Gender-Based Differences in Compliment Responses Among Jordanian University Students

Asma A. Al-Oudat

Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Salt, Jordan

Alaa M. Mahfouz

Ministry of Education, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—The current study aims at exploring the difference between male and female Jordanian university students with regard to their compliment responses on Facebook. It also investigates the difference between male and female Jordanian university students when they respond to compliments offered by the opposite sex. The study is based on a corpus consisting of 233 compliment responses collected from responses to comments on Facebook posts. The data analysis was based on Herbert's (1986) taxonomy of compliment response strategies. Findings of this research show that both male and female Jordanian university students tended to use the agreement strategies more frequently than the non-agreement and other interpretation strategies. The findings also show that although both male and female students use the agreement strategies more frequently, there are also differences in the use of the sub-categories of the agreement strategy among them. Results of the study also indicated that the Jordanian culture, norms, and expectations, as well as the relationship between the complimenter and the complimentee, accounted for the very limited number of compliments on appearance and compliment responses that occurred between two students of different genders.

Index Terms—compliment, compliment response, culture, gender, non-verbal agreement

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of the phenomena of compliments and compliment responses has become one of the most important topics in linguistics. Several researchers from different fields of linguistics, including sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics, conducted a number of studies on this topic (cf. Herbert, 1989; Holmes, 1986; Wolfson, 1983). Compliments and compliment responses constitute a major part of people's lives and are part of their daily interactions. Compliments help people to be closer to each other (Holmes, 1988).

Speech acts including apology, request, greeting, compliment, and other acts have attracted the attention of many researchers. However, compliment responses have been of interest to a large number of researchers because they carry semantic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic characteristics (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). There are several factors that influence the compliment behavior, such as culture, context, age, ethnicity, social class, and gender of both the complimenter and the complimentee. According to Holmes (1992), gender is involved when distinguishing people based on their sociocultural behavior, including speech (Holmes, 1992, p. 159). Compliments are also affected by the relationship between the complimenter and the recipient. Herbert (1990) argues that compliments can reflect the relationship between the complimenter and the complimentee.

Complimentary behavior is considered one of the most common ways of expressing politeness. It gives people positive energy that makes them closer to each other. Compliments are mostly used as politeness devices to express goodwill and build solidarity between the complimenter and the complimentee (Holmes, 1995). Responses to compliments can provide various functions of a compliment (Herbert, 1990). This means that if there is harmony between the compliment displayed by the first party and the compliment response by the other party, the interaction between them can be considered successful. However, an inappropriate compliment response by the other party may lead to failure in the interaction. The crucial element of communication between people is politeness. People talk politely in order to show respect to others and be respected. Paying compliments is one of the more obvious ways of expressing politeness. Politeness is defined as the expression of speakers' intention to mitigate the threats carried by certain face-threatening acts toward the listener (Mills, 2003). It is also defined as a means to show awareness on another person's face (Yule, 1996).

Face is defined as the positive social image that a person seeks to build in social interactions (Goffman, 1955). Definition of face includes two elements: a positive face and a negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). They defined positive face as the positive self-image, including the desire that the self-image be appreciated and approved of by interactants. Negative face was defined as the need of every member that his actions be unimpeded by others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Compliments are considered positive or negative, depending on a number of factors, such as context, cultural protocols, and individual interpretation (Tang & Zhang, 2009). Leech (1983) developed a theory of politeness and introduced six politeness maxims, which are: Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty

Maxim, Agreement Maxim and Sympathy Maxim. Agreement Maxim involves minimizing disagreement between self and other as well as maximizing agreement between self and other. This maxim can be involved when analyzing compliment responses.

Compliment behavior is one of the speech acts that have been of interest to many researchers. "A compliment is a speech act that explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some good (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) that is positively valued by the speaker" (Holmes, 1988, p. 446). It is also defined as statements that are intended to make someone feel good about himself/herself (Newton & Burgoon, 1990).

