COMPLIMENT RESPONSE PATTERNS BETWEEN PERSIAN MALE AND FEMALE ENGLISH AND NON-ENGLISH TEACHERS

Zahra Jalilzadeh-Mohammadi and Mehdi Sarkhosh

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate both the compliment response (CR) patterns between male and female English and non-English teachers and the effect of exposure to English on produced CRs. The study was conducted on 50 male and female English and 50 male and female non-English teachers. The teachers were chosen through non-randomized sampling. Participants were asked to respond to a discourse completion test (DCT) which comprised eight complimenting situations. In order to investigate the effect of exposure to English on CR strategies, CRs produced by males and females in both groups were compared. The results revealed that at macro level, there were differences between females and males in the applied strategies in both groups. Regarding the effect of exposure on CRs and CR behavior, it was found that exposure to English influenced CR patterns and strategies. It was concluded that different CR patterns implied cognitive difference between genders and their perception of appropriateness. CR behavior shift implied the occurrence of acculturation in CR patterns and strategies.

Key words

compliment, compliment response, acculturation, gender, politeness theory, female, male

1   Introduction

Complimenting is "a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes 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" (Holmes 1986: 446). Compliments and compliment responses are studied within the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory. They are studied with reference to the concept of positive face, which is a person's tendency to be appreciated and acknowledged. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), positive face is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some other executors" (ibid.: 62). Interlocutors try to save positive face in two ways, both of which are present in complimenting situations: 1) by demonstrating something in common in between or 2) by complimenting each other's self-image. When responding to a compliment, one either accepts it, which provokes the potential for self-praise resulting in the violation of modesty

maxim or evades or rejects it culminating in the violation of agreement maxim (Holmes 1998). Therefore, the response the complimentee provides depends on the way she judges the compliment, which, in turn, reflects her social codes of language appropriateness and politeness interpretations (Locher & Watts 2008).

A plethora of studies have been conducted on compliments and CRs in different societies and among different cultural groups (e.g. Holmes 1986, Locher & Watts 2008, Pomerantz 1978). Besides the cross-cultural research on CR, the relationship between complimenting and gender (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003) and CR and gender (Herbert 1990, Holmes 1998) has been investigated extensively. These studies show that, across cultures, there are different CR strategies. The probability of a shift in CR patterns, occurring when two distinct cultures meet in a foreign language learning context, is another issue noticed by the researchers on cross-cultural CR. Exposure to a language, other than one's mother tongue, might provoke a shift in the overall CR behavior of the exposed individuals. Exposure has been documented to be the most important factor resulting in cultural code transmission among societies (Sifakis 2004). In language learning contexts, such a transmission is studied in relation to socio-pragmatic exchanges through acculturation, as in SLA context. Loss of some cultural norms of native language, which have been influenced by those of L2, has been documented previously (Brown 1994, Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993). Chen (1993), for instance, compared CRs produced by the Chinese and Americans in 1993 and found that Americans tended to accept compliments more often, while the Chinese rejected compliments more frequently. Subsequently, in Chen and Yang's (2010) study, which was a replication of Chen's (1993) study, it was found that the Chinese' CR patterns resembled those of Americans and the Chinese CR behavior shifted to more 'Accept' strategy application.

The present study intends to investigate CR strategies used by Persian speaking male and female teachers within the same language community, i.e. Persian English teachers and Persian non-English subject teachers. Another aim of the present study is to explore the role of exposure to English, among Persian English teachers, on CR behavior shift.

The significance of the present study, however, lies in the fact that the previous studies on CR patterns and gender compared CRs produced by males and females within one cultural group of a society or between two different societies, while the present study was conducted on two speech communities within a single society, i.e. Persian speaking non-English teachers and Persian speaking English teachers in Iran; the first group shares Persian cultural elements and the second shares both Persian and English norms and elements; thus, behavior shift was more discernible. The other difference between the present study and

the previous ones is that the previous studies compared CRs between women and men qualitatively and the significance of the difference was not examined. Consequently, values of the differences were not considered, which can imply cross-gender issues, especially when the effect of a variable is examined on the difference and its value.

