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Gender and Pro forma Compliments in Bechari Arabic

**Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master's
Degree in Linguistics and Didactics**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Mohammed Ali.

(Your aunt loves you <3).

Acknowledgments

‘Praise is to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad and his Family and Companions.’

I owe an immense intellectual debt to my supervisor, Mr. Mohammed Omari, for very insightful and eye-opening criticism, suggestions, and comments, which have made this a better dissertation than it otherwise would have been. I am also indebted to Hachemi, El Hajj Belkheir, and Mohammed Abdessalam Benyaiche for their penetrating suggestions and continuing support for this dissertation.

I record with gratitude, love and respect very warm thanks to my beloved mother and father for making me the woman that I am today. Thanks are also extended to my sister, my sister-in-law, and all my female friends whose characters and enthusiasm fuelled my interest in women, gender, and compliments.

Thank you.

Abstract

This dissertation presents an analysis of gender differences in the use of compliments in the spoken interactions of Bechari Arabic speakers in Algeria. We selected three types of pro forma compliments for the discussion: compliments that are used as reproductions of other compliments in the conversation (recycled compliments), compliments that co-occur with face threatening acts (Compliment/FTA pairs), and compliments that are used to confront addressees' self-deprecation (anti-deprecativ compliments). The database is a set of 100 episodes documented in field notes. Drawing on work from several theoretical perspectives, we analysed the forms, strategies, and functions of compliments in these episodes. We found that gender mostly affects the lexical choice when complimenting, since women were found to be the only ones described as "zellat (deadly attractive)". Gender is also evident in creating and sustaining a unique sense of cooperation and engagement in spoken discourse, as women were found to be more oriented towards establishing common grounds with the other conversationalists through recycling their compliments than were men, and men most often opted for confronting self-deprecation through acts of negation-complimenting more than did women. Men seemed to prefer the use of complimenting formulas where powerful negations were made so as to maintain their social power while attending to the addressee's demands. Gender, however, is not found to be the only factor (or variable) that motivates and thus explains the elicitation of pro forma compliments; the particular social and personal requirements associated with the talk contribute as well. The study illustrates that a gendered strategic complimentary style cannot be specified by analysing linguistic formulas in isolation from the cultural and situational contexts in which they occur.

Key words: gender, pro forma compliments, formula, Bechari Arabic

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Transliteration Conventions

| Arabic Alphabet | | Symbols | Arabic Alphabet | Symbols |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ء | | ʔ | ض | dh |
| ب | | b | ط | t |
| ت | | t | ظ | th |
| ث | | t ^h /th | ع | 3/ʕ |
| ج | | j | غ | g ^h /gh |
| ح | | ḥ/h | ف | f |
| خ | | kh | ق | q |
| د | | d | ك | k |
| ذ | | th | ل | l |
| ر | | r | م | m |
| ز | | z | ن | n |
| س | | s | ه | h |
| ش | | s ^h /sh | و | w |
| ص | | s | ي | y |
| Vowels | | | Symbols | |
| Short | اَ\آ | | a | |
| | اُ\أ | | u | |
| | يَ\إِ | | i | |
| Long | آ | | aa | |
| | أو | | uu | |
| | اي | | ii | |

List of Abbreviations

| | | | |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| ADJ | Adjective | M → F | From male to female |
| BA | Bechari Arabic | MA | Moroccan Arabic |
| CAA | Colloquial Algerian Arabic | n | Number of occurrences |
| CP | Cooperative principle | NP | Noun phrase |
| CRs | Compliment responses | P | (social) Power |
| M | Male | PP | Propositional Phrase |
| Cs | Compliments | PS | Psychological state |
| D | Social distance | R | Rank |
| DCT | Discourse completion task/test | S | Speaker |
| F | Female | SAT | Speech act theory |
| FTA | Face threatening act | VP | Verbal phrase |
| H | Hearer | X | The propositional content |

General Introduction

Language serves a twofold function: it is both the means by which we construct the world and the tool by which we must interact with the world. It is through language that humans develop understandings of how they and those who surround them think and act. Developing such understandings allows them to differentiate between masculine and feminine, old and young, powerful and powerless, appropriate and inappropriate, etc. Making such differentiations compels them to select careful diction to appropriately greet and praise, promise and apologise, request and compliment – perform speech acts (cf. Chapter I). Subsequently, complimentary language is an important tool for social interaction as well as a means of controlling one's own and other's emotions and behaviours.

According to numerous studies (e.g., Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1988) that examined the nature of compliments as occurring in numerous linguacultures, including the different varieties of colloquial Algerian Arabic (e.g., Al-Amro, 2013; Mustapha, 2003; Rees-Miller, 2011), gender highly influences the use of compliments. Although so many scholars have achieved thorough understandings of how complimentary language is used, major issues remain understudied, especially in the Arabic linguacultures. Questions like “Why do compliments often occur with other speech acts like criticisms and requests?”, “How does men’s associated power in society affect their use of compliments?”, and “What are the different contextual factors that contribute to the elicitation of compliments?” need some further scientific investigation. To this end, this study seeks to contribute to this area by analysing naturally occurring data drawn from one-on-one daily interactions.

1. Statement of the Problem

Gender-based pro forma complimenting is a growing sociolinguistic phenomenon in the Bechari community. Bechari speakers, abiding by their genders, use specific complimenting formulas to accomplish various interpersonal and ideational functions.

The current study starts from the assumptions that: (1) compliments are not only used for the sake of making the addressee feel good about him/herself, but also for attaining personal goals and/ or attending to cultural expectations, and (2) the complimentary language reflects, sustains, and recreates power differences between men and women.

2. Limitations of the Study

Complimenting seems to be of two types in face-to-face interactions: genuine compliments (those that speakers use when they utterly want to acclaim or support the addressee for something sincerely felt to be admirable) and pro forma compliments (those that are used for the sake of form and politeness issues only, to avoid being only negative or culturally odd) (Johnson & Roen, 1992).

Our discussion is limited to three types of pro forma compliments: recycled compliments (those that occur at second-hand and are borrowed from another complimenter), compliment/FTA pairs (those that are paired either explicitly or implicitly with an FTA), and anti-deprecatative compliments (those that are used as a response to self-deprecation that co-conversationalists produce).

The data of the study are collected from the southern part of Algeria, namely, Bechar, from participants who have different ages, genders and levels of education, but the same social class, namely, the middle class.

3. Purpose of the Study

The major aim of this study is to examine the link between gender and the elicitation of specific pro forma complimenting formulas. The study further aims at investigating the most important linguistic features of politeness in the Arab Islamic culture, represented by the Bechari community in Algeria.

4. Research Questions

The following four questions are to be answered:

- . What are the major linguistic formulas of recycled compliments, compliment/FTA pairs, and anti-deprecatative compliments?
- . How are the different formulas of pro forma compliments distributed across gender groups in the Bechari society?
- . What are the syntactic markers that signal the occurrence of pro forma compliments?
- . What are the most common lexical choices in complimenting in Bechari Arabic?

5. Research Hypotheses

The following three hypotheses are to be tested:

- . Both gender of speaker and gender of addressee, and the specific requirements associated with the talk situation are important factors in eliciting specific pro forma compliment formulas.
- . Men are more power-oriented in communicative interactions in which compliment/FTA pairs occur.
- . Women are more attentive to female addressee's emotional and psychological demands.

6. Significance of the study

This study makes a small contribution to the growing body of research on language and gender. This study extends work on complimenting to new contexts by describing the forms, strategies, and functions of pro forma complimenting in (Bechari Arabic) spoken discourse, within a specific social context and activity.

7. Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation includes two chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Language and Interaction”; for it reviews the literature that embraces the view that complimentary language is an important tool for social interaction as well as a means of controlling one's own and others' emotions and behaviours. It briefly synthesises Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) models of speech act theory, Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, Lakoff's (1973) and Leech's (1983) politeness maxims, Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of face, and gendered language paradigms. It further includes some aspects of language use in Algeria and Bechar. Most importantly, it provides an overview with a focus on the most prominent fields in research that have an immediate influence on the present study and that abide by all the aforementioned theoretical frames.

The second chapter describes in detail how the study was conducted and provides an analysis of the obtained data in finer details so as to achieve a firm understanding of how compliments are used in the speech of Bechari female and male speakers.

I. Chapter I: Language and Interaction

Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the breadth and development of previous research regarding the issue under study. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides a brief review of Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) models of Speech Act theory. The second section reviews the most prevalent notions and theories regarding linguistic politeness. In the third section, research and theoretical shifts that problematize the early work in language and gender are discussed. The fourth section addresses how language is used in Bechar. The fifth and last section comprehensively summarises recent studies that investigated the functions and features of compliments both in the English and Arabic linguacultures. Throughout this chapter, we maintain our focus on how language functions in society.

I.1 Language as Action

Language in society is principally used as a tool to *do* things: exchange a greeting, report a piece of news, express gratitude, ask a friend to come and visit, pay a compliment, flirt with someone, request a favour, seek and supply information, give instructions, and perform hundreds of other ordinary verbal actions. Some of the things performed through language can produce serious outcomes: declare a war, accuse a person of murder, ask for someone's hand, dismiss an employee from a job, condemn someone to death, insult or criticise a person, etc.

Actions that are verbal are called *speech acts*. Speech acts occur in *speech events* such as news broadcasts, conversations, lectures, ceremonies, and courtroom trials, in addition to deaths, robberies, automobile accidents, and other similar contexts. Speech acts have been given so much attention (within what is known as the speech act theory) from a wide range of philosophers of language and linguists.

I.1.1 Austin's (1962) Model

The speech act theory (SAT) was originated by the British philosopher John L. Austin in his 1962 posthumously published book: *How to Do Things with Words*. Austin (1962), initially, questioned the “descriptive fallacy”, which denotes that all statements can only be weighed in terms of their truth conditions, i.e. sentences that do not adhere to the truth-or-falsehood yardstick are regarded meaningless.

I.1.1.1 Performatives

Repudiating such a very restricted fallacy, Austin (1962) set forth the performative-constative dichotomy. For him, most utterances withstand falsifiability on the grounds that most utterances do not have a constative function. He called such utterances performatives on the assumption that “the issuing of an utterance is the performing of an action” (1962: 6). He listed the following as paradigm cases of ‘acting’ utterances:

- a. *I do* (as uttered at a wedding ceremony).
- b. *I name this ship the Queen Victoria* (while smashing the bottle against the stem).
- c. *I give and bequeath my watch to my brother* (in a will).
- d. *I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow*.

These utterances do not constate but ‘perform’ the actions of ‘marrying’, ‘naming’, ‘bequeathing’ and ‘betting’ respectively.

I.1.1.2 Felicity Conditions

According to Austin (1962), performatives cannot be weighed in terms of their truth conditions; but rather their felicity ones. He, in fact, distinguished three felicity conditions (1962: 14-15):

- a. (1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, and (2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate.
- b. The procedure must be executed (1) correctly and (2) completely.
- c. Often, (1) the persons must have the prerequisite thoughts, feelings and intentions as specified in the procedure, and (2) if consequent conduct is specified, the participants must follow the conduct.

The violation of (one of) these conditions generates a sort of infelicity.

I.1.1.3 Levels of Speech Acts

Austin (1962) soon realised that every utterance performs some sort of act. It might, for example, describe a situation (e.g. Mohammed had a baby.), ask a question (e.g. Is Nancy dating a chef?), make a request (e.g. Please pass the salt!), etc. Austin (1962), therefore, abandoned the original distinction between ‘constatives’ (statements) and ‘performatives’. He instead proposed a three-level categorization of synchronous acts one can do when uttering something: the locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

Utterances’ grammatical structures and linguistic meanings are called locutions. Hence, the *locutionary act* is the literal meaning of the utterance as portrayed by the particular lexico-grammatical elements. To illustrate, Austin stated that the locutionary meaning of “shoot her” is to be drawn from what is actually said by the speaker, i.e. “shoot” and “her” (1962: 101).

Speakers have some force (intention) in making an utterance, and what they intend to accomplish is called an illocution. Hence, the *illocutionary act* is the force the utterance has. Illocutions like threats, promises, compliments, etc. are all functions

performed by utterances. To exemplify, Austin specified that the illocutionary force of “shoot her” might be an advice, urge, order... etc. (1962: 101-102).

That which is produced or occurs as an outcome of an utterance is called a perlocution. Hence, the *perlocutionary act* is the impact (uptake) that the speaker’s utterance may have on the interlocutor. Considering the utterance “shoot her”, one may take the effect of being ‘persuaded’ to shoot her (Austin, 1962: 102).

I.1.1.4 Classification of Illocutionary Acts

Austin further classified illocutionary acts into five categories taking into consideration English verbs (1962: 150-162). These categories are as follows:

- a. *Verdictives*: They are typified by giving a verdict by a jury.
- b. *Exercitives*: They are typified by exercising powers, rights or influences.
- c. *Commissives*: They are typified by assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention.
- d. *Behabitives*: They are typified by adopting an attitude.
- e. *Expositives*: They are typified by providing reasons or arguments.

I.1.2 Searle’s (1969) Model

In line with his teacher Austin, Searle (1969) opted to contribute to the notion that the smallest unit of human communication is not the sentence as a syntactic unit, but rather the performance of speech acts.

I.1.2.1 Levels of Speech Acts

Searle (1969) offered a slightly different model of speech act levels from that of Austin. For him, when producing a sentence, speakers perform an utterance act, a propositional act and an illocutionary act.

Searle (1969: 12) elucidated that the utterance act is a primary level at which there is a verbal production of linguistic items. The prepositional act, however, implicates referring and predicating.

I.1.2.2 Felicity Conditions

Searle (1969) built a modified typology of felicity conditions. His typology includes (1) propositional content condition, (2) preparatory condition, (3) sincerity condition, and (4) essential condition.

In Searle's (1969) analysis, the speech act of request, for instance, is an illocution by which the speaker encourages his hearer to make a certain action (essential condition), represents that action to be fulfilled in the future, regarding the time of speaking (content condition), really wishes that the hearer makes the action (sincerity condition), and believes that the hearer is able to do it (preparatory condition) (cited in Tsohatzidis, 2010: 343).

