

VII. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Alzeebaree (2017) investigates Kurdish EFL undergraduate students' interlanguage pragmatic competence in their use of different discourse acts. He uses a discourse completion task (DCT) that consists of thirty scenarios on the discourse acts of suggestion, opinion, request, permission, offer, apology, questioning, refusal, invitation and advice. The total number of the participants is 97, where 83 are KEFLUS and 14 are native speakers of English. The questionnaire is given twice to the KEFLUS learners; once in English to examine their pragmatic competence in English and then in Arabic to examine the learners' mother tongue effect. After the collection of data, the answers of the members are organized and analyzed. The results show that there are differences between KEFLUS and NSE in using the strategies of the speech acts under investigation. Moreover, the results reveal insignificant differences between females and males in making discourse acts.

Alemi et al. (2014) examine pragmatic assessment and rating criteria of Iranian English language teachers in their production of compliment discourse acts. The researchers used a rating questionnaire from 60 participants and analyzed the data through descriptive statistics, t-tests, and Chi-squares. The findings indicate that Iranian EFL instructors take seven macro principles into consideration when rating EFL students' pragmatic creations of the discourse act of compliment. These principles are 'politeness', 'interlocutors characteristics and relationships', 'variety and range', 'socio-pragmatic appropriateness', 'sincerity', 'complexity', and 'linguistic appropriacy'. Moreover, the results underpin the importance of rater training regarding the assessment of the production of compliments based on pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic norms.

Similar study has been done by Alemi and Rezanejad (2014) in the field of pragmatic consistency in rating and assessment. The researchers negotiate the importance of the test fairness issue that American native and Iranian non-native English instructors use when rating the standards of non-native learners performing the discourse act of compliment. A rating questionnaire was administered among 60 American native speakers and Iranian nonnative teachers of English. This is done in order to have a common ground and criteria when they rate the learners' pragmatic productions of compliment. The results show that there are nine main criteria while doing the rating and assessment of pragmatic production. These are: 'interlocutors,' 'affective factors,' 'sincerity,' 'strategy use' relationships,' 'politeness,' 'fluency,' 'authenticity,' 'linguistic accuracy,' and 'cultural issues.' To conclude the results, it is noticed that 'strangely use' and 'politeness' are the most frequent standard among the non-native and native raters, respectively.

Jucker (2009) studies pragmatic research methods to examine the speech act of compliment. These methods are: 'armchair,' 'field,' and 'laboratory.' All of them are suitable and depend on the intuited data, whether natural or elicited, in collecting compliments. Furthermore, the participants have been investigated according to different criteria, such as the pattern of the compliment, the demographics of the compliment user and the

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compliment recipient, compliment replies, and so on. The results reveal that….

Zayed (2014) investigates male and female AUE learners' performing the speech act of compliment with native speakers of English, the most frequent positive adjectives used by them, and the effect of the selected topic on compliments. The data collection for this study is a questionnaire, which consists of eight situations, and the participants are AUE, 15 male and 15 female learners. The findings show that most of the learners display pragmatic errors that are not familiar with the English language. They use Arabic compliments and jokes. They also adopt two positive adjectives, 'good' and 'nice'. Therefore, the findings reveal no differences between genders regarding their use of compliment strategies or in adopting the most positive adjectives or the topic of the setting, which is not a central factor in conveying the compliments.

Based on cultural values, Solodka and Perea (2018) analyze the techniques of complimenting in Russian, Ukrainian, and English speaking communities. They indicate that many of the cultural values are reflected by performing the speech act of compliment. These values are personal talents, possessions, appearance, new acquisitions, and skills. The aim of this research is to teach Ukrainian and Russian second language learners the ways of compliments used by American native speakers to avoid pragmatic failure. To carry out this research, the method of ethnomethodology is used to collect the data. The researchers interviewed 445 Russian, 231 Ukrainian and 245 American participants online. The results reveal how native speakers of the abovementioned communities use the language context, expressions syntactical structure, attributes praised, and cultural lexicon when complimenting others. They find out that the results of this study help in showing how to teach English to Ukrainians and vice versa, how to teach Russian or Ukrainian to speakers of English.

From a cross-cultural perspective, Al-Mansoob et al. (2019) compare American English native speakers and Yemeni Arabic native speakers in their realization of the discourse act of compliment. A questionnaire is used in order to collect the data. It consists of six compliment situations. The participants are 30 Yemenis and 30 Americans who are involved in this study. The researchers analyzed the compliment semantic formula responses of 380 Arabic ones and 338 of English. The results reinforce some practical resemblances and variances between the two native sets. The admiration strategy is found in both cultures, which proves its universality across cultures, but there are other strategies that are culturally specific to Arabs, such as exaggeration, gratitude to God, and metaphor. Moreover, the results reveal that the compliment responses used by Americans are steady and formulaic in nature, whereas the ones used by Arabs are varied in formulas and long utterances.