2   Literature review

2.1 Theoretical framework

Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory consists of two main sections, the first part discusses the nature of politeness and its mechanism in interaction and the second introduces politeness strategies and examples from English, Tamil and Tzeltal languages. They introduced the notion of 'face' according to which two types of face are tried to be maintained in interactions, i.e. positive face and negative face. Therefore, they divided politeness into positive and negative politeness. Interacting while trying to save positive face expresses positive politeness, which is attained in two ways: 1) by appreciating and complimenting addressee's self-image, 2) by indicating something in common and similar among the participants in interaction. Negative face is expressed in two ways as well: 1) by trying to save interlocutor's negative face through respecting his not-to-be-imposed right, 2) by satisfying interlocutors' face, through decreasing face-threatening acts (Kitamura 2000).

The mechanism of complimenting speech act is explained through the mentioned ways to satisfy politeness principles; however, as it was subsequently mentioned by the theory proposers and as the examples presented in the theory showed, the strategies utilized in order to attain the goal of politeness in interaction are different among speech communities. The difference is due to distinctive perception and interpretation of politeness (Brown & Levinson 1978) and distinctive perception and application of speech-acts, the building blocks of conversations (Holmes 1986). In the following years, Leech (1983) proposed six maxims as politeness principles, i.e. tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy maxims. Relevant to complimenting situation are modesty and agreement maxims. Modesty maxim means to decrease self-praise and/or to increase self-disprize and agreement maxim, which in keeping with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategies, means to mitigate disagreement between interlocutors and/or maximize agreement expressions. Thus, CRs are governed by two maxims. According to Pomerantz (1978) a) complimentee must agree with complimenter on the compliment (agreement maxim), and b) complimentee must avoid self-praise, which imperils modesty

maxim (Leech 1983). Along the same line, studies confirmed that cultures utilize the maxims differently according to their culture-specific norms in CR production. For instance, in his study on Chinese and American English speakers, Chen (1993) found that American English speakers, following Leech's Agreement Maxim, used the acceptance strategy more frequently while Chinese English speakers, governed by Leech's Modesty Maxim, used rejection as the more frequent strategy.

2.2 CR and gender

Many studies have made efforts to investigate compliments and CRs in relation to gender (cf. Holmes 1998, Rees-Miller 2011). Some differences can be attributed to the common topics of complimenting used by different genders. As a case in point, a study on celebrities in Malaysia, conducted by Yusof and Hoon (2014) found that women tend to give compliment mainly on appearance compared to men (37.1% vs. 21.3%), while men tend to give compliment on possession most frequently (32.8%) in comparison with women (23.1%). As another instance, Eckert and Mc Connell-Ginet's (2003) study demonstrated that females give and receive compliments mainly on appearance, whereas males tend to give and receive compliments primarily on performance, ability, or skill. Previous studies on compliments and CRs between men and women show that besides differences between topics men and women apply, frequencies of giving and receiving compliments between them are different as well. As a case in point, the corpus of the data in a study done by Holmes (1998) on American society demonstrated that when women are involved in conversations, complimenting and the following CR are seen more frequently in interactions. According to her, 51 per cent of the compliments were given by a woman to another woman, while only nine per cent were exchanged between two men, which was in common with what was reported by Lorenzo-Dus's (2001) investigation in Britain. The differences between genders are explained by Herbert (1990) through the way females and males perceive compliments, i.e. males find compliments as potentially face-threatening acts, while females see compliments as a medium to create and maintain solidarity in interaction.

2.3 CR and the cross-cultural studies

Studies have shown that, besides gender, culture is a determining factor influencing strategies used to respond to compliments. For instance, a cross-cultural study on CR strategies among Australian English speakers and Iranian Persian speakers was done by Sorahi and Nazemi (2013). This contrastive study demonstrated that Iranian Persian speakers used fewer Accept strategies and

more Reject and Evade strategies compared to Australian English speakers. Along the same line, Creese (1991) compared CRs produced by male and female American and British teachers on the strategies they applied. She found that male and female American teachers respectively accepted compliments more (54%), then reflected them at the percentage of 19 per cent and rejected them on 16.3 per cent of complimenting situations, and British teachers responded to the compliments using acceptance (45.9%), reflection (40.6%) and rejection (16.3%) strategies. Her findings clearly show discrepancy in the percentage of strategies between the two cultures. Although her findings go with two previous study results reported by Herbert (1990) and Holmes (1986) in the order of more frequent strategies, the difference between the ratios is clearly different. The way different speech communities respond to compliments reflects the level of their keeping with modesty and agreement maxims and appropriateness perception.