I.1.2.3 Taxonomy of Speech Acts

Searle (1979) held that the touchstones for differentiating one illocutionary act from the other are the illocutionary point (purpose of the act), direction of fit (the match between our words and the world), and the expressed psychological state (the sincerity condition of the act). These criteria, following Searle in Levinson (1983: 240), generate five classes of illocutionary acts: *representatives* (assertives), which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, *directives*, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something, *commissives*, which commit the speaker to some future course of action, *expressives*, which express a psychological state like joy, pleasure, pain, etc. towards an experience, and *declarations*, which effect immediate changes in the institutional (extralinguistic) state of affairs.

Table I-1 Functions of Speech Acts (after Searle (1979))

| Type of Act | Direction of Fit | PS* | Paradigm Cases |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Representatives | words fit the world | S* causes X* | stating, concluding |
| Directives | the world fits words | S wants X | begging, ordering |
| Commissives | the world fits words | S intends to do X | promising, offering |
| Expressives | words fit the world | S feels X | apologizing, thanking |
| Declarations | words alter the world | S believes X | declaring war, firing |

*S = Speaker, *X = Propositional Content, *PS: Psychological State

I.1.2.4 In/Direct Speech Acts

According to Searle (1979), the three basic sentence types: declarative (e.g., “You wear a seatbelt”), interrogative (e.g., “Do you wear a seatbelt?”) and imperative (e.g., “Wear a seatbelt!”) correspond to the three primary communicative functions: statement, question and command/request. When there is reciprocal correspondence between the structure and the function, we have a *direct speech act* and when there is no such correspondence, as is often the case, we have an *indirect speech act*. *It’s cold inside* is a direct speech act if intended as a statement and indirect if intended as a request (Yule, 1996: 55).

The main reason behind the use of indirect speech acts is politeness. Yule (1996: 135) argued that actions such as requests, presented in an indirect way (like in “Could you open that door for me?”), are generally considered to be gentler or more polite in society than direct speech acts (like “Open that door for me!”).

I.2 Language and Politeness

In a common perception, politeness is concerned with human behaviour that reveals good attention towards other people such as ‘opening the door for a lady’, or ‘offering a seat to a pregnant woman’. In a linguistic perception, however, politeness signifies the speaker’s verbal manifestations of his/her good intention and attention to

the addressee when conversing. Linguistic politeness is directly relevant to people's communicative behaviours in social interaction (Seken, 2018). It has therefore been considered a major theme of concern in pragmatics. Recent theories on linguistic politeness are affiliated to three major areas: cooperation-based politeness, transaction-based politeness and facework-based politeness.

I.2.1 Cooperation-Based Politeness

Grice (1975: 45) proposed the Cooperative Principle (CP) assuming that human communication is governed by the mutual logic to collaborate. Grice suggested that humans shall adhere to four maxims in order to communicate effectively and efficiently. The first maxim is *quality*: people are supposed to say something they believe to be authentic and they are not supposed to tell a lie or say anything that does not have enough evidence. The second is *quantity*: people shall not give information more than it is required and they shall not give too little information than it is required as well. The third is *manner*: people shall make their utterances as clear, ordered and brief as possible; they shall not be ambiguous and obscure. The fourth is *relevance*: people shall give information, which relates to the issue under discussion.

Nevertheless, obeying the four maxims does not necessarily mean being polite. People from time to time violate one of the maxims in order to express politeness. A teacher asks his students, for instance, if they think he talks too much. The teacher is in fact talkative and spits too often, yet the students answer: “no, you talk perfectly in a normal way.” The response in this case is a lie and violates the maxim of quality, yet it is polite and failsafe.

Lakoff (1973: 297) stated that “it is more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve “clarity”” denoting that politeness manifests itself in non-clarity better than in clarity. She offered three maxims that help accommodate

linguistic politeness: ‘do not impose’, ‘give options’ and ‘make the receiver feel good’ (1973: 300-303).

The first is the maxim of distance: ‘*do not impose*’. If the speaker wants the hearer to do something for him/her, the speaker has to mitigate the utterance. An utterance like “I am sorry to bother you, but can you help me push my car?” is believed to be more polite than “Help me push my car!”

The second is the maxim of deference: ‘*give options*’. The speaker should offer options to his interlocutors to avoid making them feel controlled. Saying “We could possibly stop seeing each other so often if you do not mind.” is more polite than saying “Stop hanging out with me!”

The third is the maxim of camaraderie: ‘*make the receiver feel good*’. The speaker should express sympathy, appreciation and gratitude towards the addressee. Regardless how tasteless your wife’s meal is, it is always considered polite to say “How could I survive without you cooking for me?”

Lakoff’s (1973) theory has been criticised in two major points: first, it does not define politeness explicitly, and second, it might be evident in realising directive speech acts, but might not be evident in expressing a nondirective (expressive) act. When communicating, people do not only seek to get things from others. Sometimes, they just express their psychological states. Lakoff’s (1973) maxims are of no relevance to expressions like “I am sad” (Pratama, 2019).

I.2.2 Transaction-Based Politeness

Leech (1983) held that the degree of politeness can be measured on a cost-benefit scale. For him, the cost-benefit scale specifies how much the act referred to in the propositional context of the speech act is judged to cost or benefit the *speaker* or

hearer (1983: 86). Leech (1983) developed a model of politeness based on six maxims related to cost and benefit analysis.

Table I-2 Politeness Maxims Proposed by Leech (1983)

| Maxim | Definition | Example |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Tact Maxim | Minimize cost to others, maximize the benefit to others. | Hand me that piece of pizza over there!* |
| | | Have another pizza! |
| Generosity Maxim | Minimize benefit to self, maximize cost to self. | We must come and have dinner with you.* |
| | | You must come and have dinner with us. |
| Approbation Maxim | Minimize dispraise of others, maximize praise of others | Your presentation did not move the audience* |
| | | You nailed that presentation. |
| Modesty Maxim | Minimize praise of self, maximize dispraise of self | How smart I am.* |
| | | How foolish of me! |
| Agreement Maxim | Minimize disagreement between self and other | No, I think you are wrong.* |
| | | Yes, you are right. |
| Sympathy Maxim | Minimize antipathy between self and other | I am so glad you lost your grandmother.* |
| | | I am so very sorry for your loss. |

Leech's (1983) maxims are significant in maintaining social equilibrium between the speaker and hearer. Pratama (2019: 15), however, stated that real-life communication is not always as certain as "a perfect equilibrium". He argued that every human being has his "own needs" to be considered; i.e. it will always be difficult to remember the principle of prioritising others. Further, sometimes there is too much social distance or power that causes one participant to maximize costs to the other participant without considering politeness maxims (Pratama, 2019: 15).

I.2.3 Face-work Based Politeness

Face is “something that is emotionally invested; it can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). Brown and Levinson (1987) classified the face into two sorts of face: positive face (the self-concept of being valued, admired, and agreed with) and negative face (the self-perception of free will, which shall be attended and respected).

Brown and Levinson (1987) built their theory of politeness on the grounds that many speech acts are intrinsically threatening to face; i.e. many speech acts do not support the face wants of the speaker (S) and/or the hearer (H). Brown and Levinson (1987) specified face-threatening acts (FTAs) according to two basic variables: whose face is being threatened (the speaker’s or the hearer’s), and which type of face is being threatened (positive or negative face) (1987: 65-67).

FTAs that threaten a **hearer’s positive face** (self-image) include those acts which indicate that the speaker does not approve of, support, or even care about the hearer’s positive face (e.g., objections, attacks, allegations, verbal harassments, interruptions, etc.). FTAs that threaten a hearer’s negative face include instances in which the hearer is pressured to accept or reject a future act of the speaker (e.g., offers, bequests, dares, etc.), or when the addressee has reason to believe that his/her goods are being desired by the speaker (e.g., compliments, honeyed expressions, etc.). Examples of FTAs to the **speaker’s self-image** include asking someone’s hand, self-deprecation, and admissions. Some of the FTAs that are threatening to the speaker’s negative face (personal freedom) include acknowledging, expressing gratitude, accepting a thank-you, or offering and making promises.

To lighten the FTA, Brown and Levinson (1987: 100) suggested five *super-strategies*: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record, and

cancel FTA. The use of these strategies depends on three social factors: relative power (P) (that the speaker possesses over the addressee), social distance (D) (that connects the co-conversationalists to feel closer or more familiar to one another), and ranking of imposition of an act (R) (that the speaker requests to the interlocutor).

In a *bald on record* strategy, The FTA is directly, clearly and precisely performed. Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced three cases in which *bald on record* strategies are expected to be applied: when power, distance, and rank are guaranteed, when an emergency happens, and when conventional politeness involves direct or imperative utterances (e.g., welcoming such as ‘Come in!’, farewells such as ‘See you later!’, and offers such as ‘Do not bother! I will clean it up.’).

Positive politeness strategies are used as a sort of figurative deepening of togetherness in order to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. Positive politeness techniques are usable not only for FTA mitigation, but in general as a kind of social accelerator where S manifests that he wants to come closer to H (Brown and Levinson, 1987:103).

Table I-3 Positive Politeness Strategies (Following Brown and Levinson (1987))

| Positive Politeness Strategies | Linguistic Realizations | Examples |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Noticing/ attending the addressee | Informal salutations Informal thanking | Hello everyone! <u>Thanks</u> for the input! |
| In-group identity markers | Markers as address forms | Dear <u>fellow</u> linguists, |
| Seeking agreement | Common opinions, views | Am I right? |
| Avoiding disagreement | Hedges | Seem to, tend to, ... |
| Exaggeration | Overstatement | We'd be <u>delighted</u> to... |
| Jokes, Acronyms | Emoticons, graphic signs | BTW (by the way) |
| Focusing on cooperation | Use of optimistic expressions | Thanks in advance |

Negative politeness is oriented mainly towards partially satisfying H's negative face; i.e. creating an atmosphere that is characterised by free will. It consists of ten

strategies: be indirect conventionally, question and hedge, be pessimistic, minimize the stake, give deference, apologise, impersonalise speaker and hearer, compare the FTA with a general rule, nominalise, and mention that the speaker is indebted and not burdened (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Off record is an act to obscure an utterance as a strategy to reduce the degree of commitment between a speaker and his utterance. There are fifteen strategies in off record acts: providing hints, providing clues based on association, presupposing, understating, overstating, using tautologies, using contradictions, being ironic, using metaphors, using rhetorical questions, being ambiguous, being vague, overgeneralising, displacing hearer, and being incomplete and/or using an ellipsis (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 110).

The fifth super-strategy, '*cancel FTA*,' is used when a speaker realises that no strategy can redress the threatening feature of the act; when the speaker figures that the utterance is too costly for his social undertaking and self-image (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 112).

Indeed, the list created by Brown and Levinson (1987) is all-inclusive. It is of no surprise that Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory is considered as the most comprehensive politeness theory (Leech, 2014). Their work also asserts a global difference between men's and women's use of politeness. The question, then, arises: how does gender influence language use?

I.3 Language and Gender

Language is in us as much as we are in language. By connecting people to their genders, language becomes their genders. Not in the simplistic sense that all we have of our genders is language but in the sense that our representations of gender are inscribed in linguistic markers, functions and accounts as much as they are marked in

clothing, hairstyles, and body movements. Numerous empirical studies (e.g., Brown, 1980; Coates & Pichler, 2011) have evidenced the existence of gender inequalities in language use.

Early works in the field of language and gender are affiliated to two main approaches: “dominance” and “difference” paradigms.

I.3.1 The Dominance Paradigm

In the “dominance” framework, scholars hold that, due to the social force of being ‘appropriately’ “feminine”, women tend to speak a “powerless language”, which is described as hesitant, weak, and excessively polite, relying on hedges, tag questions, emphatic stress, and hypercorrect grammar. Accordingly, women are often presented in this paradigm as inferior language users or a silenced group (e.g., Bradley, 1988; Lakoff, 1975).

Early researchers in the “dominance” paradigm examined conversational strategies in mixed-gender interactions. They highlighted how women and men do not have equal rights to the conversational floor. A variety of social events have revealed uneven conversational patterns, in which men tend to use diverse competitive strategies (e.g. no response, interruption, inadequate or delayed response, and silence) to control conversation (Leto DeFrancisco, 1991; Swann, 1989). Researchers suggest that men use these strategies to manifest and achieve socially authorised patriarchal relations of dominance and submission. In other words, the established social status of men causes them to adopt particular linguistic strategies to retain their power and supplement women’s relatively powerless social position (cf. Jackson, 2012). Likewise, the “dominance” paradigm examines the forms of speech women typically use and explains how these forms of speech represent and support their social powerlessness.

I.3.2 The Difference Paradigm

Apropos of the somewhat inferior or secondary status that the dominance approach placed on women, the “difference” approach emerged as an alternative explanation for the noticeable differences between men’s and women’s speech (Jackson, 2012). The difference paradigm explores gender-specific communicative norms by examining how gender is performed differentially in same-gender interactions (cf. Tannen 1990). This approach holds that males and females are socialised in different cultural groups, and therefore adopt different communicative styles and norms, and apply different communicative strategies. In essence, the difference paradigm marks interaction between women and men in terms of intercultural communication and justifies miscommunication in terms of different norms of language use and language interpretation that the two groups apply.

Major conclusions originating from research in this paradigm highlight how women’s speech is structured to support “cooperative” social roles and relationships, whereas, in contrast, men’s speech is seen as structured in ways that support a “competitive” orientation to social relations (Tannen, 1990). Much of this work explains the differences in men’s and women’s speech in terms of how boys and girls are socialised from earliest childhood to be “competitive” and “cooperative” respectively (Coates, 1998; Swann, 1992).

Both paradigms, which spanned the time period from the 1970s to the 1990s, have offered a rich range of studies examining women’s language use and later men’s language use in both mixed-gender (cross-cultural or intercultural) interactions as well as in same-gender (intracultural) interactions. A number of criticisms of these two paradigms have emerged over time; such criticisms have led to a complexification and deeper understanding of the relationship between language and gender, particularly

through the added lenses of identity, discourse, performance, and power (Jackson, 2012: 170).