Herbert (1986) proposed a detailed taxonomy of compliment responses based on his study of American English compliment responses. The main categories of Herbert's taxonomy include agreement, non-agreement, and other interpretations. Agreement consists of acceptance and non-acceptance. Acceptance subcategorizes into appreciation token, comment acceptances, and praise upgrades, whereas non-acceptance consists of comment history, reassignment, and return. The non-agreement category consists of scale down, disagreement, qualification, question, and no acknowledgment. The last category, which is other interpretations, has the sub-category of request. The compliment phenomenon can be different according to the medium in which they occur, e.g., face-to-face interaction versus online interaction. Social presence is conceptualized as a way to analyze mediated communications (Williams & Christie, 1976). In their hypothesis, they indicated that variations in the degree of social presence determine the way individuals interact through the medium. It is indicated that nonverbal channels seem to be less controllable than the verbal channels (IJsselsteijn et al., 2003), in which they are more likely to "leak" information about feelings. Moreover, intimacy behaviors, including physical distance, smiling, eye contact, and personal topics of conversation, are kept at an optimal, balanced level (Argyle & Dean, 1965). The choice of pronouns, such as 'we' or 'I', carries a feeling of closeness and association (Wiener & Mehrabian, 1968). They also showed that supporting intimacy and immediacy behaviors plays a major role in engendering social presence through media.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW COMPLIMENT RESPONSES

The study of the phenomenon of compliment responses has become an interesting topic in linguistics. Researchers investigated how compliment responses are distributed in different speech communities. Some researchers investigated the influence of culture, social status, and gender of both the complimenter and the recipient on the compliment responses. For example, Herbert (1989) conducted a comparative study to investigate the frequency of compliment responses in both American English and South African English. Results of this study indicated that Americans used more non-acceptance strategies than African Americans. It was also found that there is a relationship between the participants' different compliment responses and the functions of compliment in each culture. Gajaseni (1994) conducted a contrastive study to investigate compliment responses as used in both American English and Thai. The study examined the effect of gender and social status on the choice of responses used by both the compliment giver and the receiver. The data were collected from 40 American students and 40 Thai students, showing that acceptance was frequent in both groups, but Americans tend to use it more. The length of the responses was different among both groups, where the Americans tend to use long responses whereas Thai participants were brief in their responses. Moreover, the study indicated that both groups were affected by the complimenter's social status, where this appeared more in Thailand than in America. For example, compliments accepted from a higher status complimenter but rejected from an equal status complimenter.

Two years later, a research was conducted in to investigate the similarities and differences between Syrian and American compliment responses based on interviews with both American and Syrian individuals (Ganelson et al., 1996). The examination of these interviews suggested three broad categories, which are acceptance, mitigation, and rejection. The study showed 50 percent were coded as acceptances, 45 percent as mitigations, and 0 percent as rejections. This means that both Syrians and Americans are more likely to either accept or mitigate than to reject the compliment. The study also indicated that Americans were more likely to use appreciation responses than Syrians, whereas in the American data, there was no appearance for the preferred Syrian response, acceptance and formula.

Other researchers focused on the influence of gender on the individuals within the same culture on their compliment responses. For example, Herbert (1986) conducted a study on American English compliment responses based on a corpus of 1,062 compliment responses. The data were collected over three years at the State University of New York. He distinguished twelve types of compliment responses. Results of his study indicated that American native speakers preferred the use of positive strategies in responding to compliments. He also noted the difference between men and women in their compliment responses. In his study, he found that compliments from men are more likely to be accepted, especially by female recipients, whereas compliments from women were other than acceptance. A more recent research showed that the data were based on two corpora of compliments collected on a small Midwestern campus in the US in 2008 and 2010. The study showed that the setting determines compliment use by both genders and that there is equal compliment performance in goal-oriented activities. The study also indicated that women appearance compliments as phatic communication in unstructured settings (Rees – Miller, 2011).

Several studies were conducted in America and Europe on the study of compliment responses. However; very few studies were conducted in the Arab world on the same topic. A pilot study was conducted to investigate the influence of

the gender of Jordanian college students on their compliment responses (Farghal & Al-khatib, 2001). It was based on a corpus consisting of 268 compliment responses as they naturally occurred in different settings. The analysis of the data was according to simple versus complex responses, micro functions, and intrinsically versus extrinsically complex responses. According to the findings, the gender of the speaker influences the formulation and acceptance or rejection of a compliment in Jordanian society. The study also showed that male complimentees tended to use simple responses to respond to a compliment offered by a male and non-verbal responses to respond to females. An attempt has been made in a study to categorize compliment responses that Iraqi EFL learners produce in both English and Arabic (Ebadi & Salman, 2015). The study also aims to investigate the influence of gender on the use of these strategies. Participants were undergraduate students (50 males and 50 females), majoring in general English at the University of Babylon, Iraq. Regarding English responses, results showed that females used more appreciation tokens than males. In addition, they preferred to question the compliment more frequently than males. As regard Arabic responses, males used more praise-upgrade responses than females.