A sociolinguistic study is introduced by Al-Gamal (2017), who attempts to examine compliment responses used by male and female Yemeni native speakers of Arabic. He collects the data by using the technique of Herbert's (1989), which is a questionnaire consisting of eight situations. The researcher has adopted only four of them. A total of 45 female and male learners from different universities in Yemen have participated in this research. The results show that both females and males use different strategies in responding to compliments, although they do not use all the types of compliment responses that were already introduced in Herbert's (1989) technique. Moreover, they both prefer to use 'appreciation token' and 'return' types when responding to compliments.

VIII. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this part, the methodology utilized to answer the research questions is described. Detailed information about participants and from where and what is the tool for eliciting the data is described. Moreover, the procedures that are followed in analyzing the data and also the techniques or taxonomies used to scheme code the strategies used by the participants in their production of compliment responses were treated as well.

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1. Participants

Participants of the present study consist of three groups of Saudi university learners of English: Saudi non-native speakers of English (SNNSs), American native speakers (ANSs), and Saudi native speakers (SNSs) . The first group is of BA and MA students, ranging from 18 to 25 in age, at Jeddah, King Abdulaziz, and Oum Al-Qura universities. It comprises 84 males and 99 females speaking English as a non-native language. The second group is composed of 20 American native speakers of English living in Saudi Arabia. They are asked to respond to the same questionnaire in order to correlate with the appropriate production of compliment responses pragmatically. Finally, the third group is the same as the first, but this time they will respond using their Saudi mother tongue language.

The participants are asked to fill in a section relating to their personal information and then to the situation in a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire, and they are informed of the common objective of this study, but they are not told the exact purpose, which is to examine their compliment strategies and get neutral responses. This is done during the academic year 2020.

2. Instrument

Kasper and Dahl (1991), as well as Billmyer and Varghese (2000), emphasize that in interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatic studies, many researchers use Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) as their data collection tool, while Beebe and Cummings (1986) indicate that this method is time consuming for gathering a large corpus of data. Hence, the data for the current study were gotten using a DCT, adopted and adapted from Tamimi Sa'd (2015a), which consisted of 5 real-life academic compliment situations, given by either unequal-status interlocutors where the speaker is lower status (-P) as in situations 2 and 4 or equal-status interlocutors where the speaker and hearer are equals (=P) as in situations 1, 3, and 5 (see Table 1 & Appendix 1 & 2). These situations are of two versions to elicit data on compliment responses in English and Arabic (see methodology used in Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986), and they are sent via an online system. Furthermore, the participants are told to imagine themselves involved in these situations and write their responses as they would give them in the provided blank space after each described situation.

Table 1: Description of the DCT Situations

No.	Situation	Power	Gender	Description
1	Class Presentation	=P	Speaker = Male/Female Hearer = Female	Speaker = Hearer
2	Exam Postpone	-P	Speaker = Male/Female Hearer = Female	Speaker < Hearer
3	Academic Seminar	=P	Speaker = Female/Male Hearer = Male	Speaker = Hearer
4	Class Project	-P	Speaker = Male/female Hearer = Male	Speaker < Hearer
5	School Conference	=P	Speaker = Male/Female Hearer = Female	Speaker = Hearer

3. Procedure

In analyzing the data of compliment responses, some steps are used in order to accomplish this study. These are as follows:

- Using Herbert's (1986) compliment responses taxonomy as in Tamim Sa'd (2015) to test the compliment reply patterns that appeared (see Table 1).

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Table 2: Herbert's (1986) Compliment Responses Taxonomy

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

The study uses quantitative analysis of the data collected by discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and qualitative analysis by describing the tactics used to reply to compliments regarding the samples used by SNNSs and ANSs in order to examine their intra-lingual similarities and differences. The codification of all the three groups of compliment strategies has been carried out based on Herbert's (1986) compliment responses taxonomy. Furthermore, there are other variables, such as gender, social status, education, or age, which are believed to affect the strategies used for compliment responses. The Arabic compliment responses of the SNSs group are used to compare between the Arabic and English languages and at the same time to test the pragmatic transfer in compliment answers by Saudi students of English.

IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using Herbert's (1986) compliment responses taxonomy, Table 3 and Graph 1 show the strategies of SNNSs and ANSs when responding to compliments.

