

Formulas Against the Evil Eye in the University of Jordan

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Abstract—This paper reports on the findings of a contrastive study exploring the frequency of the use of formulas against the evil eye. It also explores the different categories of compliment responses. The subjects are 100 female and male native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English. The data are elicited through a DCT that consists of 10 situations. Analysis of the data showed that formulaic expressions were used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English to keep the evil eye away from the speakers. There were no significant differences between the female and male students in complimenting. The participants employed different types of compliment responses. The most frequent category was to accept compliments. A future study is recommended to examine the similarities and differences between the compliments used by teachers and students using online classes.

Index Terms—compliments, compliment responses, evil eye, formulas, strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

There are different languages in the world. Language is a tool that people use to coordinate with each other. It emerges when two people or more do things together. It is influenced by religion, culture and the traditions of societies. We use language to express different functions such as apologizing, giving orders and warnings. Austin (1962, p. 5) indicates that “the uttering of the sentence, or is part of, the doing of the action”. Actions that are performed using utterances are called speech acts. Different kinds of speech acts can show positive politeness. Politeness can be defined as an expression of the linguistic and non-linguistic care for the feelings of other people. It is used to show concern for the face of people. Politeness can be expressed by invitations, jokes, greetings and compliments.

Holmes (1995) claims that a compliment is a positive politeness device. It is a speech act that implicitly or explicitly gives credit to a person other than the speaker. It focuses on something relating directly to the addressee. The main function of compliments is affective. They are used to express solidarity. They also present a positive critical evaluation of a specific aspect of the recipient’s behavior, appearance or possession. They can provide praise, encouragement, and appreciation. These devices can express envy or the desire to have what the hearer’s possession, too.

Another aspect of linguistic politeness is compliment responses. It refers to how people respond to the compliments they receive. They are correlated with the compliments that they come after. Pomerantz (1978) identifies three categories for compliment responses. The first category is acceptances. People can show acceptance by using appreciation tokens or when they express agreement. When a recipient receives a compliment, he can accept or reject it. The action of accepting a compliment is called model behavior. Accepting a compliment is usually performed with appreciation. The second category is rejections. Rejecting a compliment is referred to as puzzling or troublesome behavior. It is regularly performed with disagreement. The last class is self-praise avoidance. The credit may be shifted from the speaker to the participant.

Language is related to culture. The expression of compliments varies from one culture to another. The belief in the evil eye ‘*alhasad*’ and its effect on our lives is universal. The word evil means harmful or tending to harm. Some people believe that it is invoked when someone shows admiration for a possession, physical features, or certain characteristics. Qamar (2013) states the evil eye could cause misfortune, serious diseases, or lead to death. Some Arabs tend to use religious references when they respond to compliments. Mughazy (2000, p. 156) states that “responding to a compliment is not a matter of saying thank you, but involves making choices based on one’s beliefs about the social structure and the world”. We often hear the expression *maafaallah*, ‘may Allah protect you’, in everyday interactions. It is considered a way to express feelings and beliefs.

This paper is a contrastive study to show the similarities and the differences between female and male Jordanian and American students in responding to compliments directed at the topics of possession, physical appearance, skill and attributes. It explores the use of compliments responses against the evil eye at the University of Jordan. The researcher also examines compliment responses to find out the strategies used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English. The researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do the native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and the native speakers of American English students at the University of Jordan use any compliment responses against the evil eye?
2. What are the compliment response strategies used by the Jordanian and American students at the University of Jordan?

3. What are the similarities and differences across genders in the expressions used by the Jordanians and the Americans at the University of Jordan?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Compliment and compliment responses have attracted the attention of many scholars in both the Arab and the Western world. Some studies examined the use of compliment and compliment responses by native speakers of Arabic in Arab countries (Mughazy, 2000; Al-Gamal, 2011; Al-rousan & Awal, 2016; Alqarni, 2017). Other studies included a contrastive analysis across cultures (Quran, 2012; Sakirgil & Cubukcu, 2013; Cuesta & Ainciburu, 2015; Cuesta & Yousefian, 2015; Shabani & Zeinali, 2015; Jamil, 2016; Alharbi, 2017; Zanella, 2017).