I.4 Language in Bechar

To the best of our knowledge, no study to date has focused on speech acts realization and politeness issues in Bechar speech community. Nonetheless, it is essential to cover in brief some aspects of language use in the area under study, Bechar.

Geographic location is believed to have a considerable effect on the way people use language, for it is deep-rooted in the cultural evolution of their communities (Wardhaugh, 2006).

I.4.1 Historical and Sociocultural Frames

The name of the city “Bechar” conventionally means “propitiousness” and “good news” (Benachiba & Guemide, 2012). Nonetheless, the name was ascribed to the city during the French colonization in 1903 in allusion to a French General, in the Army, Colomb- Béchar.

Bechar is located in southwestern Algeria (950km southwest of the capital Algiers), sharing western borders with Kingdom of Morocco, which allows it to be a crossroads of cultures.

As a result of migration, different tribes settled in the South of Algeria seeking safety and security (Fezzioui, 2013). The “Doui Mniç” and “Ouled Jrir” tribes in Bechar are of pure Arab origins, descending from the Yemeni tribe of Banu Hilal. The Arab Ksouria tribes in Bechar have different origins (e.g., Ouled Sidi Mhammed and Ouled Dekhissa), but represent one “cultivated and civilised speech community” (Fezzioui, 2013: 62). Ksouria come originally from Morocco, yet have lived for at

least one century in the Ksar of Kenadsa and the Old Ksar of Bechar (Benachiba & Guemide, 2012; Fezzoui 2013).

I.4.2 Arabic in Algeria

The rise of Islam and subsequent era of Western colonization has produced a unique linguistic situation in Algeria. During the seventh century, tribes from the Arabian Peninsula headed conquests (Fotouhat) across North Africa, propagating religious teachings to local peoples and causing sweeping political changes (Bessaid, 2020). Linguistically, these conquests introduced an early form of Arabic, known as Classical Arabic. Al-Fatimiin (i.e., conquerors) established schools to teach Islam and Classical Arabic by means of Al Qur'ān (the Quran), the central religious text of Islam written in Classical Arabic. By the eighth century, the standardization of Classical Arabic in Algeria had reached completion and knowledge of the language became essential for academics and individuals who sought to improve or maintain high societal positions (Benrabah, 2001). However, in everyday interactions, it was common for Algerians to continue using their native language (Berber) or combine their first language with Classical Arabic, creating a variety of colloquial Arabic dialects. Nearly a thousand years later, colonization of the Arab World by European countries further influenced the linguistic situation of the area. During the era of colonization, French was often used in Algerian schools, rather than Arabic. The knowledge of French has been seen as a badge of sophistication and prestige for educated individuals in Algeria. These centuries of European influence have brought about the borrowing and integration of Western languages into local Algerian dialects.

I.4.2.1 Bechari Arabic

Bechari Arabic (BA) belongs to Algerian Arabic, but has so much in common with Moroccan Arabic (MA) as well. Table 1-4 includes the main linguistic features of BA that share some similarities with those of MA.

Table I-4 BA's Linguistic Features

| Morpho-syntactic Features | Examples |
|--|---|
| . Using the participle “g ^h adi” to mean “Going to” (to mark a future action) | g ^h adi neqra (I am going to read) g ^h adi nergud (I am going to sleep) |
| . The present tense is manifested with the prefix “ka-” | kanbg ^h ih (I love him) ma-kanakulch (I don't eat) |
| . Using the adverb “g ^h a” “= just (simply)” to reduce the force of an imperative. | g ^h a ruuh baʕadni (Just go leave me alone) g ^h a gulha l-muk (Just say it to your mom) |
| . Adding the prefix (ʔa-) at the beginning of an utterance to intensify its force (often to express anger or impatience) | ʔa-mniin ka-tefham nta (from where do you understand (conceive things)) ʔa-malek ka-tchuuf fiyya (Why are you looking at me?) ʔa-win ka-tseknu ntuuma (Where do you live?) ʔa-s ^h hal raha ssaʕa (What time is it?) |
| Phonological Features | Examples |
| . The sound /z/ is replaced by /ʒ/ in most words | [mʒawaʒ] instead of [mzawaʒ] (married) [ʒu:ʒ] instead of [zu:ʒ] (two) |
| Lexical Features | Examples |
| . MA and BA have many words and expressions in common | Maledictions like ʔa-wili and ʔa-nari Expressions like yak labas (Is everything okay?) |

Other characteristics that distinguish BA from other Algerian dialects involve the following aspects of language usage (based on experience):

- (a) Bechari people often use family address terms (e.g., weld 3ammi/ weld khali (my uncle's son [cousin]) to address one another (even when communicating with strangers). Family address terms in Bechar are far from only situational; they are symbolic, meaningful, negotiated and have implications for individual, relational and societal representations of the Bechari identity.
- (b) Becharians uniquely use the expression “*Fi mizek!* (In your opinion!)” to fulfil different discursive functions like query, certainty and self-confidence, as shown in the following instances:

(1) A: Nta **fi mizek**, Ḥessi elli ykun ktelha za3ma? (query)

You in your opinion, Ḥessi who killed her for real?

Do you think that Ḥessi is the one who really killed her?

(2) B: Ya **fi mizek!** Howwa, wah, elli ktelha. (certainty)

Hey in your opinion! He, yes, who killed her.

Duh, for sure! He is the one who killed her, yes.

→ (a week after)

(3) A: Kan 3andek lḥaq, howwa elli darha saḥ.

Was with you the right. He who did it indeed.

You were right. He is the one who did it.

(4) B: **Fi mizek!** Ana ki kangul shi ḥaja hiyya hadik. (self-confidence)

In your opinion! I when say something it is that.

I told you so! I only say things that are exact.

I.4.3 Politeness in Algeria

Politeness in speech plays a very significant role in the life of Algerians in general and Becharians in particular. Before introducing forms of politeness in Bechar and Algeria as a whole, it is essential to clarify that these forms reflect exclusively the

cultural Arab-Islamic background, given that Christians and Jews hold a minority position in the area.

I.4.3.1 Politeness Patterns

Politeness in Islam is transparent not only in verbal, but also non-verbal patterns of behaviour. Politeness in Islam means mercy, tact, and respect towards others. It is encompassed in the Arabic expression ‘Islamic adab’, which indicates “regular customs and norms observed by cultivated Muslims” (Saktanber 2002: 202). Politeness in Islam is inspired from the Holy Quran and Sunnah (deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad ‘Peace be upon him’), which include instructions and teachings that, as El Masri (2005) argues, constitute a human model that covers all aspects of moral behaviour (e.g., honesty, modesty, charity, mercy, justice, and chastity). Muslims are taught to treat all people in all circumstances fairly and with good manners.

In a pioneering study that examined the different motives behind Tlemcenian speakers’ tendency to being always polite when performing speech acts and the different strategies that guarantee the felicity of those speech acts, El Hadj Said (2018: 237) identified three major grounds for politeness use in Tlemcen: (i) seeking positive face wants in the Arab communities that call for collectivism, unity and solidarity, (ii) conducting “safe and well-oiled interactions”, and (iii) maintaining soft and conflict-free relationships. Further, she reported three different politeness strategies used by Tlemcenians: (i) using “preventive and protective expressions (blessings and well-wishes)”, (ii) claiming common ground, and (iii) acting as if the speaker and hearer are cooperators (2018: 239).

I.4.4 Language and Gender in Algeria

Sadiqi (2003) argued that gender performances and women's agency in the Arabic socio-cultural context need to be examined in relation to four sets of factors:

- (i) The larger power structures that constitute the Arabic culture: history, geography, Islam, multilingualism, social structure, economic status, and political system.
- (ii) Social variables: geographical origin, class, level of education, job status, language skills, and marital status.
- (iii) Contextual variables: physical setting, interlocutor, topic, and purpose of conversation.
- (iv) Identity variables: motives, saliency, and immediate interest.

Gender is evident in the use of particular terms of address, and can demonstrate how a cultural body develops linguistic devices that communicate good manners and establish good rapport. Most Algerian men, for example, do not mention their wives' and daughters' names in front of other men. Algerian husbands often use the term *eddaar* (house) to refer to their wives instead of *lemra* which is the right equivalent of the English word wife/woman (Benneghrouzi and Abdelhay, 2012). Benneghrouzi and Abdelhay specified that the use of the plural 'are' instead of the singular 'is' is another "detour purported" to avoid any direct reference to the wife/woman (e.g., "*Eddaar marahumsh hna.*" (The house are not here [the wife is absent].)) (2012: 5096)).

Muslim women in Muslim communities are treated carefully and attentively. There is no kind of "friendship" allowed between women and men in Islam. Men are not allowed to talk to women about things that are not educational or professional unless those women are "maḥrams". However, members of younger generations

(from Millennials to Generation Z) in Algeria express their thoughts and feelings freely in cross-gender talks, given that Hollywood films and Western popular music have commanded the attention of the youth at the expense of indigenous conservative forms of artistic and cultural expression (Zaimeche and Sutton, 2022). Yet, a typical Algerian man (from an older generation or a younger one) would never use profanities in front of a woman.

I.5 Complimentary Language

From the previous four sections we have established that language serves an interpersonal function. Humans use language as a means of acting on others in their environment (Section 1 and Section 4), setting up relationships between themselves and others (section 2) and communicating their genders within society (Section 3).

The established functional and interpersonal perspective of language provides a theoretical orientation for the analysis of compliments. Accordingly, the primary functions of compliments in everyday interactions are associated with social and cultural demands. Their primary purpose is to establish, negotiate, maintain, or consolidate social solidarity (Herbert, 1990; Manes & Wolfson, 1981).

Holmes (1988) defines compliments as speech acts “which explicitly or implicitly attribute credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.” (1988: 210). Compliments are, thereby, held as face-enhancing acts and positive politeness strategies. Nevertheless, compliments can also threaten face as they can manipulate the receiver and put him in a “double bind” (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2001: 142). The receiver may find himself/herself in a situation where s/he has to agree with the complimenter and simultaneously avoid self-praise in order to observe both the agreement and modesty maxims (cf. Section 2, Chapter I).

The receiver may also face a situation where s/he does not know for sure whether the speaker is complimenting or criticising him/her. Indeed, despite the apparent simplicity of compliments, its behaviour is far from simple, and any kind of misuse or misinterpretation can have devastating effects on social relations (Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez, 2013).

I.5.1 Compliments in English Contexts

In the last few decades, Pomerantz's (1978) influential work on compliments (Cs) and compliment responses (CRs) in American English has been succeeded by a great number of publications, examining Cs and CRs not only in American English, but also in other English varieties, including Australian, Irish, New Zealand, and South African. Studies like those of Herbert (1990), Holmes (1988), and Manes and Wolfson (1981) have become fundamentals in the field.

I.5.1.1 Linguistic Features of Compliments

Manes and Wolfson (1981) argued that compliments in English are highly formulaic; i.e., they follow basic syntactic forms with basic verbs and adjectives that carry the compliment's positive evaluation. After investigating a corpus of 686 compliments, Manes and Wolfson identified three basic syntactic patterns accounting for the best part of the collected compliments (1981: 458). These were:

- a. NP is/looks (really) ADJ (e.g., "That shirt is so nice").
- b. I (really) like/love NP (e.g., "I love your hair").
- c. PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP (e.g., "This was really a great meal").

Manes and Wolfson (1981) also discovered that five positive evaluative adjectives, namely, *nice*, *good*, *pretty*, *beautiful*, and *great*, accounted for nearly sixty-six per cent of the adjectives speakers used. Likewise, the verbs *like* and *love* covered

eighty-six per cent of the positively evaluative verbs. The question that arises is: do linguistic features of compliments differ according to gender or not?

1.5.1.2 Gender-Linked Features of Compliments

Perhaps the most prevalent studies that answer the question of “whether Cs’ linguistic features are influenced by gender or not” are those of Holmes (1988) and Herbert (1990).

Holmes (1988) examined gender differences in New Zealanders’ complimenting behaviour. The syntactic formulas that both men and women used were correspondent to those found by Manes & Wolfson (1981). Women, however, relied more heavily than men on the ‘*I like NP*’ pattern (e.g., “I simply love that skirt”). Women also made more use of the formula ‘*What (a) (ADJ) NP!*’ (e.g., “What a neat blouse”), while men made more use of a “minimal” formula ‘*ADJ NP*’ (e.g., “Great shoes!”). Accordingly, Holmes (1988) proposed that women use strategic devices to reinforce the illocutionary force and expressive function of a compliment, while men use strategic devices to hedge on a compliment’s force and expressive function. A man is likely to say: “Not so bad” or “You could’ve done worse” or even the omnipresent phrase “You bet” when complimenting a friend who has just scored a goal and not directly utter a compliment like “That was so good” or “You’re getting better”. She also found that women paid and received more compliments than men did. This conclusion was based, partially, on the fact that data collectors found it much easier to gather compliments from women than from men in natural settings. She also found that women were more complimented by both genders than men were. Holmes (1988) concluded that women tend to view compliments as expressions of positive affect, while men view them as a source of embarrassment and face-threats.

Following a similar methodology, Herbert (1990) studied gender differences in compliments collected from college students in New York State. He discovered that women's compliments were more personal in focus while men's compliments were more impersonal, especially in same-gender talks. Put differently, women use first and second person pronouns as sentence subjects much more than men do. He proposed that "subjective" compliments, in which speakers use first person subjects (like in "*I love that skirt*" or "*I really like those boots*") have less expressive force than a comparable "objective" pattern (such as "*that skirt is lovely*" and "*Those are really nice boots*"). He also examined gender differences in lexical selection when complimenting. He found that women used 'love' more than men, who tended to select 'like', indicating that women's compliments were more intensified than those of men. He, however, identified no salient differences in the use of other evaluative expressions.

To sum up, Herbert (1990) and Holmes (1988) argued that male and female compliments in English serve different functions in social interaction. They suggested that women use compliments as primarily offers of solidarity, while men use them more often as actual assertions of praise.

The study of compliments has expanded to linguacultures outside the English-speaking context; including the different varieties of dialectal Arabic.