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Table 3: Compliment Responses of SNNSs of English and ANSs

Response Type	S1 Saudis	%	S1 Americans	%	S2 Saudis	%	S2 Americans	%	S3 Saudis	%	S3 Americans	%	S4 Saudis	%	S4 Americans	%	S5 Saudis	%	S5 Americans	%
A. Agreement I. Acceptances 1. Appreciation Token 2. Comment Acceptance 3. Praise Upgrade	100 43 8	54.64 23.49 4.37	84 0	40 20 0	32 62 20	17.48 33.87 10.92	74 9	35 20 45	51 48 25	27.86 26.22 13.66	45 0	20 25	21 32 5	11.37 17.48 2.73	65 8	30 25 40	46 40 9	25.13 21.85 4.91	63 0	30 15 0
II. Comment History	13	7.1	5	25	4	2.18	0	0	25	13.66	2	10	16	8.74	1	5	43	23.49	6	30
III. Transfers 1. Reassignment 2. Return	4 11	2.18 6.01	3 0	15 0	0 28	0 15.3	0 0	0 0	5 23	2.73 12.56	0 0	0 0	69 10	37.7 5.46	0 0	0 0	21 4	11.47 2.18	0 0	0 0
B. Non-agreement 1. Scale Down	1	0.54	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	3.82	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II. Question	1	0.54	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	6.01	6	30	5	2.73	0	0	5	2.73	4	20
III. Non-acceptances 1. Disagreement 2. Qualification	0 2	0 1.09	0 0	0 0	7 0	3.82 0	0 0	0 0	0 1	0 0.54	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
IV. No Acknowledgement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
C. Other Interpretations I. Request 2. Prayer	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 31	0 16.93	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 26	0 14.2	0 0	0 0	1 15	0.54 8.19	0 0	0 0

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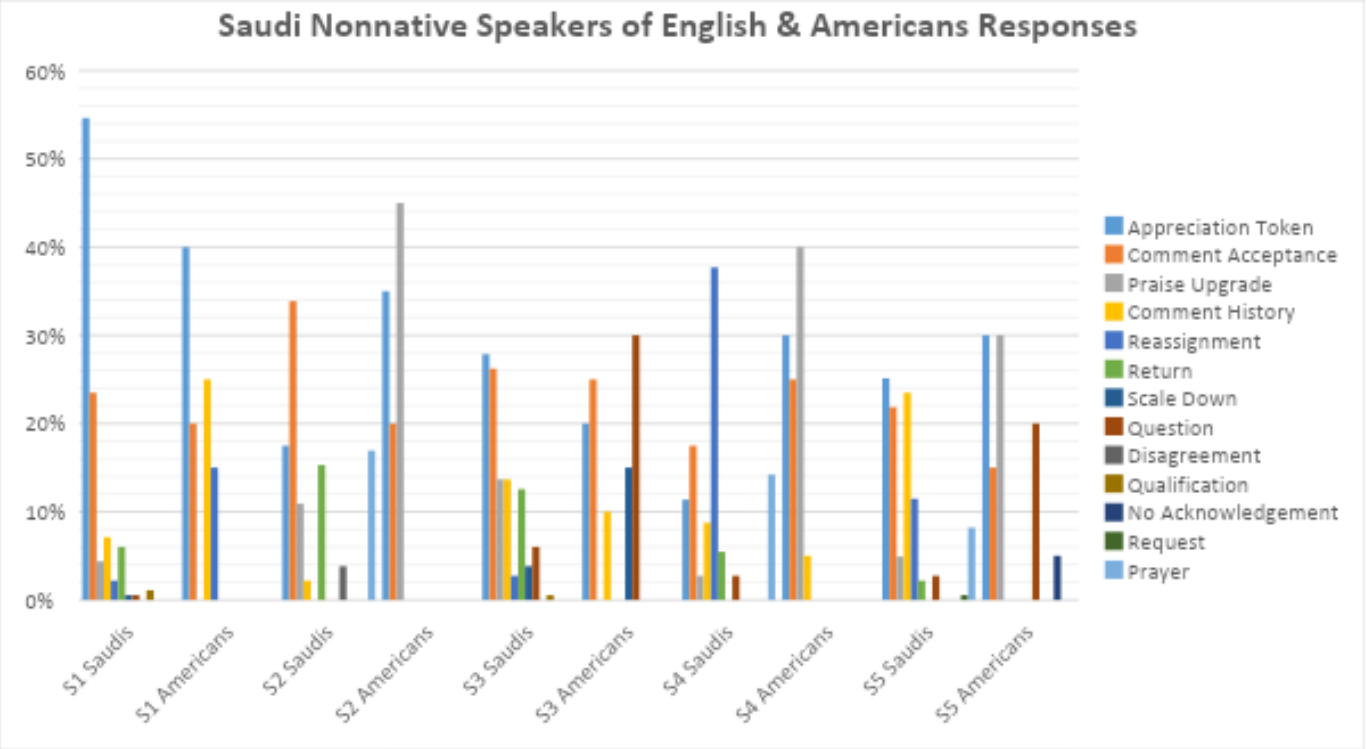

Graph 1: Compliment Responses of SNNSs of English and ANSs

1. Quantitative Results and Discussion of SNNSs and ANSs of Compliments

Situation 1: You have given a presentation in the class. After class, one of your female friends says, "Your presentation was great."