Mughazy (2000) examined the use of Egyptian Arabic speakers of different compliment-responding strategies. The participants were 40 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic aged between 25 and 36 years old (20 female and 20 male). They were professionals who had a university degree. Most of them were teachers of English in public schools. The data was collected through an oral DCT. The results showed that the subjects employed different compliment strategies in different contexts. Complaining was the most frequently used strategy. The second strategy used was to respond with another compliment. The subjects also used evasion and humor. Egyptians used secular formulas that prevent the evil eye. The most frequent was number five in Arabic. Those formulas were more frequently used by women.

Sawalmeh (2001) conducted a study to investigate whether the patterns of compliment responses were universal or culture-specific. He examined the speech acts that were produced by 150 native speakers of American English and native speakers of Saudi Arabic. The data were elicited through naturalistic observation, elicitation, and interviews. The results revealed that the American subjects accepted and rejected slightly more than the Saudi participants. The Saudis deflected more frequently than the Americans did. The complimenter's social status only significantly influenced the deflection response category of both groups. Concerning gender, the respondent's gender and the gender pairings of the respondent and complimenter significantly affected the acceptance response category of both groups. When the respondent and complimenter were from the same gender, the Saudi participants accepted more and rejected fewer compliments. However, the Americans did the opposite.

Golato (2005) examined the sequential organization of the speech acts of complimenting and compliment response. The methodology of conversational analysis was followed in that study. The data were collected from a corpus of 30 hours of face-to-face conversations and 6 hours of audiotaped telephone conversations. The participants were 62 family members and close friends. The ages ranged between 23 to 70 years old. They were from the middle and upper middle class and spoke standard German. Analysis of the data revealed that the Germanic compliments were considered formulaic. The participants used a restricted variety of syntactic forms as well as a limited number of positive adjectives. The positive meaning was not usually achieved by using a verb. Some appreciatory sounds were used. The Germans produced gustatory markers such as 'mmm' to assess food and drink. Sounds of appreciation were also used. For example, 'ooh' and 'aah'. These sounds expressed the surprise of the participants for a given item. The figures showed that 37% of the compliments were about food and drink. The other compliments were associated with appearance, ability, behavior, and possession. Women received more compliments than men.

Ghanim (2009) explored the different strategies that male and female students used while exchanging compliments in different social contexts and settings. The data were elicited through a questionnaire distributed to 180 students at Al-Isra Private University. Analysis of the data showed that males tended to employ hypocrisy when they complimented their superiors at work more than females. The female participants used elaborate and exaggerated forms of compliments on some occasions. The men added some humorous effect to their compliments more than the women. Compliments produced by females seemed to be accepted by men in different contexts, but women rejected the compliments of men in some situations such as clothes and appearance. Both genders were supportive in conversations with friends. Men mainly complimented women on their appearance. Women mostly responded to men on ability, then possession.

Al-Gamal (2011) described the different kinds of complement responses that were used by the participants. There were 45 native speakers of Yemeni Arabic students (30 male and 15 female). The data were collected via a Discourse Completion Test including four situations. The participants preferred to use three types of complement responses. They produced Appreciation Token, Return compliment, and Request Interpretation responses. The speakers did not use all the kinds of compliment responses suggested by Herbert (1989). For example, they did not use the Comment History strategy in their responses. Their responses were lengthy, but the male students used longer responses than the females. Yemeni males applied the Qualification type of compliment response whereas the females did not. Females and Males used complex responses when two responses were uttered for one compliment.

Quran (2012) examined the compliments used by Jordanian Arabic native speakers and native speakers of American English. The subjects were 143 (85 male and 58 female) Jordanians from universities in Jordan and 116 (36 males and 80 females) Americans from American universities. The data were elicited through a DCT which consisted of 12 situations. There were significant differences in the compliments used by the two groups. The Americans did not use compliments that included prayers and common social expressions. The female American and Jordanian participants employed longer compliments than males. They also used intensifiers, interjections, and adjectives that implied stronger emotions.

Sakirgil and Cubukcu (2013) described the compliments in English and Turkish according to their formulas and topics. The data was elicited from naturally occurring talk. The researchers examined 100 American English and Turkish dialogues using the Field Method which was provided by Clark and Bangerter in 2004. They found that Compliment Speech Events could be divided into six categories in English and Turkish. Three compliments were common in both languages. Those compliments were accepting formulas, rejecting formulas, and providing account formulas. In Turkish, most compliment topics were about possessions such as clothing, accessories, and houses or surnames. The subjects used less compliments on performance (skill) and attributes. In English, the highest number of compliments expressed performance. The next category used was related to possession.