I.5.2 Compliments in Arabic Contexts

There have been several studies in the Arab World focusing mainly on the social functions of compliments. One significant social function of Cs in Arabic is eliciting offers. For instance, S compliments H's bracelet; H interprets the compliment as an indirect request to have the bracelet; H responds to this compliment by offering his bracelet to S (Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001). Another worth stressing function of

Arabic Cs is preventing the potential effects of the evil (envious) eye. The destructive power of the evil eye is a belief of great significance to the daily lives of many Arabs (Mughazy, 1999). Most Arabs believe that keeping an admiration of someone or something inside the heart without expressing it out loud may cause destructive effects on that person or thing. Hence, they pay compliments, mostly religious compliment formulas, such as *masha Allah* (What Allah wills [shall come true]), *Allah ybarek* (Allah bless), and *Allahumma salli ʿannabi* (Allah's prayers be upon the Prophet), to convey their good intentions to their interlocutors (Dendenne, 2021). These religious formulas assure the interlocutors that the compliment itself is not ill-intentioned or envious. The receivers also try to protect themselves against the evil eye and respond to the compliment giver by reciting Quranic verses or uttering secular (e.g., *khamisa we khmous*) and religious (e.g., *Allahu-akbar* 'Allah is the Greatest') expressions (Mughazy, 1999).

1.5.2.1 Conversational Features of Compliments

Dendenne (2021) offered a classification of compliments in Algerian Arabic in relation to their conversational features. He selected four complimenting features for discussion, namely, complimenting relative to topic progressivity, complimenting in compliment-trigger situations, complimenting as a response to self-deprecation, and the co-occurrence of compliments and divine invocations. The selected features enabled him to explore (what we have interpreted as) five types of compliments: on-command compliments, discursive creativity compliments, complimenting as a multi-turn speech event, recycled compliments, and complimenting as a response to self-deprecation.

Dendenne (2021) argued that compliments in talk-in-interaction either affect topic progressivity by becoming the new topic of the conversation or maintain the

progressivity of the interaction without causing any effect. Further, he argued that compliments that maintain topic progressivity manifest discursive creativity (2021: 282).

In compliment-trigger situations, Dendenne (2021) specified that co-conversationalists often recycle the complimenter's compliments; i.e.; express the same linguistic expressions used by the complimenter. Giving or recycling a compliment in this case is a culturally bound action, as co-conversationalists are in fact observed to join the complimenter in complimenting the assessable. He further indicated that those recycled compliments are highly formulaic in Algerian Arabic (mostly featuring divine invocations, such as "*Allah ybarek*", "*Allah yhafdhak*", etc.).

Dendenne also depicted how complimenting can be a multi-turn speech event; i.e., in some compliment events, participants give-and-take multiple turns (multiple Cs are paid and several CRs are made). He further explained how the multi-turn property of complimenting may have some adverse effects on interactions, inasmuch as the receiver has to think each time of an appropriate response strategy (2021: 282).

Dendenne's (2021) analysis also revealed that self-deprecation is an intended act performed by speakers to trigger and attain compliments. Dendenne (2021) interpreted self-deprecation and the compliment it triggers as interactional resources.

1.5.2.2 Gender-linked Features of Compliments

Two recent studies that focus on gender differences in complimenting in colloquial Algerian Arabic (CAA) are those by Babou-Sekkal (2018) and Alnamer (2019). They both established some perceptual foundations pertaining to how gender affects the use of compliments in Algeria. We interpreted their findings to be affiliated to two major types of variation: distributional variation and paradigmatic variation (see Table I-5 for illustration).

Table I-5 Types of gender variation in the complimenting behaviour of Algerians
(After Babou Sekkal, 2018; Alnamer, 2019)

| Variation | Reported Findings | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Distributional variation | Compliment Occurrences | Compliments occurred between those from the same gender, age, and social status (Alnamer, 2019). |
| | | In Algeria, compliments between different sexes in public are more likely among the younger generations (Babou Sekkal, 2018) |
| | | Females are likely to pay compliments more than males would do (Babou Sekkal, 2018) |
| | Compliment Responses Distribution | Algerians are more likely to accept compliments paid by females rather than males (Babou Sekkal, 2018) |
| | | Acceptance of compliments is reported to be more frequent in responding to higher/equal status interlocutors (Babou Sekkal, 2018). |
| Paradigmatic variation | Compliment Topics | Both Tlemcenian females and males complimented mostly ethics and characteristics (Alnamer, 2019). |
| | Compliment Response Strategies | Both Tlemcenian females and males used face-supporting strategies (namely, appreciation and returning) when responding to compliments. |

Table 1-5 demonstrates that Babou Sekkal's and Anamer's findings were more distributional (demographic) than paradigmatic (feature-based) in nature. Both studies, Babou Sekkal (2018) and Alnamer (2019), lack a thorough analysis of the systematic features (including elements, interconnections, functions, patterns and formulas) of complimenting in discourse within an authentic context, given that all the above-cited findings were based on elicited data rather than naturally occurring instances.

Conclusion

The current chapter provided the theoretical background and context of the current study. It demonstrated how compliments fit into the notions of language as action, linguistic politeness, and gendered linguistic styles, highlighting how utterances perform actions, how speakers can mean considerably more than their words say, how linguistic politeness governs the use of utterances and how gender (especially in Islamic speech communities) may affect linguistic behaviour, with a further focus on the most prominent fields in research that have an immediate influence on the present study.

II Chapter II: The Study

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we presented a comprehensive synthesis of the related literature so as to demonstrate the theoretical orientation and the conceptual framework of the current study. In this chapter, however, we will first describe how data were collected and then analyse the collected data while providing a thorough discussion of results.

II.1 Methodology and Procedures

The methodology involved a qualitative analysis of three hundred and seven (307) compliments occurring in one hundred (100) speech events, given that sometimes two or more compliments occurred within the same speech event. The corpus of the study was collected using a field notebook. The note-taking of compliment events spanned from June 2021 to April 2022. The researcher took part in those events, sometimes as a passive observer and other times as an active participant. The researcher developed constant analytical reports soon after documenting each event. In such a way, we were able to supply information about the context and social variables, which were necessary for data analysis.

II.1.1 Methodological Considerations

In previous studies investigating speech act realizations, two methodologies for data collection were used: elicitation and ethnography. The former makes use of structured data tools to collect respondents' relatively authentic answers to language-related questions (or scenarios) concerning different speech acts. The latter, however, collects unpretentious (naturally-occurring) discourse to capture the roles language plays in social contexts. In the following subsections, these two methodological perspectives are treated in detail with a special emphasis on the advantages and

disadvantages of each approach. A special emphasis is also placed on the Discourse Completion Task as the most common elicitation technique used in speech act studies, as well as on Participant Observation as the most common ethnographic technique (and the one that was used in the current study).

II.1.1.1 Elicitation

When it comes to investigating how gender (or any other social variable for that matter) influences speech act realizations, most researchers have utilised structured elicitation tools (e.g., role plays, in-depth interviews, discourse completion tasks), which required participants to produce responses in designed contexts. More often than not, discourse completion tasks (DCTs) have been used to elicit the targeted data.

DCTs are written questionnaires that present brief language-related scenarios. Such situational scenarios are usually preceded by a prompt, which describes the context of the event and the roles and social relations of the people in the scenario. Subjects are then asked to react to the situational scenarios using language forms that are relevant to the speech act in question.

DCTs are advantageous in gathering large amounts of data in a short period of time (Cummings and Clark, 2006). They also enable the researcher to focus on specific speech act realizations and allow manipulating social and/or situational variables like gender, age, degree of imposition, power, and social distance (Cohen, 1998).

The problem with DCTs, and structured elicitation tools in general, is the limitation of the authenticity of the situations they are able to produce. Moreover, because the situational scenarios are hypothetical, they are not usually able to capture the complexity of real-life encounters. As a case in point, DCTs cannot capture the non-verbal and prosodic features of face-to-face interactions. In terms of the big

picture, DCTs provide data that reflect what people *think they would say* rather than what people *actually do say* in a given speech setting (Golato, 2005: 14).

II.1.1.2 Ethnography

Ethnography stemmed in anthropology and sociology as an approach to study the origins of cultures, civilizations and societies, and is now used in a variety of disciplines including applied linguistics and particularly sociolinguistics. Most of the previous research on compliments discussed in this study (e.g. Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1988; Wolfson 1981; Dendenne, 2021) made use of ethnographically-obtained data. After using an ethnographic method to study compliments in American English, Wolfson (1983: 95) argued that obtaining reliable data about “the way speech acts function in interaction necessitates “ethnographic field work”. To do ethnography, the researcher needs to enter into the field and follow an ‘emic’ perspective of research, which denotes capturing and presenting an insider’s view of the participants’ behaviours in their social settings and the meaning of their actions and behaviours as such. Producing an emic perspective requires a prolonged and direct engagement with the subjects. Ethnography, for that matter, implies two somewhat contradictory qualities: (1) a capacity to divest oneself from one’s own instant, culturally prejudiced reactions so as to reach a tolerable degree of “objectivity” and (2) a tendency to attain adequate empathy for the members of the group in order to develop an insider profile (Duranti, 1997).

Among the most common techniques of data collection in ethnographic research is participant observation, which is used for different purposes in anthropolinguistics, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. Participant observation can be classified based on the degree of participation involved. Spradley developed a typology to describe a continuum in the “degree of participation” of researchers

(1980: 58-62). The first degree is nonparticipation, which, according to Spradley (1980), occurs when cultural knowledge is acquired by observing phenomena from outside the research setting (e.g., by reading newspapers, watching TV, or listening to the radio). The second degree is passive observation, which exists when the researcher is present at the scene of action, but acts as a passive observer, spectator or bystander. At this level of observation, those being observed may not even know that they are actually under observation. The third degree is moderate participation, which occurs when the researcher is on spot and recognizable as such, but does not actively participate with people in it. At this level, interaction with study subjects occurs only occasionally and when it is highly necessary. The fourth and last degree is complete participation in which the researcher is or becomes a member of the group under study. At this level, researchers record observations in field notes either during the participation period or after it.

Ethnography in general, and participant observation in particular, encourages the continual reassessment of initial research questions and hypotheses, and facilitates the development of new hypotheses and questions, given that new insights constantly occur due to increasing familiarity with the context. Researchers, however, are confronted with an issue when collecting and analysing data using participant observation; they find themselves reacting to and interacting with others in the events that uncontrolledly unroll before them. Evidently, control over the research situation as a whole decreases throughout data collection and data analysis processes when using ethnography.

Another problem with ethnography is the insufficient frequency of speech acts occurrences; i.e., not all types of speech acts occur frequently enough to be collected through daily observations. In addition, developing an insider's view in ethnography

is not an easy task, as it is difficult to set a balance between “being objective” and “showing empathy for subjects”.

II.1.2 Instrument

Despite all of its shortcomings, ethnography was adopted in the current study. The researcher, in particular, chose (complete) participant observation as the data collection method to serve the study’s ongoing objectives. Participant observation significantly corresponded to the prerequisites that the current research on compliment features demanded.

II.1.2.1 Research Prerequisites

- a. Developing an understanding of how compliments are used in the Bechari society at the particular time when research is conducted.

→ Participant observation is essentially a synchronic method: it is used to understand contemporary phenomena.

- b. Attending to the details of the physical and social scenes in order to develop an understanding of how compliments relate to the Bechari social relations.

→ Mapping the social scene and the spatial layout of living and working spaces is a fairly common strategy in participant observation.

- c. Covering as many frequent situations and compliment events as possible.

→ Participant observation is an iterative process: it allows capturing patterned behaviours.

- d. Detecting tacit functions and irregular (syntactic and semantic) features of compliments.

→ Longer-term observation research enables observing rare events and tacit aspects of phenomena.

- e. Understanding the kinds and sources of diversity within Bechar speech community.
 - Participant observation most frequently includes the incorporation of the insights of community participants in the selection of places and events.
- f. Quantifying gender's impact on compliments.
 - Participant observation allows quantifying behaviours and social variables; it may produce numerical data.
- g. Data analysis taking place at the same time as data collection
 - Constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling is one of the components of participant observation.
- h. Providing fine-grained accounts on compliments and their contextual features
 - The process of observing, participating in, replaying (in the mind) and recounting conversations and events (in field notes) produces pages of detailed field notes (cf. Appendix).

II.1.3 Procedures

Wolfson (1983) stressed that any research addressing speech act behaviours should rely on data coming from 'natural' conditions. Such data, demonstratively, allow the researcher to generate hypotheses about speech act realizations and establish starting points toward investigating them. Evidently, the current research was conducted within two naturalistic (observation) phases: unstructured observation and structured observation.

II.1.3.1 Phase One: Unstructured Observation

The unstructured observation phase served as a basis for generating research hypotheses that were grounded on-the-go. During this phase, speech events were taking place incidentally and uncontrolledly. Nevertheless, they helped identify key

issues related to compliments. After developing a partial understanding of how compliments were used in the Bechari society, the focus of the study was narrowed to be placed only on the tacit “strategic” features of compliments. This early phase limited and structured the second phase of participant observation.

II.1.3.2 Phase Two: Structured Observation

While being considerably passive during the first phase, the researcher was much more active during the second one. Structured observation allowed having considerable latitude in how to design and conduct data collection protocols. The specific aspects that were observed and documented during this phase are specified in Table II-1 below.

Table II-1 Categories of documented notes during participant observation

| Category | Includes | Documented Aspects |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Appearance | Clothing, age, gender, physical appearance | Everything that indicated belonging to a certain group or subgroups of interest to the study, such as gender, religion, or ethnicity |
| Verbal behaviour and interaction | Who spoke to whom and for how long; who initiated interaction; languages or dialects spoken; tone of voice | Dynamics of interaction, linguistic features of utterances: lexical choices, semantic patterns, syntactic patterns, and prosodic features |
| Physical behaviour and gestures | What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting | How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals' behaviours indicate about their feelings toward one another |
| Personal space | How close people stand to one another | What individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Human traffic | People who enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site | Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); if they are alone or accompanied. |
| People who stand out | Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others | The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others |

II.1.4 Participants and Events

A total of 102 informants (52 males, 50 females) (aged 17-72) were observed, providing data on 100 compliment events (in which 307 compliments occurred). The noted compliment events included family members (27 episodes), close friends (22 episodes), classmates (10 episodes), buyers and sellers (18), acquaintances (16 events), and total strangers (7 episodes). These categories were further divided into four major groups: M→M group (31 events), M→F group (12 events), F→M group (24 events) and F→F group (33 events). The note-taking took place in one city (Bechar) in the south-west of Algeria in different settings (e.g., home, bus stations, around wedding tables, university corridors, taxis, streets, supermarkets, barbershops, Al-Brarik (clothing) markets, and beauty salons).