In a recent study in on this topic, compliment responses were examined among Jordanian university students as well as investigated if there were any differences with regard to gender (AlRousan et al., 2016). The corpus of their study consisted of 611 compliment responses collected from 36 students through an ethnographic (note-taking) method. They found that the participants used the agreement strategies more frequently than the other strategies. They also found that female students used the agreement strategies more frequently than male students. In addition, they noted that females tended to respond to compliments offered by females than those offered by males.

People's communication and interaction may differ according to the medium in which they occur. Three studies were conducted to investigate whether computer-mediated communication (CMC) can be characterized by self-disclosure (Joinson, 2001). The first study includes 40 undergraduate students (29 females and 11 males). Where possible, participants were paired with a student of the same gender. In this study, higher levels of spontaneous self-disclosure were found in computer-mediated compared to face-to-face discussions. Study two: Participants were 42 undergraduate students (28 females and 14 males), discussed in same sex pairs. This study explores the influence of visual anonymity in encouraging self-disclosure during CMC. Results show that participants who are visually anonymous disclose more information about themselves than non-visually anonymous participants. In study three, the participants were 84 undergraduate Communication Studies or Psychology students (59 females and 25 males). Where possible, participants were paired with a student of the same gender. In this study, when a classical de-individuation condition was effectively replicated, self-disclosure was recorded at lower levels than when private self-awareness was heightened.

Therefore, it was concluded that self-disclosure is higher in Computer-Mediated Communication than face-to-face, and that both visual anonymity and heightened private or reduced public self-awareness are involved in this regard (Joinson, 2001). He also indicated that as the Internet becomes a dominant part of people's lives, psychologists must consider both the medium and the person in any analysis of social behavior.

Several studies were interested in investigating the difference between males and females in terms of compliment responses. They also compared genders from different cultures. Previous researchers collected their data through various ways including note-taking, observation, and a discourse completion test. Therefore, the current study is based on a corpus of compliment responses collected from one of the most common social media networks, which is Facebook.

III. OBJECTIVES

The current study aims at investigating the differences between male and female Jordanian university students in their compliment responses on Facebook. Thus, the current study seeks answers for the following questions:
1. How do Jordanian male and female university students respond to compliments on Facebook according to Herbert's taxonomy?
2. How do male and female Jordanian university students respond to compliments offered to them by the opposite sex?

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present research is a qualitative-based study. It investigates the distribution of compliment responses to appearance among Jordanian male and female students at the University of Jordan. The responses analyzed in this study were responses to one compliment formula, which is 'mnwer' or 'mnawreh'. This compliment formula is commonly used by people to compliment someone on his/her appearance, although young people nowadays tend to use other different compliments rather than 'mnawer'. This research is based on a corpus consisting of 233 compliment responses (118 from females and 115 from males). The data were divided into three groups: the first group was 100 responses by females to females; the second group was 100 responses from males to males; and the last group was 33 responses by both male and female students to a compliment from the opposite sex. This research is an interpretive and descriptive one where it investigates the differences between men and women in responding to compliments and explores the reasons that can account for these differences.

The data were collected through Facebook, which is a very common social media network. It is widely used by a very large number of people around the world, as well as being easy to use for most people. Moreover, Facebook offers other alternatives to compliments and compliment responses, such as emojies, which sometimes may be more expressive than words. Facebook also allows its users to repair themselves by deleting what they have written and writing something else. In this study, the researcher analyzes personal posts that were selected randomly in order for my results to be representative of a large number of people. Personal posts include people who compliment and respond to compliments offered by others. These comments are more likely to be naturally produced as people are unaware that their comments are being investigated or analyzed, which might be helpful in reaching valid and reliable results. According to Labov (1973), the authentic data comes from observing the language used by people when they are unaware that they are being watched.