Yusof and Hoon (2014) conducted a study to identify the functions and topics of compliments as well as the strategies of compliment responses used by 40 celebrities (20 females and 20 males) in Malaysia. The researchers extracted 220 compliments and responses from Twitter accounts. To analyze the compliments, they formed a corpus. The results showed that there were significant differences in the use of compliments and compliment responses across genders. Females preferred to be complimented on their appearance. However, men preferred possession. Most of the compliments were used to express admiration. The next function for using complement was to establish solidarity. The participants also replaced compliments with other speech acts such as greetings, thanks, and gratitude.

Cuesta and Ainciburu (2015) examined compliments and compliments responses in Arabic and Spanish. The data was collected through a muted video which was recorded in Beirut and it showed family dinner. The participants were asked to act on the dialogues between the characters. The most frequent response used by the native speakers of Spanish was to explain. The subjects also expressed happiness and thanks. In contrast, native speakers of Arabic used compliment responses that expressed good wishes. Other types of compliments were also common such as expressing happiness, invitations to start dining, and offering food. Most frequently, advanced Arab learners of Spanish preferred to use compliments that express good wishes.

Cuesta and Yousefian (2015) analyzed the use of expressions against the evil eye in Arabic and Persian. They also observed the use of courtesy formulas in compliment responses. The subjects were 10 female native speakers of Arabic (ages between 19 and 24) and 10 female native speakers of Persian (aged between 27 and 40 years old). They were requested to see two muted videos and then they created the dialogues between the characters in the videos using their languages. The Persian and Arabic texts were transliterated into a Word document by the researchers. The results showed that women used formulaic sentences and expressions against the evil eye in Arabic. They used the expression 'Maafaallah' in compliments about possessions and physical appearance. In Persian, the subjects used different expressions such as "Maafaallah, I touch the wood and My eyes are not salty" (Cuesta & Yousefian, 2015, p. 136). Compliments could be explained according to the social and cultural context.

Shabani and Zeinali (2015) investigated compliment response strategies which were considered a sub-category of politeness strategies. The subjects of the study were 26 English native speakers in Canada (13 females and 13 males) and 30 Iranian native speakers (15 females and 15 males) in Iran. They were college students with ages ranging from 17 to 30. The researchers collected the data through a DCT. The researchers found that there was a significant difference between Persian native speakers and Canadian English speakers in using the strategies of accepting, evading, and rejecting. The most frequently used strategy was accepting. There wasn't any significant difference concerning gender.

Khaneshan and Bonyadi (2016) explored the compliment response strategies of 100 advanced Iranian EFL learners of English (50 females and 50 males) in an institute in Iran. The data were collected through a DCT that included four situations. They were related to possession, appearance, clothing, and ability. The figures showed that all the advanced EFL learners accepted the compliment and it was followed by a return compliment in almost all situations. All the participants seemed to be similar in expressing modesty.

Al-rousan et al. (2016) examined compliment responses at Yarmouk University in Jordan. The subjects of the study were 36 students (18 male, 18 female) students. The ages ranged between 18 and 24 years old. The responses were collected through an ethnographic method. A note-taking technique was used to identify compliments from the students. Then the responses were transcribed in English orthography. The corpus of the study consisted of 611 naturally occurring exchanges. The results showed that agreement strategies were used more frequently. Another interpretation was the least frequent response used by the Jordanian students. The results revealed that female students tended to use the appreciation token strategy more than male students. The females preferred to employ comment acceptance and reassignment to respond to compliments. The male students agreed with compliments but not directly. The Arabic-Islamic culture played an essential role in the phrasing of compliments and compliment responses.

Jamil (2016) investigated how 17 Omani lecturers and students (9 male and 8 female) and 18 Australian lecturers and students in Australia (10 male and 8 female) would respond to compliments. The researcher interviewed the subjects. They had to imagine being in different situations, so they were offered compliments about possessions, appearance, character, skills, and culture. Some compliments were produced by the Omanis and Australian such as thanks, return of compliments, agreement, and disagreement. However, the strategies of remaining silent, invocation request, invocation, and advising were only uttered by the Omani students and lecturers. The researcher found that the students and the female lecturers would express their disapproval of compliments from the opposite gender by keeping silent. The gender of the speaker affected the responses of the Omanis more than the Australians. Some Omani lecturers and students requested the addressee to mention God's name because they believed in the evil eye.