II.2 Results and Discussion

As the previous section exposes the methodological design of the current research, this section provides comprehensive analysis, discussion and interpretation of the results. It thrashes out the most frequent formulas of compliments that are paid to achieve an end in the speech community of Bechar, describing the strategies adopted and highlighting their semantic patterns. The construct of the chapter is

presented in a logical hierarchical order, i.e., formulas pertaining to pro forma compliments are presented following a componential structure: starting from the most partial to the most integral formulas.

Before reporting each identified formula of complimenting and quantifying gender influences on it, one or two episodes are inserted as a starting point towards a deeper analysis of data. The names of the participants and locations are altered in our reported episodes so as to avoid having any clue of who they might be.

II.2.1 Type 1: Recycled Compliments

Episode 1 features a male taxi driver (TAD) in his fifties, a female passenger in her forties sitting in the back seat (PAB), and a female pedestrian (EDE) in her twenties. TAD parked his taxi right in front of EDE. EDE continued walking until she got right next to the taxi and that is when the conversation starts. PAB is a very active conversationalist in this Episode. EDE is the least engaged in the conversation.

Episode 1:

(1) PAB: madam gallek muul ttaxi tfadli rekbi m3ana

Miss! The taxi driver asks you to get in.

(2) EDE: ah shukran bezzef bezzef

Oh! Thank you so so much.

(3) EDE: [while opening the door] llaH yezzikom kul khiir

May Allah reward you with all what is good.

(4) PAB: mazal rah kayn lkhiir fhad lblad

There still exists benevolence in this country.

(5) EDE: wellah sah mazalu kayn lkhiir

That is true, there still exists benevolence.

(6) TAD: ah elli lga kifah ydir lkhiir gha ydireh

Whoever found a way to do something good, he shall just go for it.

(7) PAB: llaH yfarhak w ya3tik 3la hsab nayettek w tiibtek.

May Allah make you happy and reward you as good as your intention and kindness are.

(8) TAD: amin amiin hna wiyyakom wajami3 lmuslimiin

Amen, (may He reward) me, you and all Mulims.

(9) EDE: [**while smiling**] amiin yareb ykatter khiirek

Amen, Lord, may He increase your benevolence.

(10) PAB: wash howwa nnodfami nta3ek

What is your last name?

(11) TAD: ana ana Boukellala Keddour

Me! My name is Keddour Boukellala

(12) PAB: rani nguul had ttiiba mahash ghriba 3liyya rana wlad 3amm

I was telling myself that this kindness is familiar to me, we are (actually) cousins.

(13) PAB: ana Bouderbala had ttiiba na3rafha

Mine is Bouderbala, this kindness is familiar to me.

(14) TAD: iwa ana lwalida nta3i Bouderbala nishshan

PRT My mother's last name is Bourdabala exactly.

(15) PAB: ana ghir sheftek w sheft wash dert m3a lbent

(→) 3raft belli had eddam lina

The second I saw you and saw what you did to the girl

(→) I knew that this blood is ours

(16) TAD: llah ybarek lkhiir rahu bayn 3lik

May Allah bless, it is obvious that you are a good person

(17) EDE: Allah ybarek

May Allah bless!

Although EDE is the one who is offered a ride for free, it is PAB that keeps complimenting TAD using mainly prayers. EDE finds herself culturally bound to give TAD compliments as well. PAP's utterance of "*Mazal rah kayn lkhiir fhad lblad* (There still exists benevolence in this country)" is an indirect act of complimenting, as it implies that TAD is a benevolent person who stands for and represents benevolence in the country. EDE as an attempt to engage in the conversation takes advantage of PAP's aforementioned compliment and recycles it towards TAD. Later in the conversation, TAD compliments PAP, telling her that it is self-evident that she (PAP)

is a good person. EDE again takes advantage of TAD's compliment and iterates on part of it (*Allah ybarek* [may Allah bless]) towards PAB. One explanation of EDE's recycled compliments is that both the taxi driver and her fellow passenger are completely strangers to her; she cannot give them original deserved compliments. A second explanation is that EDE might be caught up in the moment to the point where she does not really know what to say. A third and final explanation is that EDE through her recycled compliments fulfils two politeness maxims: the approbation maxim (EDE compliments and appreciates TAD's free ride) and the agreement maxim (EDE agrees with PAP that TAD is a benevolent person and agrees with TAD that it is self-evident that PAP is a good person) (cf. Section 2, Chapter I). EDE's first recycled compliment (*wellaḥ saḥ, mazalu kayn lkhiir*) is thematic, while her second recycled compliment (*Allah ybarek!*) is religious.

II.2.1.1 Formulas of Recycled Compliments

We identified 118 recycled compliments manifested in two major formulas: religious and thematic. Religious compliment formulas are those expressions and structures that are extracted or inspired from the Islamic religion. They include Quranic verses (e.g., "فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ" *Fatabaraka Allahu ahsanu alkhalikiin* (So blessed is Allah, the best of all creators), religious prayers (e.g., *Allah yhafdak* (May Allah protect you)) and prophet-praise expressions (e.g., *Allahumma salli wasallim wabarik 3ala sayyidina Muhammed* (Allah's blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammed)). Religious formulas are broad and do not directly relate to the topic of the compliment. Thematic compliment formulas, however, relate and denote the theme (the subject of the talk) that is being complimented (e.g., *Nas-mlah bezzef nti* (You are so nice), *Jatek thabbel* (it looks amazing on you), etc.).

Our corpus consists of 62 instances of *religious compliment formulas*, occurring in 25 speech events, and 56 instances of *thematic compliment formulas*, recycled in 23 speech events (in most cases, two or more recycled compliments occurred within the same speech event). Both religious and thematic formulas of recycled compliments were distributed differently across gender groups as indicated in the subsequent tables (from Table II-2 to Table II-4).

Table II-2 Instances of Religious Compliment Formulas by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 18 (29.03%) | M → F: 8 (12.90%) | Same-gender: 39 (63%) |
| F → M: 15 (24.19%) | M → M: 21 (33.87%) | Mixed-gender: 23 (37%) |
| Total: 33 (53.22%) | Total: 29 (46.77%) | Total: 62 (100%) |

Table II-2 shows the number of occurrences of religious compliment formulas that were recycled in the speech of female participants and compares it with those in the speech of male participants. Out of a total of 62 instances of religious compliments, women used the formula 33 times, while men used it 29 times. 63% of the religious compliment formulas were recycled in same-gender talks rising from 37% instances in mixed-gender talks.

Evidently, women's and Men's uses of recycled religious compliments were almost identical (29% vs. 33%). Men received recycled religious compliments more than did women (58% vs. 41%). The highest number of recycled religious compliments was offered by male speakers to male addressees (33%). The lowest number of recycled religious compliments was offered by men to women (12%). The highest number of recycled religious compliments was offered in same-gender talks (63%). Such patterns indicate that associating religious compliment formulas with female speakers (or with males for that matter) is incorrect. Rather, the data lead us toward a conclusion grounded in discourse requirements: both women and men

speaking in same-gender talks recycled more religious compliments than when speaking in mixed-gender talks.

Table II-3 Instances of Thematic Compliment Formulas by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 26 (46.43%) | M → F: 03 (05.36%) | Same-gender: 43 (77%) |
| F → M: 10 (17.85%) | M → M: 17 (30.35%) | Mixed-gender: 13 (23%) |
| Total: 36 (64.28%) | Total: 20 (35.71%) | Total: 56 (100%) |

Table II-3 shows that out of a total of 56 instances of recycled thematic compliments, women used the formula 36 times and men used it 20 times. 77% of the total occurrences occurred in same-gender talks, rising from 23% in mixed-gender talks.

All things considered, women stood out as distinct with regard to recycling thematic compliments. The highest number of recycled thematic compliments was offered by female speakers to female addressees. The lowest number of recycled thematic compliments was offered by men to women. Male speakers accommodated to the gender of their addressees more than did female speakers. The highest number of recycled thematic compliments was offered in same-gender talks as opposed to mixed-gender talks. These patterns reveal that recycling thematic compliments was highly associated with the gender of the speaker and gender of the addressee.

Table II-4 Instances of Recycled Compliments by Gender and Type of Formula

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| F → F: 44 (37.28%) | M → F: 11 (9.32%) | Same-gender: 82 (69%) |
| F → M: 25 (21.18%) | M → M: 38 (32.20) | Mixed-gender: 36 (31%) |
| Total: 69 (58.47%) | Total: 49 (41.53) | Total: 118 (100%) |
| Type of Formula | | |
| Religious Formula: 62 (53%) | | Thematic Formula: 56 (47%) |

Table II-4 shows the overall frequency of occurrences of recycled compliments in terms of the type of formula. It was found that religious formulas were recycled 62 times whereas thematic formulas were recycled 56 times. The table also shows the overall distribution of recycled compliments across gender groups and the types of talk in which they occurred. Women used recycled compliments 69 times while men used them 49 times only. 69% of the total occurrences occurred in same-gender talks as opposed to 36% in mixed-gender talks.

All in all, women used recycled compliments more than did men (58% vs. 42%). Men were offered recycled compliments more than were women (57% vs. 43%). The highest number of recycled compliments was offered by female speakers to female addressees. The lowest number of recycled compliments was offered by male speakers to female speakers. The highest number of recycled compliments remarkably occurred in same gender talks as opposed to mixed-gender talks (69% vs. 31%). The two types of formulas of recycled compliments (religious formulas and thematic formulas) had almost the same degree of occurrence (53% vs. 47%). The emerging patterns imply that offering recycled compliments depends on both the gender of the giver and the receiver and the type of talk in which they engaged.

II.2.2 Type 2: Paired Compliments

Episode two features five family members: an eighty-seven years old grandfather, fifty-three years old father, fifty years old mother, twenty-two years old daughter, and ten years old son. They are sitting around a round table in the living room, having al-Harira soup for dinner while watching Bab Al-Hara season 3 on TV. The grandfather (GF) really enjoys the mother's (MR) Harira soup. The father (FR) and the daughter (DU) are the main sources of compliments in this episode. The son (SN) is the least engaged in the conversation.

Episode 2:

(1) GF: lyum lahrira jat mrigla ya3tik ssaha

Today the Harira soup is perfect, bless you!

(2) MR: Allah ysallmek a 3ammi lhajj

Thank you my uncle al-Hajj [father in law]

(3) FR: aywa di hiyya lahrira elli rana nsharbuha 3and ensawiin

And so this is the Harira soup that we are having from other women

- **[Everybody laughs and looks at MR]**

(4) MR: mana3raf shkun had ensawiin elli rah yeshrubha 3andhom

I do not know who these women whom he is having it from are.

(5) FR: awal marra ddirinna hrira kima hadi

This is the first time that you make us a Harira soup like this.

(6) DU: emmm teshbeh lelahrira elli dertha liikom ana dek nnhar

Yes, it tastes like the one that I made you the other day.

(7) FR: shufi benti nti kollesh fik zin bessah ki tji fel makla khatik

Look my daughter, everything about you is beautiful, but when it

(→) comes to (making) food, you are out.

(8) MR: sah ki tji fel minage hetta wahed ma yfutek,

(→) bessah ki tji fetyab mazal ykhussek

Right, when it comes to cleaning, nobody compares to you,

(→) but when it comes to cooking, you still need (to learn).

(9) GF: ma3lish shwiyya shwiyya tt3almi

It is okay, you will learn step by step.

(10) DU: awweddi ntuuma katensaw bezzeef ghi dek nnhar dertha uu 3ajbetkom

(PRT) You forget a lot, I made it just the other day and you liked it

(11) FR: hna ma3lish ghir gunnalek zidi hotti rassek tt3almi

We just told you that you should pay some more attention to learn

- **[DU puts down her soup plate, grabs a glass of water, and looks towards TV]**

(12) DU: [while drinking water] Mouh, rak ga3ed 3a9el lyuum rak 3ajebni

Mouh, you are sitting quiet today, I like it

(13) SN: rani na3san

I am sleepy

(14) DU: ih khuya la3ziz ida kammelt makla ruh rgud.

Eh, my dear brother if you have finished eating, go to sleep!

(15) SN: Wah ni mashi

Yes I am going.

(16) DU: stenna khuya zwayyen jibbli m3ak dek lcomonde nzayyed chwiyya

(→) lettili rah grib ykammel bablhara wma sma3t waluu

Wait my cute brother; bring me the remote to turn up the volume on

(→) TV, Bab Al-Hara is almost over and I have not heard anything

- [SN leaves the living room without bringing the remote control]

(17) DU: dek ttnah wellah ma jابه tguul kont nhdar m3a lhiit

That fool did not bring it, as if I was talking to the wall.