For the response type of agreement, the data shows that 54.64% of SNNSs of English frequently use the appreciation token, while 40% of ANSs use this agreement. For the comment acceptance, 23.49% of SNNSs frequently used this, while 20% for the ANSs. For the praise upgrade, 8 respondents, or 4.37%, frequently used this response type. Meanwhile, 25% of ANS respondents and 7.1% of SNNSs frequently use the comment history in an agreement response type. In the transfer stage of the response type, 15% of ANSs and 2.18% of SNNSs of English frequently use the reassignment response, while 6.01% of SNNSs use the return response type. For the non–agreement response type, the data shows that only 0.54% of SNSs use the scale down and question response, while for non-acceptance, 1.09% of SNNSs use this type.

Situation 2: You are not ready for the exam. You ask your professor to postpone the examination and she says, "I'll postpone it just because you are a good student."

In the response to situation 2, the data shows that comment acceptance is the frequently used agreement response by SNNSs (33.87%), followed by appreciation token (17.48%), and 10.92% of praise upgrade. For ANSs, appreciation token is still the most regularly used agreement answer at 51%, followed by remark recognition at 48% and only 13.66% for praise upgrade. Meanwhile, for comment history, only 2.18% of SNNSs use this response. For the transfer stage of agreement, there are still 28 respondents, or 15.3% of SNNSs, using this response type. Furthermore, for the non-agreement response type under non-acceptance, there are 3.82% of respondents that use disagreement and 16.93% of prayer under other interpretations.

Situation 3: You and a friend of yours attend an academic seminar. After that, he says to you, "I liked the questions you asked in the seminar."

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SNNS respondents of 27.86% frequently use the appreciation token under agreement response in this situation, while ANSs respond with a percentage of 20%. The data shows that in comment acceptance, 26.22% of SNNSs use this response type, compared to and 20% for ANSs. The praise upgrade and comment history response each receive a similar percentage of 13.66% SNNSs, while 10% of the respondents of ANSs use this response. For the transfer stage, reassignment and return receive 2.73% and 12.56%, respectively, for SNNSs. For the scale down under non-agreement response, the data shows that 3.82% of SNNSs use this response, compared to only 15% of ANSs. For question under non-agreement, 6.01% of SNNSs and 30% of ANSs use this response type.

Situation 4: You accomplish a classroom project successfully. Later, a male professor says, "Your project was the best one in the university."

SNNSs of the percentage 17.48% frequently use the comment acceptance as the response type, followed by appreciation token of 11.37% and 2.73% for praise upgrade, while ANSs frequently use the praise upgrade response of 40%, followed by appreciation token and comment acceptance of 30% and 25%, respectively. In comment history under agreement response, SNNSs of 8.74% use this response, while only 5% of the respondents of ANSs use this response. Meanwhile, in the non-agreement response type, it is evidently shown in the data that 2.73% of SNNSs use the question response type in this situation, compared to 14.2% for the prayer response under other interpretations.

Situation 5: You are coordinating a school conference with a classmate. She says to you, "Wow, you are really handling things very well."

SNNSs frequently use the appreciation token of 25.13%, 21.85% for comment acceptance, and 4.91% use this response type. ANSs frequently use the appreciation token of 30% and comment acceptance of 15% in this situation. For the comment history under agreement response, 23.49% of SNNSs use this response type, while 30% of ANSs use this type of response. For the transfer stage under agreement response, reassignment and return response receive 11.47% and 2.18% of SNNSs, respectively. In addition, under non-agreement response, the data shows that 2.73% of SNNSs and 20% of the ANS respondents use this response type. For other interpretation responses, SNNSs frequently use the prayer response of 8.19% and only 0.54% for the request.