2.4 Socio-pragmatic transmission of CRs across genders

Teaching English with the observance of pragmatic principles enables learners to use language socially appropriately in the target context (Sifakis 2004); however, socio-pragmatic exchanges are indispensable in such teaching programs, as loss of some cultural norms of native language influenced by those of L2 has been found in previous studies (Holmes & Brown, 1997, Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993) under the heading of acculturation. Acculturation model was proposed by Schumann (1986) and, as Brown (2007) stated, it has been shown to occur in L2 teaching and learning context as well. As a case in point, Spenader (2011) measured acculturation level of four American sojourners to Sweden in relation to L2 learning. As demonstrated by the results, there was a positive relationship between levels of L2 proficiency and acculturation level. Besides, regarding the adaptiveness of human behavior, it is probable for acculturation to also occur in foreign language context. In other words, in the long run, exposure to a foreign language can hypothetically lead to behavior change and in particular, CR behavior change among the exposed individuals.

In this regard, in an interesting study, Monjezi (2014) investigated the effect of foreign language learning on CR strategies across genders. His samples included two groups of intermediate and advanced male and female English students. As he reported, proficiency in English, as a foreign language, was found to be a determinant factor in CR production between two groups and the ratios of applied CR strategies were found different in terms of two proficiency levels across genders. For instance, the ratio of questioning the compliment in male group was 15-18.75 (intermediate-advanced), while in the female group it was 16.66-11.11. As another example, Chen (1993) compared CRs between Chinese

and Americans in 1993 and found that Americans tend to accept more, while the Chinese used reject more frequently. Subsequently, in Chen and Yang's (2010) study, which was a replication of Chen's previous study from 1993, it was found that Chinese CRs had approached those of English after long-term exposure and they tended to accept compliments more frequently. Thus, socio-pragmatic transmission of CR behavior, as a result of exposure and through CR behavior acculturation, was demonstrated. The present study also examines the effect of exposure to English on CR patterns produced by male and female Iranian Persian speakers; in so doing, the study aims at answering the following research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: Is there any difference between Persian male and female non-English teachers in frequency of strategies (Accept, Reject and Evade) used to respond to compliments?

RQ 2: Is there any difference between Persian male and female English teachers in frequency of strategies (Accept, Reject and Evade) used to respond to compliments?

RQ 3: Are CRs produced by females in non-English group the same as those produced by females in the English group?

RQ 4: Are CRs produced by males in non-English group the same as those produced by males in the English group?

RQ 5: Is male and female Persian English teachers' CR behavior acculturated to that of English?

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of the present study were 100 teachers who spoke Persian as their mother tongue. They were assigned to two groups, one group was comprised of 50 male and female English teachers called the exposed group (E-group) and the other group consisted of 50 male and female non-English teachers, called non-exposed group (NE-group). The participants were assigned to groups through non-randomized sampling design. E-group participants were chosen from among teachers aged 20-to-30 from a language institute in Urmia, Iran. E-group members were all graduates in English literature and NE-group teachers were all non-English subject-matter teachers, who were not in touch with or exposed to English in their daily lives. In order to satisfy the ethical considerations, the participants were made sure that their answers would remain confidential. The participants were not supposed to write their names on the DCTs in order to observe the anonymity considerations.

3.2 Instrument

A DCT was generated on the basis of Manes' (1983) compliment classification to elicit CRs and was utilized to gather data in the present study. As he puts it, compliments fall into four categories, i.e. physical appearance, owned object, character and ability. As the authors of the study, we were well cognizant of the shortcomings of using DCT compared to naturalistic data collection (cf. Golato 2003, Yuan 2001 for shortcomings of DCT). Every method of data collection has its strengths and weaknesses depending on the purpose and nature of research; for example, "DCT may be adequate when the aim is to make probability-based assertions and/or broad generalizations, while recording naturally occurring talk-in-interactions will suit better if the aim is to study actual language use and/or provide a description of the organization of talk-in-interaction" (Heidari-Shahreza et al. 2011: 161). On the other hand, DCT can help the researcher collect ample data in a relatively short time and is more economical compared to naturalistic data collection; it can also "provide a sound template of stereotypically perceived requirements for socially appropriate CRs in the groups studied" (Lorenzo-Dus 2001, as cited in Heidari-Shahreza et al. 2011: 161). The DCT used in this study (cf. Appendix 1) comprised of eight complimenting situations, two situations for each complimenting category which were complimenting on 1) physical appearance, 2) owned object, 3) character and 4) ability). The validity of the DCT was tested through Expert Opinion Method.