The participants of the present study, to which the posts belong, were students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Jordan. The age range of the participants involved in this research was between 18 and 23.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

In this research, compliment responses were analyzed according to Herbert's (1986) taxonomy of compliment response strategies. The compliment responses of both male and female participants were compared in order to investigate the influence of gender differences on their compliment responses. Herbert (1986) developed a taxonomy of compliment responses types.

The main categories are agreement, non-agreement, and other interpretations. The first two contain other sub-categories. The agreement category consists of acceptance and non-acceptance. Acceptance is sub-divided into appreciation tokens, comment acceptances, and praise upgrades, whereas non-acceptance is subdivided into comment history, reassignment, and return. The non-agreement category consists of the sub-types of scale down, disagreement, qualification, question, and no acknowledgement. The category of other interpretations includes only requests.

The table below shows compliment response strategies according to Herbert's (1986) taxonomy and provides examples for each strategy.

TABLE 1
HERBERT'S TAXONOMY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES

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

The compliment responses collected from Facebook will be analyzed and compared according to the previous categories.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of the present study is to investigate the pattern of compliment responses among male and female participants who are students at the University of Jordan. Some differences were found between male and female Jordanian university students in the way they responded to compliments offered on their appearance on Facebook posts. Male and female students were compared in their responses to a particular compliment formula, which is "mnawer" or "mnawra". The most frequent response to compliments that was used by both males and females was the agreement strategy, which constituted 92.7% of the total responses. The second most frequent response strategy was non-agreement, though it was rarely used. The non-agreement strategy constitutes 7.2% of the total responses. The other interpretation strategy did not exist at all. These findings are in line with the Al-Rousan study, which arrived at the same findings. The results of his study indicated that 86% of the total compliment responses belonged to the agreement category, 12% to the non-agreement category, and 2% to other interpretations. The high frequency of agreement responses is also similar to findings about compliment responses used by Jordanian college students (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001).

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES

Complement Responses	Males	Females
Agreement Strategies	89.5%	98.2%
Non- Agreement Strategies	10.4%	4.2%
Others Interpretations	0%	0%

The culture, norms, and expectations of the Jordanian society play an essential role and account for the high frequency of the agreement strategies used by both male and female Jordanian students. In Jordanian society, rejecting a compliment offered by someone on a specific skill, characteristic, or even appearance is considered impolite and shameful behavior. The nature of Facebook itself can also account for the high frequency of the agreement strategy rather than the non-agreement. That is because people who offer a compliment to someone on Facebook by writing a comment, expect this person to respond to or reply to their comment. Moreover, some individuals may consider the ignorance of their compliment comments as impoliteness and disrespect. This result also indicated that the strategies used by both male and female Jordanian university students are related to Leech's (1983) agreement maxim, where recipients tend to maximize agreement between self and other and minimize disagreement between themselves and others.

A. Agreement Compliment Responses Among Male and Female Students

Within the agreement strategy, there are two basic strategies, which are acceptance and non-acceptance of the compliment. Each strategy consists of other sub-categories.

Both male and female Jordanian students tend to use the agreement strategies on Facebook rather than the non-agreement or other interpretation. However; interesting differences can be noted among them. The most frequent agreement strategy used by female students was the appreciation token strategy, accounting for 52.5% of female responses. An appreciation token can be listed under both the agreement strategy and the sub-category acceptance. However, the most frequent agreement strategy used by male students was the return strategy, which belongs to the sub-category of non-acceptance. The use of the return strategy among male students accounts for 59.9% of their responses. Female students tend to accept compliments offered to them on Facebook more than male students do.

1). Agreement Strategies Used By Female Jordanian Students:

The most frequently used strategy was an appreciation token among Jordanian female students. They themselves tend to believe that it is highly important to appreciate and respect those who comment on their personal photos. Moreover, the researcher would like to think that female students seem to have a sense of politeness and courtesy, so they find themselves obliged to reply with a compliment. The table below shows the percentage of frequency of the sub-categories of the agreement strategy as a proportion of the female data set, which comprises 118 complement responses.