Table 4: Compliment Responses of Male SNNSs

Response Type	S1	%	S2	%	S3	%	S4	%	S5	%
A. Agreement										
I. Acceptances										
1. Appreciation Token	45	53.57	14	16.66	20	23.8	6	7.14	20	23.80
2. Comment Acceptance	20	23.80	27	32.13	7	8.33	5	5.95	13	15.47
3. Praise Upgrade	7	8.33	13	15.47	19	22.61	0	0	6	7.14
II. Comment History	10	11.90	4	4.76	13	15.47	13	15.47	22	26.19
III. Transfers										
1. Reassignment	0	0	0	0	5	5.95	40	47.61	13	15.47
2. Return	0	0	9	10.71	13	15.47	0		0	
B. Non-agreement										
1. Scale Down	0	0	0	0	5	5.95	0	0	0	0
II. Question	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
III. Non-acceptances	0	0	7	8.33	0	0	0	0	0	0

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1.Disagreement 2.Qualification	2	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IV. No Acknowledgement	0	0	0	0	2	2.38	0	0	0	0
C. Other Interpretation I. Request 2. Prayer	0 0	0 0	0 10	0 11.90	0 0	0 0	0 20	0 23.80	0 10	0 11.90

Table 5: Compliment Responses of Female SNNSs

Response Type	S1	%	S2	%	S3	%	S4	%	S5	%
A. Agreement I. Acceptances 1. Appreciation Token 2. Comment Acceptance 3. Praise Upgrade	55 23 1	55.55 23.23 1.01	18 35 7	18.18 35.35 7.07	30 25 6	30.30 25.25 6.06	15 27 5	15.15 27.27 5.05	26 27 3	26.26 27.27 3.03
II. Comment History	3	3.03	0	0	10	10.10	3	3.03	21	21.21
III. Transfers 1. Reassignment 2. Return	4 11	4.04 11.11	0 19	0 19.19	0 10	0 10.10	28 10	28.28 10.10	8 4	8.08 4.04
B. Non-agreement 1. Scale Down	1	1.01	0	0	5	5.05	0	0	0	0
II. Question	1	1.01	0		6	6.06	5	5.05	5	5.05
III. Non-acceptances 1.Disagreement 2.Qualification	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 3	0 3.03	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
IV. No Acknowledgement	0	0	0	0	4	4.04	0	0	0	0
C. Other Interpretation I. Request 2. Prayer	0 0	0 0	0 20	0 20.20	0 0	0 0	0 6	0 6.06	0 5	0 5.05

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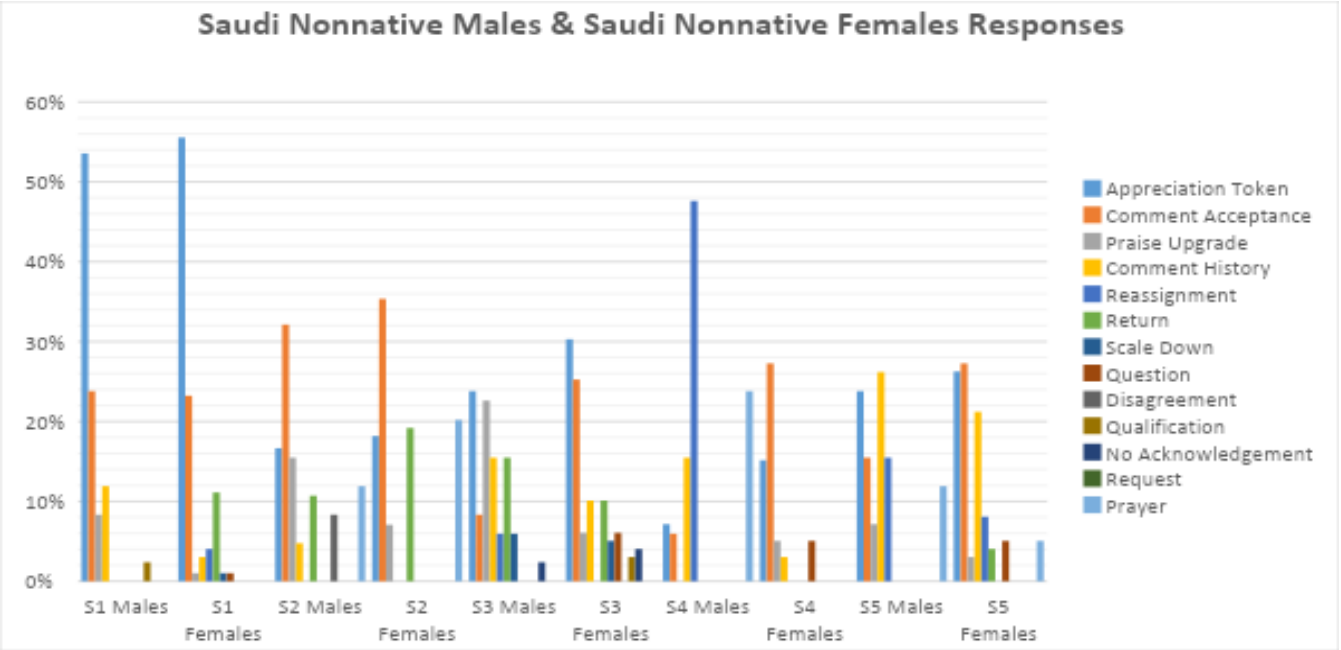