Alharbi (2017) investigated how Saudi females responded to English compliments in educational settings in the KSA. The data included 126 compliment responses in imaginary situations. It was collected from 64 lecturers and 62 students. Six respondents from each group were also interviewed. The scenarios included different topics such as possession, appearance and language ability. The majority of lecturers showed acceptance of compliments on their writing ability whereas the students accepted them less frequently. The researcher stated that the lecturers were more reserved in accepting compliments on their ability to speak the language, but the students accepted them. Some students used Arabic expressions and religious phrases such as '*maafallah*' with compliments on language ability, appearance, and character.

Alqarni (2017) investigated the speech acts of compliments and compliment responses from a sociolinguistic perspective as realized by eighty Saudi students of English. The study aimed to identify the semantic and structural formulas. It also examined gender differences and the role of the topic of conversation in the realization of compliments. The results showed that the primary form of compliments used by the participants was unbound semantic formulas. The social relationship between the participants did not influence these compliments. Compliments consisted of adjectives rather than verbs. Gender did not affect the use of compliments and responses. The young Saudis might be influenced by English and Western culture when they produced compliments.

Shaari and Maros (2017) provided an overview of previous studies on compliments and compliment responses in Western and Asian contexts. They indicated that cultural globalization or the acquisition of common cultures changed the communication strategies and behavior of people. That happened because of the online social networking experience and media. The studies revealed that modern Malay speakers did not respond to compliments as prescribed by their traditional culture anymore. They had various attitudes and perceptions in expressing speech acts.

Zanella (2017) examined politeness strategies of compliment responses. The study aimed to investigate how Brazilian Portuguese speakers were different from American English speakers when they received compliments. It included 12 students with intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of EFL from a private school in Brazil. The data consisted of 133 responses. The results revealed that the Brazilian Portuguese speakers gave reasons for the compliments that they received. They employed different strategies. The strategies of thanking and returning the compliment followed the strategy of explaining. Rejecting compliments was the least-used strategy. The main difference between Brazilian Portuguese speakers and American English speakers was that the Americans showed higher rates of either thanking or rejecting compliments whereas the Brazilians showed higher rates of explanation. The contrast between the two groups could be associated with the Brazilian cultural boundaries.

III. CORPUS CONSTRUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

As stated above, the study examined the use of formulaic expressions against the evil eye by male and female native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English. In addition, it shed light on the different types of compliment responses. The subjects of the study were 100 students at the University of Jordan. The participants represented one level of education (after secondary education). The native speakers of Jordanian Arabic were 50 Jordanian students. They were 25 females and 25 males. Their ages ranged between 18 and 45 years old. The native speakers of Jordanian Arabic were selected randomly from different colleges. The students were from different colleges. They were students in the College of Art, Foreign Languages, Business, and Physical Education. The native speakers of American English were 50 Americans (25 female and 25 male). They were taking a course in Arabic for four months at the University of Jordan. Their ages ranged between 18 and 45 years old. The researcher asked the subjects to fill out a Discourse Completion Task (DCT).

The data were elicited through a DCT. Golato (2003) stated that discourse completion tasks were used in different fields because they were simple to use. They helped researchers to have a high degree of control over different variables, too. Two versions of the Discourse Completion Test were provided to the participants in this paper. One version was written in Arabic for the native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The other version was in English to be given to the native speakers of American English. The test was divided into two sections. The first part of the DCT included demographic information related to gender, nationality, job, college, and age. The participants were asked to complete the first section and then complete the second part of the test. The second section consisted of 10 situations. The students were asked to read the compliments produced by a friend or a teacher and to provide compliment responses to situations related to five topics. Table 1 represents the topics of the compliments in the test.