Response	Number	Percentage	Example
Appreciation Token	62	52.2%	Thank you تسلميلي (teslamili) حبيبتي (habibti)
Acceptance	-	-	-
Agreement	-	-	-
Comment History	-	-	-
Comment Acceptance	-	-	-
Non- Acceptance	-	-	-
Reassignment	-	-	-
Return	39	33%	نورك يا قلبي (norek ya qalbi) نورك حبيبتي (norek habibti)
Praise Upgrade	-	-	-

EXAMPLES:
The following adjacency pairs took place between two females who are friends on Facebook:
A.   منورة (mnawra)
B.   Thanks (nick name).
A.   منورة(name)
B.   حبيبتي الله يسعدك (Name) (habibti Allah Yes'edek)
A.   منورة
B.   حبيبتي (habibti)

The examples above are examples of the appreciation token strategy, whereas the following examples are about the return strategy.
A.   منورة (mnawra)
B.   نورك يقلبي (noorek yqalbi)
A.   منوره يا عسل (mnawreh ya asal)
B.   Nork had
A.   منورة

B.‎ نورك حبيبتي (noorek habibti)

2). Agreement Strategies Used by Male Jordanian Students:

The most frequent response strategy used by male Jordanian students on Facebook was the return strategy, which is a sub-category of non-acceptance. The table below indicates the percentage of frequency of compliment responses as a proportion of the male data set comprising 115 compliment responses.

Response	Number	Percentage	Example
Appreciation Token	29	25.2%	حبيب قلبي (habib qalbi) تسلم يا غالي (teslam ya ghali)
Acceptance	-	-	-
Agreement	-	-	-
Comment History	-	-	-
Comment Acceptance	-	-	-
Non- Acceptance	-	-	-
Reassignment	-	-	-
Return	62	59.9%	نورك يا وحش (noorak ya wahsh) النور نورك يا غالي بوجودك (elnoor noorak ya ghali bewjoodak)
Praise Upgrade	-	-	-

Each of the following adjacency pairs occurred between two males who are friends on Facebook. The first three examples show the return strategy, while the remaining three examples show the appreciation token strategy.

Group 1:

A.‎ منور (mnawer)

B.‎ بوجودك (bewjoodak)

A.‎ منووووووور (mnaweeeeeer)

B.‎ النوور نوركك يا غالي (elnooor noorkk ya ghali)

A.‎ منور يا حب (mnawer ya hob)

B.‎ نورك يا وحش (noork ya wahsh)

Group 2:

A.‎ منور يا باشا (mnawer ya basha)

B.‎ حبيبي(name) (habibi)

A.‎ منور يا وحش (mnawer ya wahsh)

B.‎ حبيب قلبي(nick name) (habib qalbi)

A.‎ منور (mnawer)

B.‎ تسلم يا غالي (teslam ya ghali)

In addition to the differences between male and female students in the frequent usage of agreement strategies, the examination of the data collected through Facebook found that female students tended to use longer responses compared to those used by male students. Another difference was that females' responses tended to show emotions and solidarity more than males' responses. Females show emotions and intimacy through their responses to compliments and the frequent use of emojis such as the hearts emojis.

The study also found that the agreement strategy on Facebook also involves non-verbal agreement responses. The data show that the non-verbal agreement responses can be either a reply with a compliment response or by reacting using emojis that indicate agreement. The non-verbal responses accounted for 10.4% of male responses and 10.1% of female responses. The following photos (Figure 1) provide examples of this type of the agreement strategy. The first two photos show how male students can agree with a compliment offered to them by reacting with like or love reactions. The other photos show how females use the non-verbal agreement strategy to respond to compliments offered to them on Facebook.
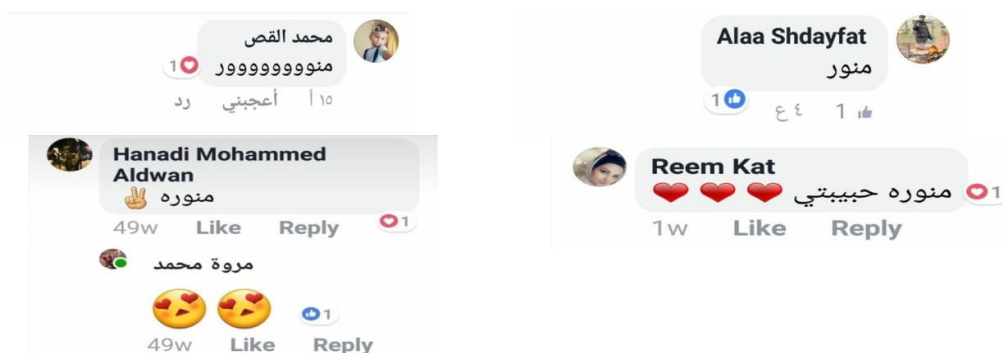