3.3 Procedure and data analysis

The participants were asked to envision eight complimenting situations in the DCTs and provide responses to them as they would in real interactions. They had five to ten minutes to complete the DCTs and were supposed to write from one word to a sentence as a CR. Some of them answered the DCTs on the spot and some took them home and returned later. CRs were categorized in the light of Holmes's (1998) taxonomy including 'Accepts', 'Rejects' and 'Evades' covering all types of CRs at micro- and macro-levels (cf. Table 1).

Macro-level	Micro-level	Sample item
Accept	1. Appreciation Token	"Thank you."
	2. Agreeing Utterance	"I know it myself."
	3. Downgrading/Qualifying Utterance	"It's not that much good."
	4. Return Compliment	"Yours was very nice, too."
Reject	1. Disagreeing Utterance	"I don't think so."
	2. Question Accuracy	"Oh, no, Really?"
	3. Challenging Sincerity	"You must be kidding."
Evade	1. Shift Credit	"You are polite."
	2. Informative Comment	"You can get it from (store name)."
	3. Request Reassurance	"Do you really think so?"

Table 1: Holmes's categorization of CRs (1998)

Having been categorized in the light of Holmes's (1998) taxonomy at macro-level, responses were divided into two groups of male and female and were compared to find existing differences in each group (E and NE-groups) separately. Significance of the differences was measured and compared between E and NE-groups using Mann-Whitney U- test to find out if exposure to English influenced the magnitude of the differences and their significance between males and females. Mann Whitney U-test was chosen to test the significance of the differences because the present study is a non-parametric one. Subsequently, the frequency of strategies applied by males of E-group was compared to those produced by males of NE-group and the same was done on CRs produced by females to find out whether exposure influenced the way different genders responded to compliments across E and NE-groups. Furthermore, in an inter-group fashion, CRs were compared between the two groups at micro-level to investigate the differences in a smaller scale.

4 Results

In order to answer the questions of the study, first, results of comparisons between genders in NE-group are provided; then, the parallel results in E-group are demonstrated. Subsequently, the significance of the differences between genders in both groups is provided and, finally, comparisons between genders in both groups at micro-level are demonstrated through figures.
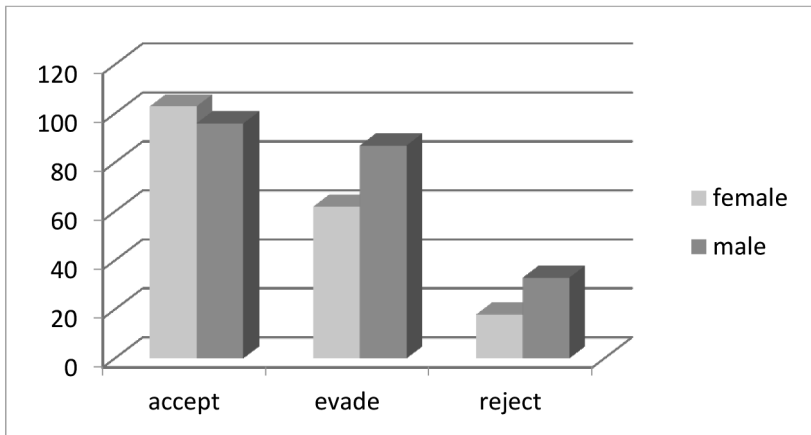
Group	Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female	Accept	8	7.00	21.00	103	12.8750	4.51782
	Reject	8	.00	4.00	18	2.2500	1.38873
	Evade	8	2.00	14.00	62	7.7500	4.26782
Male	Accept	8	5.00	16.00	96	12.00	4.20883
	Reject	8	2.00	10.00	33	4.1250	2.69590
	Evade	8	5.00	19.00	87	10.8750	4.96955