TABLE 1
TOPICS OF COMPLIMENTS

Item no.	Topic
1 & 6	Physical Features
2 & 7	General Appearance
3 & 8	Performance/Skill
4 & 9	Possession
5 & 10	Attribute

The topics of the compliments in the DCT were physical features (hair), general appearance, performance (experience, high marks), and attributes. The researcher specified the relationship between the speakers and the

respondent (friend or teacher) in each situation. The first five situations were informal as they were produced by a friend. The last five situations were uttered by a teacher. Table 2 shows the distribution of items according to the degree of formality and the relationship between the speaker and respondent.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF SITUATIONS

Item no.	Formality	Status between speaker and respondent
1	Informal	Friend
2	Informal	Friend
3	Informal	Friend
4	Informal	Friend
5	Informal	Friend
6	Formal	Teacher
7	Formal	Teacher
8	Formal	Teacher
9	Formal	Teacher
10	Formal	Teacher

The status between the speaker and the respondent was specified because it could affect compliments. They might speak much more politely in formal situations (with the teacher). To ensure validity, the DCT used in this paper was given to three judges at the University of Jordan to validate it. Then the researcher made the necessary modifications (See Appendix B).

The Discourse Completion Task consisted of 10 situations and the subjects had to provide the relevant compliment responses. The data were analyzed to show the similarities and differences between the expressions used by the two groups. The researcher followed the framework of compliment response categorization which was suggested by Pomerantz (1978) and Holmes (1986). Table 3 represents Holmes' classification of compliment responses. Pomerantz (1978) and Holmes (1986) classified compliment responses into three types accept, reject or evade.

TABLE 3
HOLME'S (1986) CLASSIFICATION

Broad categories	Sub-categories	Examples
Accept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation or agreement token Agreeing utterance Downgrading or qualifying utterance Return compliment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Thanks", "yes", or smile "I think it's lovely, too" "It's not too bad, is it?" "You're looking good, too"
Reject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disagreeing utterance Question accuracy Challenge complimenter's sincerity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I'm afraid I don't like it much" "Is beautiful the right word?" "You don't really mean that"
Deflect/ Evade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift credit Informative comment Ignore Legitimate evasion Request reassurance/ repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "My mother knitted it" "I bought it at that Vibrant Knits place" "It's time we were leaving, isn't it?" "You know, that shop in Cubacade" as a response to the compliment, "Hey they're nice. Where'd you get them from?" "Do you really think so?"

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed quantitatively. The results were represented and discussed in three sections. The first section presented the use of formulas against the evil eye by male and female native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The second section included a contrastive analysis of the use of formulaic expressions by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English. The categories (types) of compliment responses that were used by the Jordanians and the Americans were represented in section three.

A. Native Speakers of Jordanian Arabic

Holmes (1995) considered compliments as positive politeness devices that were used to express solidarity and goodwill between the speaker and the recipient. The native speakers of Jordanian Arabic provided a variety of compliment responses against the evil eye. Table 4 below shows the frequency of using formulas against the evil eye in Jordanian Arabic.

TABLE 4
FREQUENCY OF FORMULAS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE

Topic of situations	Jordanian Arabic							
	Female				Male			
	Informal		Formal		Informal		Formal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Physical Features	7	28	3	12	5	20	3	12
General Appearance	8	32	6	24	5	20	6	24
Performance/Skill	11	44	10	40	10	40	12	48
Possession	13	52	15	60	13	52	11	44
Attribute	3	12	5	20	8	32	9	36

The figures revealed that the female and male Jordanian students at the University of Jordan used compliment responses against the evil eye in formal and informal situations. In formal situations, the female participants used formulaic expressions more frequently about possessions, 60% of the compliment responses included formulas against the evil eye. This is similar to Mughazy (2000), Cuesta and Yousefian (2015) and Alharbi (2017). Compliments about performance also included formulas about the evil eye, 40%. The topic that included the least formulaic expressions was physical features. However, 48% of the men's responses which were directed at performance or skill consisted of formulaic expressions. Compliment responses about physical features did not include a lot of formulaic expressions, only 12%. There was a significant difference between men and women concerning possession. The female students provided a lot of formulaic expressions when they responded to compliments related to belongings. It seems that possessions are more important to women than to men. They like to talk about money and shopping. Both genders were not very interested in physical features such as hair. The status of the speaker (teacher) affected the compliment responses about physical features.

Regarding informal situations, both genders provided the highest percentage of formulaic expressions when they complimented on possession. It scored 52%. Women used the least number of expressions against the evil eye about attributes. It seems that women think that it is customary to get on well with others. Women like to interact with people. The speakers didn't perform an action that attracted the envy or the admiration of others. Men produced the least number of formulas while they were talking about physical features and general appearance. They scored 20%. The male participants may consider these topics parts of their daily routines. They have their hair cut frequently and they play sports. These activities are not unique to the speakers, so they don't use formulaic expressions.