Figure 1. Non-Verbal Agreement Strategy to Respond to Compliments
(Source: Facebook).

Non-agreement Compliment Responses within the non-agreement strategy, there are other five sub-strategies. The data collected from Facebook personal posts found that this type (non-agreement strategy) was the second frequent strategy among both genders. The data also found that the sub-category which is no acknowledgement seems to be the only non-agreement strategy used to respond to compliments on Facebook. Additionally, the no-acknowledgement strategy refers to the situation in which the recipient either responds with an irrelevant comment or gives no response. The no acknowledgement strategy occurred more among male students.

The data in the present study found that the no-acknowledgement strategy was used among male and female students on Facebook by avoiding writing a like on the comment or by writing an irrelevant response.

The no-acknowledgement strategy constituted 10.4% of males' compliment responses and 4.2% of females' responses.

3）．The non-agreement strategy used by female students:

As mentioned above, the only non-agreement strategy that was used by both male and female students on Facebook was the no-acknowledgement strategy. Although it was the only strategy, it was very rare. It only comprised 4.2%, which means only 5 responses out of 118. The data collected indicated that female students used this strategy by avoiding reacting by using a like. Figure 2 provides an example of this strategy.

Figure 2. The Non-Agreement Strategy Used by Female Students
(Source: Facebook)

4）．Non-agreement strategy used by male students:

The case here is the same as what has been found in female data, where the no-acknowledgment strategy was the only non-agreement strategy. It accounted for 10.4% of the total responses. Unlike female data, the data revealed that male students used the non-acknowledgment strategy slightly more than those of female. In other words, Jordanian male university students avoided showing any sort of reaction or replying back to the compliment. The following adjacency pair provides an example of irrelevant compliment responses used by male students on Facebook.

A.   منور يا معلم (mnawer ya m'aalem)
منك نتعلم (mennak tent'allam)

B. Other Interpretation Strategy

This strategy has one sub-category, which is the request strategy. According to Herbert (1986), in the request strategy complimentees consider the compliment as a request instead of understanding it as a compliment. As this study is concerned with compliments related to persons' appearances rather than compliments on objects such as clothes, cars, etc., this type of strategy did not exist at all.

While the first objective is to investigate the patterns of compliment responses among both male and female students at the University of Jordan, the second objective is to explore how male and female Jordanian students respond to a compliment offered by the opposite sex on Facebook posts.

It was very difficult to find males who compliment females on their appearance through Facebook, and it was also very difficult to find females who did the same thing. The number of compliment comments and compliment responses by males to females or the other way around was very few. This can be attributed to different reasons. It was noted that there were any male students who were willing to collect compliments from females (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). They also indicated that this unwillingness may be attributed to the phenomenon of gender segregation in Jordanian society. In addition to this reason, there are other reasons that are related to both the social and cultural norms of the society as well as the Facebook itself. One of the reasons that may account for the rarity of male and female students paying compliments on each other's appearance on Facebook is that many females tend to reject adding male friends to their Facebook accounts. Another reason is that many males and females find it unacceptable to insert a compliment among other comments that are either by relatives or of the same sex. For example, if a male student posts his personal photo on Facebook, female students would prefer to avoid writing a compliment comment among other comments by his relatives and male colleagues. This is also related to the nature of Facebook itself, where everything a person writes can be seen by anyone who has access to the post. Therefore, many male and female students prefer to avoid writing any compliment comment to the opposite sex in order to avoid expected problems related to gender segregation.