FR in this episode offers very problematic compliments to his wife (MR). His first compliment, *Aywa di hiyya lahrira elli rana nsharbuha 3and ensawiin* (And so this is the Harira soup that we are having from other women), implies that the other women's soups were better than all of MR's previous soups. FR's compliment in this case is not accepted, as MR questions his utterance by saying: "*Mana3raf shkun had ensawiin elli rah yeshrubha 3andhom* (I do not know who these women whom he is having it from are)". MR and everybody else in the room know what FR means. FR works in Adrar, which is 283 miles away from Bechar, and while he is working there, he gets invited so often to his friends' houses for dinner or lunch where he is usually served tasteful Harira soups (Al-Harira is a very famous soup in Algeria). Hence, MR's response indicates that she clearly does not take FR's utterance as a compliment, but rather a criticism. FR's second compliment "*Awwal marra ddirinna hrira kima hadi* (This is the first time that you make us a Harira soup like this)" is similar to his first, as it implicitly expresses criticism towards MR's previous Harira soups. FR's and MR's subsequent compliments towards DU in lines (7) and (8), are slightly different, as they co-occur with explicit acts of criticism marked by the word "*bessah* (but)". When DU responds to FR and MR, she entirely skips their initiative

compliments on her beautiful character (as claimed by FR) and unique skills in cleaning (as claimed by MR) and focuses on their criticisms, rejecting their utterances and accusing them for lack of remembrance of how delicious her last prepared soup was. Later in the conversation, DU pays another sort of problematic compliments that have double-functions. She starts offering a set of compliments to her brother SN just to get to the point where she explicitly asks him to bring her the remote control. SN is too sleepy to the point where he neither pays attention to her compliments nor attends to her request. The negative evaluative adjective in DU's last utterance "*ttnah* (fool)" indicates that her compliments are not for the sake of complimenting but of persuading her brother to bring the remote control.

Evidently, all the compliments that occur in Episode 2, except that of GF in line (1), are paired with FTAs. FR's first two complimenting acts are paired with implicit criticising acts. FR's and MR's subsequent complimenting acts are paired with explicit criticising acts. DU's complimenting acts at the end of Episode 2 are paired with an act of request. One explanation for FR's and MR's compliment/explicit criticism pairing towards DU may be the tendency to reduce the threatening force of criticism. The same explanation can be said about DU's compliment/request pairing, as DU might be relying on compliments to pave the way to her request and make it less costly to her addressee SN, whereupon she makes it less threatening to SN's positive face (cf. Section 2, Chapter I). Nonetheless, redressing the force of the FTA cannot explain FR's compliment/implicit criticism pairing. If we measure the pairing aspect of the third act of FR and the ones of MR and DU (for the sake of argument), we can clearly see that their compliments are paid to serve their FTAs and not vice versa. But if we measure the pairing aspect of the first two acts of FR, it will be difficult for us to determine which is paid to serve which. FR might be relying on

criticising MR's previous soups to express admiration for her current soup (let us call it the first possibility) as much as he might be relying on compliments to express criticism towards MR's previous soups (let us call it the second possibility). Ergo, FR's utterance of "*Aywa di hiyya lahrira elli rana nsharbuha 3and ensawin* (And so this is the Harira soup that we are having from other women)" corresponds more to the first possibility, and his utterance of "*Awwel marra ddirinna hrira kima hadi* (This is the first time that you make us a Harira soup like this)" corresponds more to the second possibility.

In addition to voicing criticism and making requests, we encountered one case where compliments were paired with an apology, as featured in Episode 3.

Episode 3 features a male shopkeeper (SHO) and two male customers (CUS and TOM). SHO is in his sixties whilst CUS and TOM are in their twenties. CUS and TOM are actually friends. CUS is left-handed. The shop is nearly empty; there were only these three men in addition to one female customer who does not take any part in the conversation. The two most engaged in the conversation are SHO and TOM.

Episode 3:

(1) SHO: [addressing CUS] *hez lqar3a bidek liimna mashi bliisra*

Take the bottle with your right hand not with the left one!

- [CUS holds the bottle with his right hand, then pays money to SHO with his left hand]

(2) SHO: *hot lqar3a 3tini ddrahem bidek limna menba3d 3awed hezha bidek limna*

Put the bottle down, give me money with your right hand, and then

(→) Take the bottle with your right hand again.

- [CUS puts money on the cash desk with his left hand and leaves]

(3) SHO: *lahawla wa la qowwata illa billah*

There is no power [in averting evil] and no strength [in attaining good] except through Allah.

(4) TOM: *awweddi alhajj ghir smahleh rak insan kbir w 3aqel w ta3ref had jjil*

(→) kifah dayer

Sir just forgive him, you are old and sage and you know how this generation is like

(5) SHO: had liid liisra hiyya elli raha jayba lfaqr lennas hezz had drahem

(→) 3liyya b3id

This left hand is the one that is bringing poverty to people, take this money away from me

(6) TOM: waluu a lhajj hani hazzithom ana bidi liimna gha shedhom 3liyya

No sir, here I am holding them with my right hand; just take them from me

(7) SHO: [while taking money from TOM] hehe wlad ttakhir zzaman

Haha, boys of the end of days

(8) TOM: sheft 3raftha galbek kbir heheh

See! I knew your heart is big

SHO apparently is among those people who believe that using the left hand is inappropriate; he even claims that using it causes poverty. CUS shows a kind of disrespect when he disobeys SHO's orders to use only the right hand when dealing with him. CUS's disrespectful (although understandable) behaviour causes frustration to SHO. In normal cases, CUS does not owe SHO an apology, but SHO is three times older than him; hence, it is culturally expected from CUS to apologise. Since CUS has left, it is up to TOM to fix the situation. Tom relies on compliments to convey his apology on behalf of his friend. He, specifically, makes use of two positive evaluative adjectives, namely *kbir* (old [wise]) and *3aqel* (sage). He also uses the expression "*galbek kbir* (your heart is big)" to strengthen his politeness strategies and the force of his utterances.

II.2.2.1 Formulas of Paired Compliments

There are in fact hundreds of formulas in which a compliment can be paired with an FTA (whether a positive FTA or a negative one). Compliments can be paired with both explicit and implicit apologies, requests, and criticisms in addition to orders, assigned responsibilities, divorces even, and hundreds of other FTA's depending on the intention of the speaker. For our own purposes, however, we singled out only those compliments that are paired with criticisms (both explicit and implicit

ones) and requests. There was only one instance of compliment/apology pairing that we took into consideration (cf. Episode 3).

We reported 101 instances of compliment/FTA pairing formulas: 57 compliment/criticism pairing formulas (34 compliments/explicit criticism pairing formulas and 23 compliment/implicit criticism pairing formulas), 43 compliment/request pairing formulas, and 1 compliment/apology pairing formula. The frequency of the occurrences of each formula differed according to gender, as shown in the undermentioned tables (from Table II-5 to Table II-9).

Table II-5 Instances of Compliment/Explicit Criticism Pairing Formulas by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 12 (35%) | M → F: 04 (12%) | Same-gender: 23 (67%) |
| F → M: 07 (21%) | M → M: 11 (32%) | Mixed-gender: 11 (33%) |
| Total: 19 (56%) | Total: 15 (44%) | Total: 34 (100%) |

In accordance with Table II-5, there are so many similarities within the patterns that emerge. Women's and men's uses of the compliment/explicit criticism pairs were almost identical (19 times vs. 15 times). The women to women group and men to men group were characterised by offering the highest number of compliment/explicit criticism pairs as opposed to the two remaining groups. Correspondingly, the highest number of compliment/explicit criticism pairs occurred in same-gender talks as opposed to mixed-gender talks (67% vs. 33%). One explanation of the unexpected similarities is the small number of the total occurrences (34); perhaps if we collected more instances of compliment/explicit criticism pairing formula, data will lead us toward another conclusion. All in all, women and men behaved in almost the same manner regarding the use of compliment/explicit criticism pairing formula.

Table II-6 Instances of Compliment/Implicit Criticism Formulas by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 05 (22%) | M → F: 12 (52%) | Same-gender: 09 (39%) |
| F → M: 02 (9%) | M → M: 04 (17%) | Mixed-gender: 14 (61%) |
| Total: 07 (31%) | Total: 16 (69%) | Total: 23 (100%) |

As indicated in Table II-6, men were the most to offer compliments that are implicitly paired with criticism and women were the most to be given such compliments. The highest number of compliment/implicit criticism pairs was offered by men to women, while the lowest number of them was offered by women to men. As opposed to same-gender talks, mixed-gender talks were reported to hold the highest number of compliment/implicit criticism pairs. These patterns, alongside with those that are aforementioned, reveal that women opted for the explicit formula whereas men opted for the implicit one especially when addressing women. One explanation of men's tendency to implicitly pair their compliments with criticism is that they care about maintaining – and redressing the threats to – the positive face of their female addressees. Another explanation is that men might not find it culturally appropriate to compliment a woman; thus, they might prefer doing it implicitly through pairing their compliments with acts of criticism. Again, the total number of occurrences of this formula is too small to make any generalizations.

Table II-7 Instances of Compliment/Criticism Pairing Formulas by Gender and Type of Criticism

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|---|-----------------|---|
| F → F: 17 (30%) | M → F: 16 (28%) | Same-gender: 32 (56%) |
| F → M: 09 (16%) | M → M: 15 (26%) | Mixed-gender: 25 (44%) |
| Total: 26 (46%) | Total: 31 (54%) | Total: 57 (100%) |
| Type of Criticism | | |
| Explicit Criticism Pairing: 34 (60%) | | Implicit Criticism Pairing: 23 (40%) |

Table II-7 totalises the overall occurrences of compliment/criticism pairs by gender and by type of talk while highlighting the percentages of the two afore-discussed types of criticism pairing. Men used compliment/criticism pairing formulas more than did women (54% vs. 46%). Women received compliment/criticism pairs more than did men (58% vs. 42%). The highest number of compliment/criticism pairing formulas occurred in same-gender talks. These patterns reveal that complimenting while voicing criticism highly took place when addressing women (either by other women or by men).

Table II-8 Instances of Compliment/Request Pairing Formulas by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 18 (42%) | M → F: 03 (7%) | Same-gender: 31 (72%) |
| F → M: 09 (21%) | M → M: 13 (30%) | Mixed-gender: 12 (28%) |
| Total: 27 (63%) | Total: 16 (37%) | Total: 43 (100%) |

Table II-8 displays the number of occurrences of compliments that were used to pave the way for making a request in the speech of female participants and compares it with those in the speech of male participants. Women used compliment/request pairing formulas more than did men. Women and men received compliment/request pairs in an identical manner. The highest number of compliment/request pairs was offered by women to women, whereas the lowest number of them was offered by men to women. Compliment/request pairing formulas occurred with the highest degree in same-gender talks (72%). The emerging patterns indicate that the use of compliments as initial politeness strategies to make requests is highly associated with female speakers in same-gender talks.

Table II-9 Instances of Compliment/FTA Pairing by Gender and Type of FTA

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| F → F: 35 (34%) | M → F: 19 (19%) | Same-gender: 64 (63%) |
| F → M: 18 (18%) | M → M: 29 (29%) | Mixed-gender: 37 (37%) |
| Total: 53 (52%) | Total: 48 (48%) | Total: 101 (100%) |
| Type of FTA | | |
| Criticism: 57 (56%) | Request: 43 (43%) | Apology: 01 (01%) |

Table II-9 displays the occurrences of compliment/FTA pairing formulas in an all-encompassing way; it combines the afore-discussed formulas of paired compliments to provide a total description of the overall distribution of compliment/FTA pairing formulas across gender groups. Although not statistically significant, we took into account the one instance of compliment/apology pairing formula that occurred in our sample, as to give exact numerical accounts to each gender group. We found that women as a whole used more compliment/FTA pairing formulas than did men. The highest number of paired compliments occurred within same-gender talks (63%), especially among women (34%), whereas the lowest number of them occurred in mixed-gender talks (37%). The FTA that was paired most frequently with compliments is the speech act of criticism (56%). Accordingly; the overall analysis of the data demonstrates a high correlation between the use of paired compliments and the cultural boundaries that exist between women and men.

II.2.3 Type 3: Anti-deprecativ Compliments

Episode 4 features two female university students. One of them (ROZ) is 19 years old. The other one (EVE) is 18 years old. ROZ and EVE are not close friends and they rarely talk to each other. ROZ is about to get married and so she comes to invite EVE to her wedding. The conversation takes place in the morning in front of a door of a lecture hall in which there are one female and two male students revising

their lessons. ROZ and EVE are talking in a low voice in order to not disturb those students.

Episode 4:

(1) ROZ: ahlaaa waakhiran qdert nelgak wagfa wahdek

Hi! Finally I could find you standing alone.

(2) EVE: 3lah [greeting through cheek kissing] Kunti thawsi 3liyya

Why? Have you been looking for me?

(3) ROZ: elLaa sheftek men gbil ghi wash ma kuntish wahdek

No, I have seen you a while ago, but you were not alone.

(4) EVE: ih wah iwa kiraki wash lakhbar

Ah yes, so how are you doing? What's up?

(5) ROZ: rani nwajjed lel 3ars 3arsi garreb

I am preparing for the wedding, (the date of) my wedding is approaching.

(6) EVE: makansh menha belbaraka a lalla wana ga3 la khbar

No way! Congratulations my lady and you did not inform me.

(7) ROZ: hehehe hada 3lah bghitek tkuni wahdek bash n3ardek

Ha-ha! That is why I wanted you to be alone so as to invite you.

(8) EVE: ih mziyya dertini filahsab mmala l3ars fi 3utlat mares

Ah great, you took me into consideration, so the wedding is on spring break?

(9) ROZ: ella lla, ssimana lli jjaya lla ssimana lli muraha l3ars nshallah

No, it is on the week that is after next week

(10) EVE: kifash haadi nkunu nfawtu fi lizigzama

How come? We are sitting for the exams (on that week)

(11) ROZ: ma kayhamsh madam khlass ma ghadish nzid nkammel qraya

It does not matter since I am not going to resume my studies.

(12) EVE: men neytek Mazalna duuzyammani a ben3ammi

Are you serious? We are still second year students, girl!

(13) ROZ: hadik tgulha wahda kifek ana ki grit ki ma grit ga3 kifkif

That should be said by someone like you; whether I study or not is the same thing.

(14) EVE: 3lah nti wash khassek hetta nti labas bik

Why? What do you lack? You are good as well.

(15) ROZ: waluu ana leqraya men wana men lhih ma yliq li ghi zzwaj

No, in my case studying is on this side and I am on the other side.

The only thing that fits me is marriage.

(16) EVE: elLa lla shufi howwa zzwaj mlih hetta ana raha nafhet li 3lih

(→) bessah 3el aqal eddi la licence w habsi ida bghiti

No look, marriage is good; I am considering it myself,

(→) but at least get a BA degree and quit if you want.