The results showed that the students believed in the evil eye and its effect on people and life. Table 5 below represents some examples of formulaic expressions used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic to prevent the evil eye.

TABLE 5
EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES AGAINST THE EVIL EYE

Topic of situations	Native speakers of Jordanian Arabic	
	Informal situation	Formal situation
Physical Features	'Maafaallah' 'May Allah protect you'	'Maafaallah' 'May Allah protect you'
General Appearance	'Allah yuwafqak' 'May Allah help you to succeed' 'tabaarak Allah' 'May Allah bless you'	'Allah yahfazlak sihtak' 'May Allah keep your good health'
Performance/Skill	'Alhamdulillah' 'Thanks to Allah' 'Allah yuwafqak' 'May Allah help you to succeed'	'Allah yiziidak film wa nuur' 'May Allah increase your knowledge' 'sallaat an-nabbi saliik' 'Mention Prophet PUH'
Possession	'infaallah tjuuf fala wijihaa al-xiir' 'inshaAllah you will have good days' 'Allah yitammim fala xiir' 'May Allah fulfill what you want'	'infaallah tjuuf fala wijihaa al-xiir' 'inshaAllah you will have good days' 'Allah yuwafqak' 'May Allah help you to succeed'
Attribute	'Allah yiqawiik' 'May Allah give you strength'	'baarak Allah fiik' 'May Allah give you blessings'

An important aspect of speech acts in Jordanian Arabic was the significant use of religious-formulaic expressions. The students believed that a compliment response could attract the evil eye, so they used expressions that invoked God's protection. The expression *Maafaallah* 'May Allah protect you' was frequently used in compliments on physical features, general appearance, and performance. It was used with compliments related to possession and attribute, too. The status of the speaker did not affect the kind of formulaic expression. The students used the same expressions in both formal and informal situations. They used standard Arabic or jargon language (*baarak Allah fiik*) or Jordanian Arabic dialects (*Allah yiqawiik*).

It was noticed that some compliment responses included expressions that could attract the evil eye. According to the data, the topic of performance (getting high grades) received compliments responses such as ‘*qattaah*’ (clever) and ‘*wahj*’ (monster). These expressions can harm the speaker. It seems that some Jordanians were jealous and envied the speakers.

B. Native Speakers of American English and Jordanians

It is necessary to use formulaic expressions in Jordan. It is part of the culture. The native speakers of Jordanian Arabic employed religious expressions regardless of the status of the speaker. The highest percentage of the protective expressions was on possession. The native speakers of American English also used them. Table 6 shows the frequency of using responses against the evil eye by the American and Jordanian participants.

TABLE 6
FREQUENCY OF FORMULAS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE

Topic	Native speakers of Jordanian Arabic				Native speakers of American English			
	Situation				Situation			
	Informal		Formal		Informal		Formal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Physical Features	12	24	6	12	2	4	2	4
General Appearance	13	26	12	24	3	6	3	6
Performance/Skill	21	42	22	44	3	6	3	6
Possession	26	52	26	52	3	6	6	12
Attribute	11	22	14	28	2	4	2	4

The results showed that the native speakers of American English used expressions that invoked the protection of Allah to compliment on physical appearance, general appearance, possession, and performance (skill). The Americans used some formulaic expressions such as *Maafaallah*, May Allah protect you, and May God bless you. The highest percentage of formulaic expressions were given to possession. 12% of the compliment responses included religious expressions. Both Jordanians and Americans produced the highest percentage of compliments against the evil eye on possession. The lowest percentages went to physical appearance and attributes. Belongings were very important for Americans because they related to money and business. This result was contrary to Quran (2012) who indicated that the Americans did not use compliments that included prayers and common social expressions.

It seems that the Americans in Jordan believe in the evil eye and they are affected by the Jordanian culture or Islamic societies. It seems that the topics of physical appearance and attributes may not cause envy to the Americans. It is normal to look after their appearance.

The status of the speaker affected the use of compliment responses against the evil eye for Americans. There was a significant difference between compliment responses produced on possession in formal and informal situations, they scored 12% and 6% respectively. However, there weren't any significant differences in the compliment responses directed at other topics such as performance and general appearance.