Graph 2: Compliment Responses of Male and Females SNNSs of English

2. Quantitative Results and Discussion of Male and Female SNNSs of Compliments

Situation 1: The most momentous result in the recent study is that the recipients answer to compliments by utilizing agreement plans more recurrently than the other tactics. As seen in Tables 4 and 5, 97.60% of male SNSs and 97.97% of female SNSs frequently use the agreement response to compliments. It is evident in the data that the percentage of 53.57% of males and 55.55% of females frequently use the gratitude symbol under agreement to reply to compliments. Meanwhile, they frequently use praise upgrade of 1.01% as one of the strategies under agreement respond to compliment by both Saudi males and females.

Situation 2: In this situation, it is noted that comment acceptance is the frequently used response to compliment by both Saudi males and females. However, the return type of compliment under transfer is preferred by females with a percentage of 19.19 % compared to males with the percentage of 10.71%. It is also noted in the data of other interpretation responses, specifically the prayer response to compliment, is also used by both the Saudi males and females with a percentage of 11.90% and 20.20%, respectively.

Situation 3: It is evident in the data that the agreement gratitude symbol is still the most regularly used kind of response to compliments. Both the males and females garnered the highest data percentages of 23.8% and 30.30%.The finding shows that 25.25% of the females prefer the use of comment acceptance to respond to compliments than the males, at only 8.33%. Meanwhile, it is overwhelming for both males and females to have the same percentage of comment history and return under agreement to respond to compliments of 15.47% and 10.10%, respectively. Moreover, for non-agreement, there are still respondents who use the 'no acknowledgement' or 'silence' response to compliment. For males, it is 2.38% and for females, it is 4.04%.

Situation 4: The findings reveal that 47.61% of males prefer the reassignment as a response to a compliment. While in this situation, females still frequently use the comment acceptance of agreement of 27.27% than males of 5.95%. In addition, 15.15% of females prefer the use of appreciation token agreement to respond to

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compliments than only 7.14% of males. In other interpretation responses, 23.80% of males frequently use the prayer response to compliment than females of only 6.06%.

Situation 5: Of the 84 respondents, 26.19% of the males frequently use the comment history to respond to compliments, while a near equal percentage of 21.21% of females respond to this type. It is evident in the data that comment acceptance is the most frequently used agreement response type by females (27.27%), followed by appreciation token (26.26%), while only 23.80% of males use the appreciation token agreement for situation 5. In other interpretation response type, 11.90% of males use the prayer response to agreement, while 5.05% of females use it.

3. Qualitative Results and Discussion of SNNSs and ANSs of Compliments

The results of the current study show that the compliment responses of SNNSs and those of ANSs are similar, and both of them use agreement strategies more than non-agreement ones and other strategies, but there are differences. The under agreement strategies are acceptance, appreciation token, comment acceptance, and praise upgrade. It is found that SNNSs prefer to use the appreciation token 'Thank you' and comment acceptance more than ANSs. However, praise upgrade is only used by ANSs. Both SNNSs and ANSs express thanking in response to compliments.

These results are associated with the results of related studies that aimed native and non-native speakers of English, such as Al-khatib and Farghal (2001) and Herbert (1990). They indicate the same similarities in which their participants prefer agreement strategies. In this study, the compliment responses of SNNSs and those of ANSs are similar in that both of them favor utilizing agreement plans more than non-agreement plans. Under agreement, plans are acceptance, gratitude symbol, comment acceptance, and compliment upgrade. It is found that SNNSs prefer to use the appreciation token 'Thank you' and comment acceptance more than ANSs. Further, compliment upgrade is preferred by ANSs. In the studies of Leech (1983) and Wolfson (1989), Americans are found to regularly concur with the complimenter or else try not to show conflict, even when they truly do contradict the speaker (cited in Karimnia and Afghari1, 2011).

However, there are ways in which the two groups perform differently. For example, SNNSs are likely to accept the compliment that there are patterns of agreement. SNNSs are inclined towards mitigating the force of a compliment for an achievement or success by applying a combination of strategies (acceptance and comment history), especially when the participants are the compliments recipients from higher-status speakers (e.g., a university lecturer praising his/her scholar on the article that the scholar wrote), for example:

'Thank you, professor, for your kindness. I usually don't postpone my studies, but I really have been in a difficult situation.' While in other situations, they receive respect from equal-status speakers (e.g., a student praising a classmate on his/her worthy presentation on a task), they use one strategy.