(17) ROZ: waluu khlass hadak ma helbet ma3andish fel mukh

No that's it; this is what I am born with: an empty mind.

(18) EVE: ga3 makansh menha 3andek bezzeff qudurat ghi makish shayfethom

(→) wzid tna3ch l3am men hyatek ghatkun rahet haba'an manthura

No it is not the case at all; you have so much potential; you just cannot see it.

(→) Besides twelve years of your life would be wasted (just like that).

Based on EVE's utterances in lines (6) and (8), we can assume that getting married in the middle of an academic year is something usual to EVE. What is unusual to her is quitting pursuing a degree whilst there are only three semesters left to fulfil it, as indicated through her comments in lines (12) and (16). ROZ can get married and continue pursuing a BA degree in her specialty, but (for some reasons) she prefers to drop out. EVE finds herself culturally bound to at least try to change ROZ's mind about quitting. The main reason behind ROZ's decision is her poor performance at studying, as clearly indicated through her acts of self-deprecation in lines (13), (15) and (17). EVE confronts each deprecatory act with a compliment on ROZ's performance and potentials in studying. We stressed earlier that EVE and ROZ are not close friends. EVE in fact has little knowledge about ROZ's performance and abilities in studying. Nonetheless, she disagrees with all what ROZ claims and complains about herself. EVE's compliments in this case may not be deserved or sincere, but they are culturally expected to be paid.

Superficially, EVE's compliments in Episode 4 all seem to be triggered by ROZ's expression of self-deprecation. But (further to my previous comments) EVE's main purpose here is to make ROZ overturn her decision about dropping out. Cultural expectations towards saving someone from a devastating act as such are much stronger than those towards confronting an expression of self-deprecation. Nonetheless, since there is a strong correlation between quitting university and having poor performance, EVE uses compliments as a politeness strategy to accomplish two goals at once: challenging ROZ's decision and (or through) confronting her expression of self-deprecation.

II.2.3.1 Discourse Strategies of Anti-Deprecative Compliments

As indicated in Episode 4, an anti-deprecativ compliment may be signalled through questions (e.g., “*3lah nti wash khassek* (Why? What do you lack)”) or through negations (e.g., “*Ga3 makansh menha, 3andek bezzeḥ qudurat ghi makish shayfethom* (It is not the case at all; you have so much potential; you just cannot see it)”).

In addition to the two instances that are demonstrated in Episode 4, we reported 28 other instances of negations and 26 other instances of questions (see Table II-10 and Table II-11 for further details). We also encountered 34 cases where anti-deprecativ compliments were signalled through integrated forms of both questions and negations. We split those integrated formulas into two so as to join them to the instances of questions and negations. Our corpus, therefore, consists of 88 anti-deprecativ compliments: 45 negation-based compliments and 43 question-based compliments.

Table II-10 Instances of Negations by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 12 (27%) | M → F: 09 (20%) | Same-gender: 32 (71%) |
| F → M: 04 (09%) | M → M: 20 (44%) | Mixed-gender: 13 (29%) |
| Total: 16 (36%) | Total: 29 (64%) | Total: 45 (100%) |

Negation use is a linguistic device which we expected to be associated with the conversational style of men. Indeed, as Table II-10 indicates, men made more use of negations than did women (64% vs. 36%). Examining the distribution of negations across the two types of talk, we found that 71% of all the instances of negations occurred in same-gender talk rising from 29% in mixed-gender talk. Our data establish that gender was a salient variable in these interactions. One explanation of our expectations and matching conclusions is that most of the anti-deprecative compliments that we reported were extracted from interactions between husbands and wives. Accordingly, Bechari men attended to the emotional demands of their wives that were implied in their utterances.

Table II-11 Instances of Questions by Gender

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| F → F: 02 (05%) | M → F: 19 (44%) | Same-gender: 12 (28%) |
| F → M: 12 (28%) | M → M: 10 (23%) | Mixed-gender: 39 (72%) |
| Total: 14 (33%) | Total: 29 (67%) | Total: 43 (100%) |

Question use was reported to be a characteristic of men's conversational style. As shown in Table II-11 above, men significantly made more use of the question-asking formula than did women (67% vs. 33%). Unexpectedly, the highest number of questions was offered by men to women (44%). The group of "from female speakers to male speakers (F → M)" came second in rank (28%). In other words, mixed-gender talk was marked by the highest rate of question-asking formulas (72%). These

patterns provide evidence that paying questions to the opposite gender to make him/her rethink about his/her utterances and self-belittling acts is an important concern for speakers when using compliments.

Table II-12 Instances of Anti-deprecativ Compliments by Gender and by Type of Discourse Strategy

| Female | Male | Type of Talk |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| F → F: 14 (16%) | M → F: 28 (32%) | Same-gender: 44 (50%) |
| F → M: 16 (18%) | M → M: 30 (34%) | Mixed-gender: 44 (50%) |
| Total: 30 (34%) | Total: 58 (66%) | Total: 88 (100%) |
| Type of Discourse Strategy | | |
| Negations: 45 (51%) | | Questions: 43 (49%) |

Table II-12 summarises the overall use of anti-deprecativ compliments. Evidently, men's compliments were triggered more than were those of women (66% vs. 34%). One explanation of this prominent ratio of occurrence is that, as stressed earlier, most of the data pertaining to anti-deprecativ compliments were collected from husband-wife interactions, which were characterised by the use of utterances like "*Waqila rani nesmen yak?* (Perhaps I am getting fat, right?)". Husbands were often responding to such utterances with "*Ella waluu raki tbani mliha normal* (No, you look good, normal)" and other times with "*Ella 3lah? Bel3aks la taille nta3ek raha ttrigal* (No, why [are you saying that]? On the contrary, your size is getting better)". Another explanation is that, in male to male talks, self-deprecation was occurring recursively which made male speakers utter compliments recursively as well. The predominant triggering acts of men were marked by: "*A sahbi rah ma wellitch ...* (O my friend I stopped being [VP/NP/PP]) and "*raha tbanli ...* (It seems to me [VP])". Other overall patterns that emerge from analysis are: (i) men's compliments were triggered 30 times when conversing with other men and 28 times when dealing with women, (ii) women's compliments were triggered 14 times when

talking to other women and 16 times when dealing with men, (iii) anti-deprecatative compliments occurred 44 times in same-gender talks and 44 times in mixed-gender talks, and (IV) Negations were used 45 times and questions were used 43 times.

One explanation of these similar proportions is the co-occurrence of questions and negations within the same compliment. Another explanation might be the recurrence of anti-deprecatative compliments within the same speech event.

Taken together then, the discourse strategy of both negation-making and question-asking with one or more compliments can be considered a "compliment framing strategy." Speakers chose to surround self-deprecation with positive comments. This strategy functioned to create a socially appropriate solidarity framework and sustain the sense of attending to the emotional demands of the addressee.

II.2.4 Overall Features of Pro forma Compliments

We now turn to the overall complimenting patterns and features that speakers used to fulfil their interpersonal and ideational purposes. As mentioned, they used recycled versions of compliments to fulfil their roles as thoughtful members of the community. They also used compliments to address specific FTAs (criticisms, requests and apologies) and to confront self-deprecation and other verbal acts of self-harm. Here, we describe only the most frequently used syntactic and lexical patterns of each type, and offer an interpretation of the overall distribution of pro forma compliments across the gender groups of our sample.

II.2.4.1 Syntactic Markers of Pro forma Compliments in BA

We were interested in sorting the syntactic structures of pro forma compliments in Bechari Arabic, but they were too many to be listed here, given that (unlike English) compliments in Arabic are highly non-formulaic (Sweid, 2014).

Additionally, we cautioned against providing inaccurate English equivalents to the words and expressions of Bechari Arabic that do not really have direct equivalents in English. By way of alternative, we drew out the syntactic markers that signalled the occurrences of pro forma compliments. We distinguished three syntactic features of recycled compliments:

- a. The use of the term “*sah* ([that’s] true)” (e.g., *Sah raki te3qali* (that is true you are getting sage)).
- b. The use of the expression “*3andeh/ha lhaq* (s/he is right)” (e.g., *3andeh lhaq ta3ref tersom* (He is right you know how to draw)).
- c. The use of a complete repetition of another one’s compliment.

We further identified four syntactic features of compliment/FTA pairs:

- a. The use of the term “*bessah* (but)” to separate a positive evaluation from a negative one (like in “*jat mliha bessah kont qader ddir khir* (It is good, but you could have done better)”).
- b. The use of compare and contrast transition words (such as “*khir men* (better than)”).
- c. The use of the expression “*awwal marra* (the first time)” as a means of acknowledging an addressee’s performance, behaviour, appearance, etc. to be the best of all what came/existed beforehand (e.g., *hadi awwal marra tlebsi mlih* (this is the first time that you dress well)).
- d. Noticing a change in the addressee (e.g., “*byadhiti* (you became white/whiter)” and “*zyaniti* (you became (more) beautiful)”).
- e. Suspicious Repetition of similar compliments;
- f. Extensive use of positive evaluative adjectives;
- g. (Speaker) Claiming that the addressee’s prayers are always answered;

- h. (Speaker) Claiming that the addressee is much better at something (than he is);
- i. The use of the expressions “*galbak kbir* (your heart is big)” and “*ma ykudak waluu* (nothing affects you negatively)”;

The first syntactic marker typified explicit criticism, the second, third and fourth typified implicit criticism, the fifth, sixth and seventh signified requests, and the eighth and last one signified apologies. We at last distinguished six syntactic features of anti-deprecative compliments: the first five of them signalled negation based complimenting and the sixth one signalled question based complimenting:

- a. The use of the terms “*Ella*” and/or “*walou*” (No).
- b. The use of the expressions “*khlass ma* (enough with)”, “*ma tzidish* (stop)”, “*ma tgolish* (do not say)”, “*ma tahsish* (you can never know)”, and “*makansh ga3 menha* (it is not the case at all)”.
- c. The use of the expression “*bel3aks* (on the contrary)”
- d. The use of the expression “*Hetta nti* (you too)”
- e. The use of the expression “*ma khassak/ ykhussak waluu* (you do not lack anything)”
- f. The use of the terms “*3la(s)h* (why)” and “*kifah* (how come)”.

II.2.4.2 Lexical Features of Pro forma Compliments in BA

We were also interested in identifying the lexical features of compliments in Bechari Arabic. We expected to encounter an exhaustive list of lexical items pertaining to compliments. The findings; however, did not match our expectations. Lexical choice was in fact found to be highly formulaic: 12 adjectives accounted for 70.8% of all positive evaluative adjectives in the compliments. Those most used were *zwin(a)* (nice) and *mbenen(a)* (“*mbenen*” does not have a direct equivalent in English, as it can mean: cool, lovable, gentle, funny, or any other quality depending on the

context in which it occurs). *Zwin(a)* and *mbenen(a)* together accounted for 56% of the data. Other positive evaluative adjectives included: *3aqel(a)* (sage), *nas-mlah* (kind), *shbab/shabba*, (handsome/ pretty), *kriim(a)* (generous), *mess3ef* (obedient), *qafez* (skilled for men)/ *shatra* (skilled for women), *qarray(a)* (smart), *bnin(a)* (delicious) and *zella* (deadly attractive; used for females only). The most frequently used verb was *ya3jeb* (like), which accounted for 61.6% of all verbs. The most common adverb was “*mlih* (well)”, which accounted for 80% of the adverbs that were used. The most frequently used religious expressions were “*Allah ybarek* (May Allah bless)” “*Masha Allah* (What Allah wills [shall come true])” and “*Allah yhafdhak* (May Allah protect you)”, accounting for 89% of all religious expressions in use.

II.2.5 Gender-linked Features of Pro forma compliments

Large gender differences were evident in the use of pro forma compliments, as indicated in Table II.13, figure II.1 and figure II.2 below.

Table II-13 Overall Distribution of Pro forma Compliments

| Compliment Type | F→F | | F→ M | | M →F | | M→ M | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Recycled Compliments | | | | | | | | |
| Religious Compliments | 18 | 5,86 | 15 | 4,88 | 8 | 2,60 | 21 | 6,84 |
| Thematic Compliments | 26 | 8,46 | 10 | 3,25 | 3 | 0,97 | 17 | 5,53 |
| Subtotal | 44 | 14,33 | 25 | 8,14 | 11 | 3,58 | 38 | 12,37 |
| Compliment/FTA Pairs | | | | | | | | |
| Compliment/Criticism Pairs | 17 | 5,53 | 9 | 2,93 | 16 | 5,21 | 15 | 4,88 |
| Compliment/Request Pairs | 18 | 5,86 | 9 | 2,93 | 3 | 0,97 | 13 | 4,23 |
| Compliment /Apology Pairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0,32 |
| Subtotal | 35 | 11,40 | 18 | 5,86 | 19 | 6,18 | 29 | 9,44 |
| Anti-deprecativ Compliments | | | | | | | | |
| Negation-Complimenting | 12 | 3,90 | 4 | 1,30 | 9 | 2,93 | 20 | 6,51 |
| Question-Complimenting | 2 | 0,65 | 12 | 3,90 | 19 | 6,18 | 10 | 3,25 |
| Subtotal | 14 | 4,56 | 16 | 5,21 | 28 | 9,12 | 30 | 9,77 |
| Total | 93 | 30,29 | 59 | 19,21 | 58 | 18,89 | 97 | 31,59 |

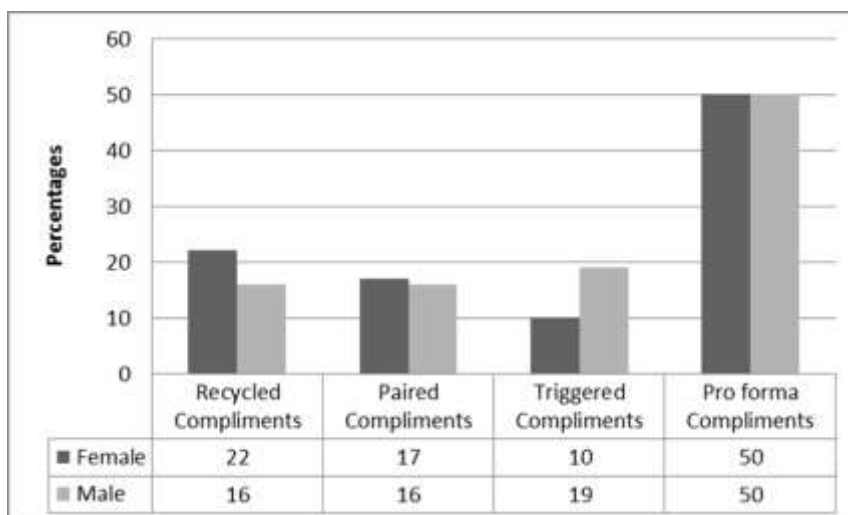


Figure II-1 Distribution of pro forma compliment types by gender

Table II-13, Figure II-1 (above) and Figure II-2 (below) present the overall distribution of pro forma compliments in Bechari Arabic. On the whole, men and women used pro forma compliments in an equivalent manner (50.49% vs. 49.51%). The highest number of pro forma compliments was offered by male speakers to male speakers (32%), followed by female speakers to female speakers (30%). Evidently, and in accordance with figure II-1, the highest number of pro forma compliments was offered in same gender talks (62%) as opposed to mixed-gender talks (38%). The type of pro forma compliment that was mostly used was recycled compliments (39%).