C. Categories of Compliment Responses

The native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and the native speakers of American English produced a variety of compliment responses. Analysis of the data revealed that these speech acts can be divided into three main categories. Table 7 represents the types of responses in Jordanian Arabic.

TABLE 7
TYPES OF COMPLIMENTS USED BY JORDANIANS

Types of compliments		Native speakers of Jordanian Arabic							
		Female				Male			
		Informal		Formal		Informal		Formal	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accept	Appreciation or agreement token	11	9	16	13	10	8	9	7
	Agreeing utterance	93	74	93	74	98	78	97	78
	Downgrading or qualifying utterance	3	2	3	2	8	6	1	1
	Return compliment	7	6	2	2	2	2	3	2
Total		114	91	114	91	118	94	110	88
Reject	Disagreeing utterance	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2
	Question accuracy	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
	Challenge complimenter's sincerity	4	3	2	2	2	0	6	5
	Total	7	6	6	5	5	4	9	8
Deflect/Evade	Shift credit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Informative comment	1	1	2	2	0	0	3	2
	Ignore	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2
	Legitimate evasion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Request reassurance/ repetition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	4	3	5	4	2	2	6	4

The results showed that female and male native speakers of Jordanian Arabic responded to compliments in similar ways. The Jordanian subjects tended to accept compliments. The categories of reject and evade were not common. There weren't any significant differences between males and females. The most common response to a compliment was to accept it. In formal situations, 91% of the compliment responses that the female provided showed acceptance whereas the men produced 88%. Both genders accepted compliments by using agreeing utterances such as '*mumtaaz*' (excellent). They used appreciation expressions or agreement tokens such as '*aah*' (yes), '*fukran*' (thanks), or '*akiid*' (sure). The participants produced downgrading or qualifying utterances. For commenting on an attribute, they produced compliments like '*faadii*' (free), and '*ʔihtam bi-diraastak ʔahsan*' (Your main concern should be your studies). For someone who bought a car, a student complimented with the expression '*bakkiir*' (you are behind). About general appearance, someone replied with a strange expression, '*ʔirt haikal*' (you are skinny now).

According to the figures, the next category used by the Jordanians was rejection. The Jordanians produced a few rejection responses. There weren't any significant differences between men and women. There weren't any significant differences between formal and informal situations. In formal situations, 8% of the compliment responses of the men included rejections, whereas 5% by the women. In informal situations, the women produced 6% of compliments in which they expressed rejection. They produced utterances such as '*laa qabil aħlaa*' (before it was nicer) and '*mif maʔqool*' (impossible). Disagreeing responses were uncommon. A few students avoided showing acceptance or rejection. They produced responses such as '*wa ʔana maalii*' (It is not my concern) and '*laa ʔarud*' (I do not respond).

The social status did not affect the kind of strategy used by the participants. This finding is in line with Alqarni (2017). It seems that most of the students get on well with the teachers as they provide acceptance responses. It is noticed that the Jordanian participants are influenced by other cultures which is in line with Alqarni (2017), Shaari and Marcos (2017). They included some borrowed words from other cultures such as nice, wow and oh. The females used expressions to show exaggeration like '*bijannin*' (very nice), and '*raaʔiʔ*' (wonderful). This result is similar to Ghanim (2009). He has stated that the female participants used elaborate and exaggerated forms of compliments on some occasions. The types of compliment responses might be universal. Table 8 shows the types of compliments in American English.

TABLE 8
TYPES OF COMPLIMENTS USED BY AMERICANS

Type of compliment		Native speakers of American English							
		Female				Male			
		Informal		Formal		Informal		Formal	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accept	Appreciation or agreement token	11	9	16	13	12	10	20	16
	Agreeing utterance	93	74	93	74	90	72	78	62
	Downgrading or qualifying utterance	3	2	3	2	10	8	0	0
	Return compliment	7	6	2	2	7	6	5	4
	Total	114	91	114	91	119	95	103	82
Reject	Disagreeing utterance	3	2	3	2	1	1	4	3
	Question accuracy	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Challenge complimenter's sincerity	4	3	2	2	3	2	4	3
	Total	7	6	6	5	5	4	9	7
Deflect/Evade	Shift credit	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
	Informative comment	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	1
	Ignore	3	2	3	2	1	1	9	7
	Legitimate evasion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Request reassurance/ repetition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	4	3	5	4	1	1	13	10