Table 2: Descriptive statistics across genders in the NE-group

Table 2 represents the results of descriptive indicators of the differences between males and females in responding to compliments in the NE-group. The SUM index in Table 2 indicates that the frequency of the most frequent response in both groups, i.e. 'Accept', is higher in the female group with the value of 103 compared to 96 in the male group. However, in order to assess the significance of differences in all dimensions, appropriate statistical tests are presented subsequently. For more tangible understanding of descriptive indicators, column figures of each group are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Comparison of each variable frequency between females and males in NE-group

The results of Figure 1 show that the highest frequency belongs to females in the 'Accept' dimension with the value of 103 and the lowest frequency is seen in the 'Reject' dimension in female group with the value of 18. Mann-Whitney U-test was applied and in Table 3, mean rank and sum of ranks for males and females of the NE-group are presented. Then, in Table 4, in order to test the significance of the difference between males and females, the results of Mann-Whitney U-test, in each dimension of Accept, Reject and Evade, are reported.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Accept	Female	8	8.25	66.00
	Male	8	8.75	70.00
	Total	16		
Reject	Female	8	6.63	53.00
	Male	8	10.38	83.00
	Total	16		
Evade	Female	8	7.13	57.00
	Male	8	9.88	79.00
	Total	16		

Table 3: Mean ranks and sum of ranks of CRs produced by males and females in NE-Group

Mean ranks in each dimension between males and females in NE-group in Table 4 indicates that there is a tangible difference between the groups. To investigate the significance or non-significance of the existing differences Mann-Whitney U-test was applied.

	Accept	Reject	Evade
Mann-Whitney U	30.000	17.000	21.000
Wilcoxon W	66.000	53.000	57.000
Z	-.211	-1.625	-1.158
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.833	.104	.247

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U- test results of the differences between CRs produced by males and females in NE-group

Table 4 shows Mann-Whitney U-test results, used to investigate the significance of any difference in each dimension (Accept, Reject and Evade) between men and women in the NE-group. Z and Sig rates must be considered; based on this data the value of Z, i.e. – .211 and with the significance level of P=0.83 for Accept dimension (p>0.05) shows that there is no significant difference between males and females. Furthermore, Z with the value of – 1.62 and with the significance level of P=0.104 (p>0.05) for Reject dimension, and Z with the value of – 1.15 and with the significance level of P=0.24 (p >0.05) for Evade dimension, confirms that the found differences are insignificant. The parallel results in the E-group are provided.

Group	Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female	Accept	8	15.00	27.00	160.00	20.3750	3.85218
	Reject	8	.00	3.00	8.00	1.0000	1.06904
	Evade	8	1.00	9.00	36.00	4.5000	2.97610
Male	Accept	8	15.00	23.00	141.00	17.6250	2.82527
	Reject	8	.00	1.00	3.00	.3750	.51755
	Evade	8	2.00	10.00	52.00	6.5000	2.92770

Table 5: Descriptive statistics across genders in E-group

Table 5 presents the results of descriptive indicators of the differences between men and women in responding to compliments in the E-group. SUM index in Table 5 indicates that the rate of Accept responses in female group with the value of 160 is more than the value of 141 in the male group. However, in order to assess the significance of these differences, appropriate statistical tests are presented subsequently. For more tangible understanding of descriptive indicators, column figures of each group are presented in Figure 2.
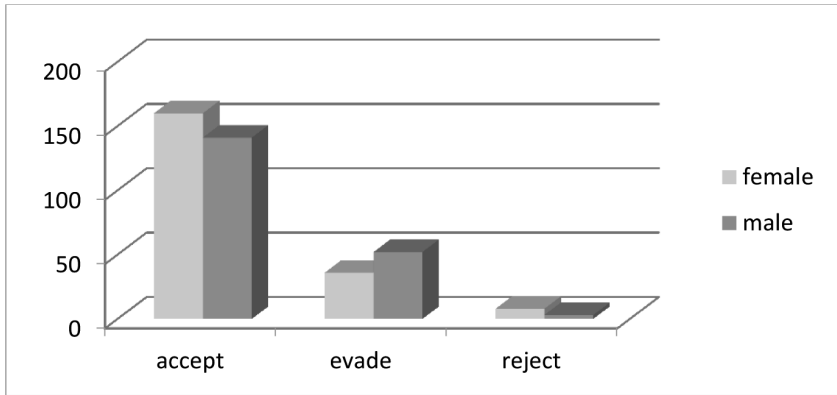
Figure 2: Comparison of each variable frequency between females and males in the E-group