The present study supports the findings of Al-Batal, Nelson and Bakery (1996) that "the Arab culture tends to favor longer forms of compliments" (cited in Alqarni, 2020, 248). However, Al-rousan et al. (2016) claim that "people use elaborate compliments to convince the addressees about the sincerity of their praises" (32). Further, Al-Shorman (2016) adds that most Saudi speakers use "elaborated example because they wanted to make sure that they get the message across to the hearer without any ambiguity" (223).

Meanwhile, all ANSs respond by giving short answers, but SNNSs answer by giving explanations, because the presence of modesty and humility are cornerstones of Saudi culture, especially with higher-status interlocutors, who prove to be quite conscious of the importance of the role of speakers' power and societal position in agreeing interactions by using honorifics such as 'Dr., Professor', for instance: 'Thank you,

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Professor' 'شكرا أستاذ'. According to Amel (2019), "[t]his is part of politeness and respect in the Arabian culture due to the social distance that exists between the two interlocutors" (52).

Moreover, the results reveal that the SNNSs apply a mitigating force of compliment on certain types of compliment more than the ANSs do. This is done by choosing non-agreement strategies such as non-acceptances, question, scale down (qualification or disagreement), no acknowledgement, or other explanations (prayers or request), which are used more by SNNSs than ANSs.

However, we find SNNSs try not to create target-like compliment replies. Their cultural knowledge influences their replies. They plainly interpreted Saudi formulaic terms utilized in compliment replies, and these terms are not permanently appropriate for the compliment given in English. For instance: 'Honestly, I prepared it hardly and my focus was on it. الحمدلله '

In the studies of Wolfson (1980), Kasper (2000), Farghal and Haggan (2006),Qanbar (2012), and Manes and, Arabic speakers will generally utilize a proper example of praise use (cited in Alqarni, 2020). They tend to incorporate their cultural norms into their interaction, attempting to tie the compliment response directed to their religion, particularly when they are praised on their success. Using 'Alhamdullilah' 'الحمدلله' is evidence that students' language proficiency does not embody in their performance of native-like praise formulas in English. Moreover, Alqarni (2020) states that "the socioreligious rules that dominate the highly conservative culture of Saudi Arabia do influence the way that compliments are used" (248).

4. Qualitative Results and Discussion of Male and Female SNSs of Compliments

The third research question in this study sets out to investigate whether there are significant similarities or disagreements between Saudi females and males in their use of the praise response strategy types. It is noted that both females and males favor using agreement plans more than non-agreement. However, female participants use agreement strategies more frequently than their male counterparts. This finding is supported as well by the findings of Al-rousan et al. (2016), who indicate that "female students tend to use the agreement strategies that can help show the positive face to the complimenter by accepting compliments" (30).

Subsequently, when the participants are complimented by a higher-status female, they prefer to use comment acceptance forms strategy that show respect for the complimenter. Al-rousan et al. (2016) claim that "to prevent self-praise, female students [use] comment acceptance strategy while male students simply [favor] accepting the compliment" (30). Moreover, in such a situation, females prefer to utilize return plans to respond to praises offered by females rather than those offered by males. Saudi males and females also use other interpretations, specifically the prayers after their expression of thanks, to respond to compliments offered by females of higher status. According to Soleimani and Mohajerniya (2013), "appearing generous will maintain and enhance the face and image" (15).

Meanwhile, it is overwhelming for both males and females to use comment history and return under agreement to respond to the compliment of a male friend. Moreover, the findings display that females prefer to employ comment approval more than males. Further, female members are found to employ 'no acknowledgement' to respond to praises more than males.

The findings of the data reveal a great difference when responding to compliments offered by males of higher status. In this case, males prefer the reassignment strategy as a response to compliment, while females frequently prefer the comment acceptance of agreement. In addition, females prefer the use of appreciation token agreement to respond to compliments than males, which contrasts with Herbert's (1998) study, in which he states that females disagree with compliments. In other interpretation responses, more males frequently use the prayer response to compliment than females. Another significant finding is that both female and male members

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employ comment history, gratitude symbol, and prayer strategies to respond to compliments offered by a female friend.