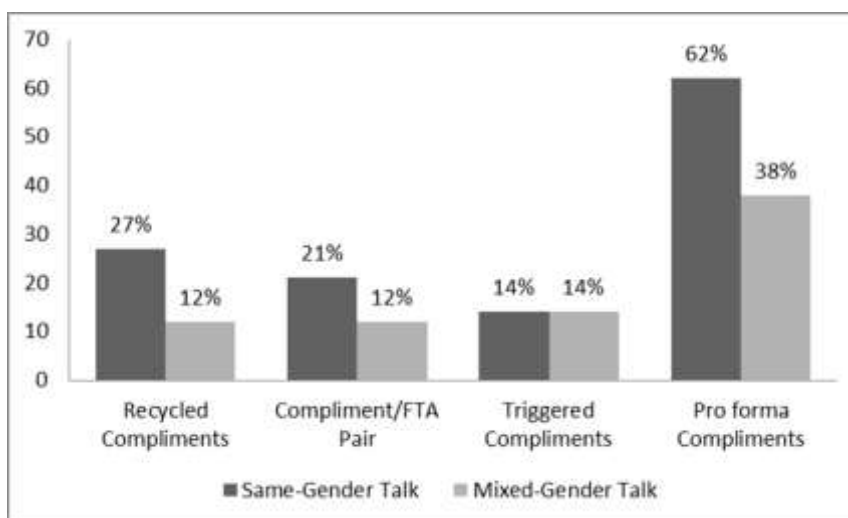


Figure II-2 Distribution of pro forma compliment types by type of talk

In summary, these analyses of complimenting formulas in Bechari spoken interactions provide evidence that gender of speaker and gender of addressee play a role in the selection of both partial and integral formulas. The findings regarding pro forma compliment formulating might lead one to the conclusion that women and men when speaking in same-gender talks are more oriented toward solidarity than when speaking in mixed-gender talks. We caution against taking this interpretation too far; however, because women and men in mixed-gender talks used other kinds of discourse strategies to fulfil their cultural and societal roles. For example, men often paired their acts of criticism with apologies with female addressees. Women, for another example, confronted men's expressions of self-deprecation by uttering similar expressions of self-deprecation as well, as illustrated in the following example:

1. MAN: Rani nhess ruuhi netbakkesh, ma wellitsh nefham belkhuf

I feel like I am getting stupid, I no longer understand things quickly.

2. WMN: Ana tani wellah, marraat nhess 3aqli hbas

Me too I swear, sometimes I feel like my mind has stopped [processing].

WMN's self-deprecation in this case is also regarded as a politeness strategy, as it adheres to the maxim of agreement (cf. Chapter I, Section 2).

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter, we described how, where and when we conducted our research. We also presented the two main instruments of data collection that have been used in the past to study gender differences in complimenting and the advantages and disadvantages of each of these instruments with respect to studying actual language use, as a means of justifying why we chose to collect data using ethnography (participant observation and field notes). In the second part of this chapter, we analysed our data through extracting the various linguistic

forms that have been used by interactants when complimenting each other. We provided the context of the talk and inserted the episodes in which compliments occurred so as to avoid any misinterpretations.

Chapter II argued that it is not only gender that explains the occurrence of a certain syntactic or semantic formula of pro forma compliments; but also the conversational requirements and cultural expectations.

General Conclusion

Our analysis of compliments and the use of specific linguistic formulas in conversations between same-gender and mixed-gender pairs in the Bechari society validated the need to reassess some of the principal categories of analysis that have been previously established in complimentary language and gender studies. Particularly, the data elucidate that a gendered complimentary style cannot be determined by counting individual linguistic forms without regard to the cultural context, as the context itself, the task undertaken, the topic at hand, and other discourse variables may be responsible for the forms of compliments that occur. Our findings on the distribution of pro forma compliments (those compliments that are used as strategies to fulfil a certain personal or cultural purpose) across the different gender groups show that the major variables that are responsible for the elicitation or suppression of specific complimenting formulas include: the gender of the speaker, the gender of the addressee, the type of relationship between the interlocutors or their cultural group affiliations, and the specific requirements associated with the talk situation.

The findings related to the use of recycled compliments (those that are inspired from other complimenters and used at second-hand) indicate that female speakers appear to be demonstrating their readiness to collaborate with other conversationalists in the production of a compliment, given that they are under the same cultural constraints as the compliment givers/receivers themselves (Dendenne, 2021). Why and how, then, did other gender differences persist despite situational equality? What we discovered was that, even in a naturalistically controlled context with relative situational equality among participants, men and women did make gender-linked linguistic choices. Women recycled religious expressions significantly

more than did men. The most recycled religious expressions were: *Allah ybarek* (May Allah bless)” “*Mashaallah* (What Allah wills [shall come true])” and “*Allah yhafdhak* (May Allah protect you)”. We further found that most recycled compliments are marked by the use of agreement expressions, such as “*sah* ([that’s] true)” and “*3andeh/ha lhaq* (s/he is right)”.

With regard to the use of compliment/FTA pairing formulas, our findings show that women most often pair their compliments with explicit FTAs whilst men pair them with implicit ones. From a cognitive perspective, we hypothesised that differences may occur, in part, because men and women have different intentions behind pairing compliments with FTAs. That is, they may either pair a compliment with an FTA to mitigate the force of the FTA as they may pair an FTA with a compliment to hedge on the force of the compliment. For some speakers, creating harmony and establishing rapport may be all-important, while for others, power-oriented goals are most crucial. Indeed, our findings indicate that men are often more power-oriented in communicative interactions in which paired compliments occur. Put differently, men make use of compliment/implicit criticism to reduce the force of the compliment so as to maintain their associated social powers. A more thorough and balanced approach to addressing such power orientations in subsequent analyses would involve also examining how speakers expressed other types of speech acts. The straightforward conversational style of women in pairing compliments with FTAs supports our hypothesis that women are more attentive to female addressee’s emotional and psychological demands. Women also focused more on expressing solidarity within their own subcultural affiliated group. Gender-linked linguistic choice was also found to be a feature of paired compliments. Compliment/criticism pairs were mainly marked by the use of comparisons and contrasts whereas

compliment/request and compliment/apology pairs were marked by the extensive use of positive evaluative adjectives, such as “*mess3ef* (obedient)”, *shatra* (skilled for women), and “*kriim* (generous)”. These gender-linked patterns support the view that language reflects, sustains, and recreates power differences between men and women in society.

Although the present study did not undertake an analysis of all the social factors that may trigger a compliment, our findings show that men attended to their addressees’ psychological demands and confronted their expressions of self-deprecation and other verbal self-harm acts more than did women. The male speakers investigated in this study demonstrated their sensitivity to their addressees by engaging in a form of accommodation. They accommodated their complimenting style - including varying the linguistic devices of questions and negations- according to addressees. Thus, when considering speaking styles (whether cooperative or powerless), we need to caution against overgeneralization. The findings related to anti-deprecatative compliments seem to support the view that it is incorrect to portray all women and no men as engaging in cooperative talk, and that it is equally incorrect to characterise all women and no men as powerless or insecure speakers.

All in all, our findings concerning pro forma complimenting in Bechar speech community indicate that it is not only the gender or the sex of the speaker that inspires and explains the use of certain complimenting formulas, but also the topic of the talk and the (cultural or personal) requirements of both the speaker and the addressee. Two important questions, then, for further research are: What are the different strategies that are employed when responding to pro forma compliments? Do compliment response strategies reflect, sustain, and recreate power differences between men and women in the speech community of Bechar?

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Appendix: The First Initial Set of Field Notes

Notes #vol. 1

Setting: Inside a bus at the bus station of Bouhlal next to the prefecture of Bechar, about 10 men, 7 women, 3 girls

It was about 12am. My dad and I entered the bus when more than 11 people were already seated. We said “Al-salamu ‘alaikom”, but only one man replied “Wa ‘alaikom al-salam warahmatu Allahi wabarakatuh”. Everybody seemed bored and tired and they were all loaded with filled shopping bags. We took a seat on the front left side of the bus. More people were getting into the bus; most of them gripped the hanging straps for support. Everything was calm until an old man stepped inside making a huge fuss about the bags that were placed on the bus floor. Apparently, that old man was the bus driver. The two women that were sitting right behind us started screaming at him claiming that the size of the bus was too small. The old man let out a long sigh of despair and left the bus. Everybody started looking through the window seeing where the bus driver was heading. The two women that were screaming (women A & B) and another female standee (woman C) started chatting with each other. At a certain point woman A said to woman B: “Ya 3omri! Yeddik bezzaf sg^har w na3min bayna f 3omrek ma g^hsalti ma’an.” (Oh! Your hands are so small and soft, you must have never washed the dishes.” Woman B made a sound of giggling and then said: “Llaaa wallah waluu; llema3n ghir huuma, [a sound of laughter] ħna ga3 3ayletna yeddihom dayrin hak w kandon 3andna fel wirata had es^hs^hi” (No I swear not, the dishes are the only things around (I keep washing dishes), (in fact) everybody in our family has hands like mine, and I think it’s something genetic). Woman A replied: “Ah saha, sa3datek machi kima halti, yeddiyya ga3 ħashfo” (Ah I see! (Well) lucky you, yours are not like mine, mine have all wrinkled). Woman B replied: “Aaah k^halini ns^hof, [silence] lla lla ma kayk^hoshom waluu; ‘ajbuuni” (Ah let me see, no actually they don’t need anything, (and) I like them). Woman C said: “Wah, 3andha Lħaq ma yk^hoshom waluu; ghi wash jayyin bayna nta3 waħda mulaat dar Allah ybarek” (Yes, she has a significant point; they (your hands) don’t need anything, it’s just they look like hands of a (fine) housewife, Allah ybarek). Woman B Agreeing with woman C: “Wah s^hefti! Allah ybarek” (See! Allah ybarek).

When woman A complimented woman B on her hands, she paired her compliment with a sort of criticism (bayna f 3omrek ma g^hsalti ma’an), such an utterance in the Algerian culture denotes that a woman is lazy and not qualified to be a housewife.

When woman A expressed a self-deprecation (yeddiyya ga3 ħashfo), woman B automatically paid her a compliment to redress deprecation. That is what urged woman C to join them by paying a recycled compliment (... ma yk^hoshom waluu) to fulfil her cultural role and participate in the conversation.

المخلص

هذه الأطروحة تقدم دراسة تحليلية للفروقات الجنسانية عند استعمال المجاملات الشكلية من قبل سكان بشار المتحدثين باللغة العربية البشارية . لقد انتقينا ثلاثة أنواع من المجاملات للقيام بدراستنا : النوع الأول هو المجاملات المعاد انتاجها و التي تكون منقولة عن متحدث آخر ؛ النوع الثاني هو المجاملات المصحوبة بأفعال كلام أخرى و التي غالبا ما تكون مهددة للصورة الحسنة للمخاطب (أو في بعض الأحيان للمتحدث نفسه) ؛ أما النوع الثالث فهو المجاملات المستعملة كمضادات لعبارات الانتقاص من الذات أو التقليل من شأن الذات (الصادرة من قبل المتحدث معه) . تعتمد دراستنا على مئة حلقة من المحادثات التي تم توثيقها في ملاحظات ميدانية . بالاعتماد على دراسة بوجهات نظر مختلفة ؛ قمنا بتحليل صيغ و استراتيجيات و وظائف المجاملات التي تم اصدارها في تلك الحلقات . لقد وجدنا بأن الجنس (جنس المتحدث أو جنس المخاطب) له دور جلي في التعبير عن حس التعاون و الترابط عند استعمال الكلام ؛ حيث أننا وجدنا بأن النساء يهدفن إلى الاتفاق مع المتحدثين من خلال نسخ و إعادة استعمال عباراتهم المجاملة أكثر من الرجال و أما الرجال فإنهم يفضلون الرد على عبارات الانتقاص من الذات بالنفي المصحوب بمجاملات دبلوماسية أكثر من النساء ؛ فبنفيهم هذا هم يضمنون المحافظة على قوتهم في المجتمع و كذا مراعاة ما يحتاج المخاطب إلى سماعه ؛ لكن الجنس وحده (على حسب ما وجدنا) لا يشجع أو يبرر استعمال صيغ و أنماط محددة عند المجاملة ؛ حيث أن المتطلبات الاجتماعية و الثقافية للمحادثة كذلك تساهم في استنباط أشكال و استراتيجيات معينة للمجاملات ؛ تحليلنا قد أفاد أن الأسلوب المجامل الشكلي لا يمكن تعريفه أو تحديده عن طريق تحليل الصيغ اللغوية البحتة في معزل عن سياق الكلام الثقافي و الموضوعي .

الكلمات المفتاحية : الجنس ؛ المجاملات الشكلية ؛ صيغ ؛ اللغة العربية البشارية