The results of Figure 2 indicate that the highest frequency belongs to females in Accept dimension with the value of 160 and the lowest frequency is seen in Reject dimension in male group with the value of 3. Mann-Whitney U was applied and in Table 6, mean rank and sum of ranks for males and females are represented. Then, in Table 6, in order to test the significance of the difference between males and females, the results of Mann-Whitney U, in each dimension of Accept, Reject and Evade, are reported.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Accept	Female	8	10.19	81.50
	Male	8	6.81	54.50
	Total	16		
Reject	Female	8	9.88	79.00
	Male	8	7.13	57.00
	Total	16		
Evade	Female	8	6.94	55.50
	Male	8	10.06	80.50
	Total	16		

Table 6: Mean ranks and sum of ranks of CRs produced by males and females in E-group

Mean ranks in each dimension (Accept, Reject and Evade) between males and females in the E-group in Table 6 shows that there are tangible differences between the groups. However, to investigate the significance of the existing differences Mann-Whitney U-test results are reported in Table 7 as follows.

	Accept	Reject	Evade
Mann-Whitney U	18.500	21.000	19.500
Wilcoxon W	54.500	57.000	55.500
Z	-1.427	-1.272	-1.326
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.154	.203	.185

Table 7: Mann-Whitney U-test results of the differences between CRs produced by males and females in E-group

Table 7 shows Mann-Whitney U-test results, used to investigate the significance of any difference in each dimension (Accept, Reject and Evade) for males and females. Z and Sig rates are considered. Based on this data, the value of Z, i.e. – 1.43, with the significance level of P=0.15 for Accept dimension shows that there is no significant difference between males and females. Furthermore, Z with the value of – 1.27 with the significance level of P=0.20 for Reject dimension, and Z with the value of – 1.32 with the significance level of P=0.18 for Evade dimension, confirm that there is not any significant difference between males and females. Thus, it can be concluded that the existing differences in the rates of each group, in Table 4 above, are not significant statistically and there is not any significant difference between males and females in Accept, Reject and Evade dimensions in the E-group.

The comparative results of the responses produced by males and females in the E-group in all dimensions at micro-level are provided below.
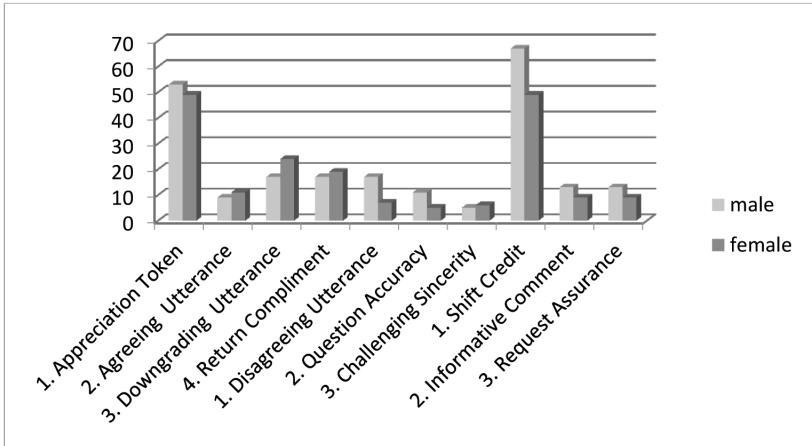
Figure 3: The comparative results of responses produced by males and females in NE-group in Accept, Reject and Evade dimensions at micro level.