Throughout data collection via Facebook, it was clear that male and female students are more willing to comment on each other's posts that are not personal. Male students, for example, tend to comment on female content posts that have content such as wisdom, a poem, an achievement, etc. In addition, both male and female students tended to just put a like on a personal photo posted by the opposite sex rather than putting a compliment comment. Moreover, it was

obvious that female students used agreement strategies more to respond to compliments offered by females than compliments offered by male students.

The examination of the data revealed that 60% of the compliments and compliment responses that took place between two individuals of different genders occurred between relatives. For example, a male student may be complimented by his aunt or mother and respond to her, just as a female student maybe complimented by her uncle or brother and respond to them. The first two examples took place between individuals of different genders, while the rest were also inter-gender, but they were relatives.

Group 1:

Male:منورة (mnawra)

Female: Thanks dear

Female: منور (mnawwer)

Male: Just like

Group 2:

A.   منورة يا عمو (mnawra ya amo)

B.   حبيبي عمو (habibi amo)

A.   منور عمتو (mnawwer amto)

B.   يسعدك عمتي (yes'edek amti)

The data showed that the most frequent response strategy that males used to respond to compliments offered by females was the appreciation token strategy, accounting for 46.4%, as in the following example:

Female: منور (mnawwer)

Male: يسعد قلبك (yes'ed qalbek)

Regarding female responses, the data clearly indicated that the most frequent strategies that females used to respond to males were both the appreciation token and return strategies.

Example:

Male: منورة (mnawrah)

Female: شكرا (shokran)

Male: منورة (mnawrah)

Female: نورك (noorak)

VII. Conclusion

In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the influence of the gender of Jordanian University students on their compliment responses to compliment comments on their appearance on Facebook. It also aimed to investigate how compliment responses were displayed among individuals of different genders in Jordanian society. Moreover, the researcher has related the distribution of compliment responses to Leech's (1983) maxim of agreement as well as the theory of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It was clear that the complimentees tended to accept the compliments offered to them in order to be polite and save the face of the complimenter.

Compliment responses were analyzed according to Herbert's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses. The most important finding in the present study was that the complimentees responded to compliments by using agreement strategies more frequently than the other strategies. Results showed that 92.7% of the entire data belonged to the agreement strategy. This result can be related to Leech's (1983) agreement maxim, in which recipients maximize agreement between themselves and others and minimize disagreement between themselves and others. The study also revealed that the norms and expectations in the Jordanian society play an important role in the high frequency of using agreement strategies by both male and female students when responding to compliments. That is because rejecting compliments in Jordan is considered shameful; therefore, examples of rejecting compliments were very rare in the data. In investigating the compliment responses in relation to gender, the study found that female students tended to use the appreciation token strategy more than male students. It was also found that male students used the return strategy more than other strategies when responding to compliments. Regarding the other interpretation strategy, it was clear that this type of compliment response had no existence in the data because this research is concerned with studying compliments on persons' appearances on Facebook rather than compliments on persons' objects. The second objective of this study was to investigate compliment responses that occurred between two genders. The study revealed that compliments and compliment responses that took place between individuals of different sexes were very difficult to find. This can be attributed to the fact that Jordanian society is a conservative society that frowns upon such behaviors. In such countries, people consider interaction between the genders is prohibited. The study shows that cross-sex compliments and compliment responses depend on the situation. For example, compliments that were offered to male and female students on Facebook were done by their relatives. The study also found that the limited number of compliments and compliment responses that occurred between people of different sexes was also attributable to the nature of Facebook. That is because many Jordanians tend to avoid adding people of the other gender to their Facebook profiles.

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Asma AbdulHafiz Al-Oudat is a full-time lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literature, Salt College for Human Sciences, AL- Balqa Applied University, Salt, Jordan. She received her MA in Applied Linguistics from Mutah University-Jordan in 2009, and BA in English Language and Literature from Mutah University in 2006. She is interested in topics related to Sociolinguistics, and Language acquisition. E-mail: asmaoudat@bau.edu.jo

Orcid ID https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5987-2529

Alaa M. Mahfouz is an English language teacher at the Ministry of Education. He received his PhD from University of Jordan in Linguistics in 2022, and M.A from University of Jordan in Linguistics in 2015, and BA in English Language and Literature from University of Jordan in 2008. His area of research is Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Pragmatics. E-mail: mahfouzala@gmail.com