X. CONCLUSION

The current study falls under intercultural communication research. It investigates and compares the sociopragmatic appropriacy of the compliment response of SNNSs and ANSs. Regardless of the general similarities between SNNSs and ANSs, the outcomes show significant differences that cause communicative failure due to pragmatic transfer of SNNSs in using compliment responses in the target language, which is English. This conclusion is compatible with many studies in which cultural diversity leads to misunderstandings, such as Soleimani and Mohajerniya (2013), Abdul Sattar and Che Lah (2011) or Yu (2005). They all focus on the importance of acquiring the right sounds and forms of the target -language, and most importantly, acquiring the communicative competence of this language. In order to be able to communicate appropriately in a language, it is necessary to learn the pragmatic norms and cultural routines of that language. Therefore, this study results will comprise some implications for English teachers and material designers. They should sensitize the learners to the genuine representations and provide opportunities to practice role plays of natives like contextual atmospheres while performing different speech acts. Likewise, students ought to be trained to distinguish the context and can select a suitable form out of a variety of linguistic forms or strategies based on well-known code schemes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR), University of Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under grant no. (UJ-21-SIL-6). The author, therefore, acknowledges with thanks DSR's technical and financial support. She would also like to express her thanks to her MA student, Nada Abdulmajeed Lashkar, for the constructive comments on the data collection and generosity in sharing learning research tools.

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APPENDIX 1

Thank you for giving us the time to participate in this questionnaire. You are kindly requested to fill in the section relating to personal information, which will be totally confidential.

Please read all the situations below carefully and write down the possible form of response you would use for each compliment in such natural settings.

Nationality:	Saudi	American
Sex:	Male	Female
Age:	18-22	23-26
Level of education:	Undergraduate	Graduate
Mother tongue:	Arabic	English

Have you been abroad in English mother tongue language: Yes No

If yes, then how long have you been? 3 months More than 3 months

Situation 1: You have given a presentation in the class. After class, one of your female friends says, "Your presentation was great."

You would say:

.....

Situation 2: You are not ready for the exam. You ask your professor to postpone the examination and she says, "I'll postpone it just because you are a good student."

You would say:

.....

Situation 3: You and a friend of yours attend an academic seminar. After that, he says to you, "I liked the questions you asked in the seminar."

You would say:

.....

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Situation 4: You accomplish a classroom project successfully. Later, a male professor says, “Your project was the best one in the university.”

You would say:

.....

Situation 5: You are coordinating a school conference with a classmate. She says to you, “Wow, you are really handling things very well.”

You would say:

.....

APPENDIX 2

نشكر حضراتكم على اقتطاع الوقت للمشاركة في هذا الاستبيان، ونرجو منكم ملئ الجزء الخاص بالبيانات الشخصية والذي سيعامل بسرية تامة، ثم التكرم بقراءة وصف المواقف التالية ثم أكتب/ أكتبِ ما ستقوله/ ستقولينه تلقائيا باللهجة العامية في الفراغ أسفل كل موقف.

ألجنسية:	سعودي	أمريكي
الجنس:	ذكر	أنثى
العمر:	22-18	26-23
المستوى العلمي:	خريج	لم تتخرج بعد
اللغة الأم: العربية		الإنجليزية
هل سافرت بلد اللغة الأم فيها اللغة الإنجليزية: نعم		لا
إذا نعم، هل المدة 3 شهور		أكثر من 3 شهور

الموقف الأول: لقد قمت بتقديم عرض أمام الفصل الدراسي. وبعد الإنتهاء من الدرس قالت إحدى صديقاتك: "لقد أبليت بلاء حسنا في تقديمك للعرض" ، فماذا تقول/تقولين؟

.....

الموقف الثاني: لم تكن مستعد للاختبار في مادة ما، فسألت الأستاذة عن إمكانية تأخير الاختبار. فقالت لك/لكِ: "سوف أُأجل الاختبار فقط لأنك/لأنكِ تلميذ/تلميذة جيدة" ، فماذا تقول/تقولين؟

.....

الموقف الثالث: أنت/أنتِ وصديق لك/لكِ حضرتما حلقة بحث، بعد الإنتهاء قال: "لقد أعجبني السؤال الذي طرحته/طرحتيه في حلقة البحث"، فماذا تقول/تقولين؟

.....

الموقف الرابع: لقد حققت/حققتِ مشروعا تعليميا ناجحا. وبعد ذلك قال أحد الأساتذة: "لقد كان المشروع الأفضل على مستوى الجامعة"، فماذا تقول/تقولين؟

.....

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الموقف الخامس: لقد قمت/قمتِ بإعداد مدهش لمؤتمر سيعقد في المدرسة. فقالت أحد/أحدى الزملاء/الزميلات: "واو... لقد أعددت/اعددتِ كل ما يلزم لعقد المؤتمر بشكل رائع"، فماذا تقول/تقولين؟

.....

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