Analysis of the data showed that the most common strategy of compliment responses in American English was to accept. This result is similar to Al-rousan and Awal (2016) and Alharbi (2017). There were not any significant differences according to gender. In formal situations, 78% of the Americans showed acceptance for what the speakers complimented such as 'Good job' and 'That's amazing'. Downloading compliments were also employed. A compliment response on general appearance was 'Be careful! You don't want to lose too much weight'. Another response to the fact of buying a car was the compliment 'Why would you buy a Ford'. The next common category used by Americans was deflect or evade. It seems that the participants would not reply if they did not accept the compliments. This could be a way to show politeness. They preferred to show acceptance but not rejection. The Americans disagreed with compliments, 12%.

In informal situations, the most frequent category used by the female native speakers of American English was acceptance, 91%, and the men scored 95%. The least common strategy was to reject. For example, an American complimented on physical features 'No, it's awful' and 'Buy a Japanese car instead'. There wasn't a significant difference between female and male Americans. Compliment responses are politeness devices.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

It is believed that compliment responses should be accompanied by a deferential reference to Allah to prevent the envy of others or harm. The study revealed some similarities and differences between the native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English in using formulas. In formal and informal situations, formulaic expressions were frequently used by male and female native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. Native speakers of American English also produced some religious expressions. Both Americans and Jordanians produced more religious expressions when they talked about possessions. They were affected by the Islamic culture. Gender and the status of the speaker did not affect the use of formulaic expressions in compliments for Jordanians and Americans. The most common religious expression was 'Maafaallah' (May Allah protect you). The status of the speaker did not affect the category of compliment responses produced by the participants. The most frequent compliment type was acceptance. A future study should examine the use of compliment responses in online classes including students and teachers of different ages.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 9
LIST OF PHONETIC SYMBOLS

Symbol	Place and Manner of Articulation
ʔ	glottal stop
ʕ	voiced pharyngeal fricative
q	voiceless uvular stop
g	voiced velar stop
ɗ	emphatic voiced alveolar stop
ð	voiced interdental fricative,
ḏ	emphatic voiced alveolar fricative
θ	voiceless interdental fricative
f	voiceless alveolar fricative
h	voiceless glottal fricative
ħ	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
x	voiceless uvular fricative
χ	voiced uvular fricative
a	short central low vowel
i	short front high vowel
u	short back high vowel
aa	long central low vowel
ii	long front high vowel
uu	long back high vowel

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire about the Use of Compliments against the Evil Eye in Arabic and English

Dear Students,

The following questionnaire aims to investigate the use of compliments against the evil eye. Please fill in your personal information and then read the following situations and write the appropriate responses. Please try to be accurate and objective as much as you can when you answer the questions. Your answers will be considered confidential and used only for scientific research.

Personal Information:

Gender: Male Female

Nationality: _____

Career: _____

College: _____

Age: _____

Situation 1:

Your friend has his/her hair cut. The next day, your friend said: "I had my hair cut. Is it nice?"

What would you say? _____

Situation 2:

Your friend joined a gym and after one month he/she said: "I joined a gym and I lost twenty kilos."

What would you say? _____

Situation 3:

Your friend prepared for exams and studied hard. At the end of the term, your friend said: “I have finished all the exams and I got high marks.”

What would you say? _____

Situation 4:

Your friend has worked in a company for nine years. Your Friend bought a car two days ago and he/she said: “ I bought a car from Ford and I am going to bring it tomorrow. ”

What would you say? _____

Situation 5:

Your friend participated in all students activities and social occasions for students. Your friend said: “ I love people. I like to socialize with everyone.”

What would you say? _____

Situation 6:

Your teacher has his/her hair cut. The next day the teacher said: “I had my hair cut. Is it nice?”

What would you say? _____

Situation 7:

Your teacher does exercises every day. The teacher said: “I keep fit because I do exercises every day.”

What would you say? _____

Situation 8:

You registered a course at university. The first day the teacher said: “ I have twenty years of experience in teaching.”

What would you say? _____

Situation 9:

Your teacher bought a flat. The teacher said: “I bought a big apartment in Amman.”

What would you say? _____

Situation 10:

You registered a course at university. The first day the teacher said: “ I understand the students’ problems and I am trying to solve them. My concern is the student.”

What would you say? _____

Thank you

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