As Figure 3 demonstrates, Shift Credit was the most common strategy among all, which was used more by men and the next frequent strategy was Appreciation Token. Challenging Sincerity was applied less than other strategies by males and in the female group Question Accuracy was applied at the lowest rate.
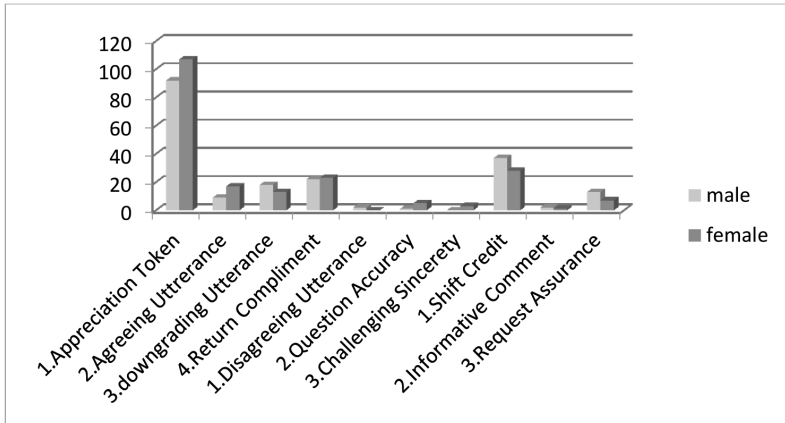

Figure 4: The comparative results of the English responses produced by males and females of the E-group in Accept, Reject and Evade dimensions at micro level.

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Appreciation Token was the most frequent applied strategy of all, having been used more by women and Informative Comment was the least used strategy by the members.

5   Discussion and Conclusion

The present study first compared CRs produced by males and females in the NE-group; subsequently, the same was done between genders in the E-group. Then, the found differences between genders in each group were compared across both NE and E-groups to find out if they were different due to E-group's exposure to English. Finally, CRs produced by males were compared between NE and E-groups and the same was conducted on females of both groups to investigate the effect of exposure to English on CR behavior change.

As revealed by the results, the most frequent strategy used by both males and females in both NE and E-groups was acceptance, which confirms what was found by the previous studies in the Iranian context (Allami & Montazeri 2012, Heidari-Shahreza et al. 2011, Sorahi & Nazemi 2013). This signals the common principle followed by interlocutors to save positive face, which is elaborated on in Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, i.e. interlocutors try to indicate that their opinions are similar in order to save positive face;, thus, they accept what one says. The second most frequent strategy in both groups was 'Evade' and then 'Reject' which is also in line with the principle of politeness theory; to put it another way, interlocutors rejected and evaded compliments less because they tended to show similarity between each other's opinions. Besides, the findings reflect cultural differences between CRs produced in the E and NE-groups. As the results demonstrated, the percentage of 'Accept' in NE-group is lower compared to that in the E-group, which is in line with the previous studies on English and Persian CRs (Boori 1994, Herbert 1986), confirming cultural influence of English CRs on the Iranian ones, which will be discussed in more detail subsequently. These findings are also explainable through two relevant-to-compliment maxims proposed by Leech (1983), i.e. modesty and agreement. NE-group demonstrated more deference to modesty maxim, through using the culture-specific formulaic expression of evading and rejecting compliments called 'taarof' (cf. Sharifian 2005) in the Iranian culture, while agreement maxim was more discernible in the E-group's CRs, which is in congruity with the English culture (Herbert 1986).

The comparison made between genders in NE-group showed that, in spite of the differences, both genders demonstrated the same order in the frequency of applied strategies, i.e. Accept-Evade-Reject, reflecting the common CR behavior in the Persian culture. However, the ratios were different, which is in

keeping with CR studies across genders (Holmes 1998, Rees-Miller 2011) and implies difference in cultural appropriateness and politeness perception between genders. In NE-group, females tended to accept compliments more than males demonstrating more agreement maxim application by females, which is in contrast to what was reported by Heidari-Shahreza et al. (2011) in the Persian society. The incongruity between the results is explainable through the fact that Heidari-Shahreza et al. (2011) conducted their study on Iranian teenagers, while the present study was done on adults; thus, it can be concluded that age plays a vital role in CR production. Considering the next more frequent strategy, i.e. 'Evade', male teachers used it more frequently compared to females and regarding the last strategy at macro-level, i.e. 'Reject' strategy, it was found that males applied this strategy more often, which besides the results of 'Evade' dimension demonstrates higher levels of modesty maxim used by males in the NE-group.

Comparing CRs between females and males in the E-group revealed that females used 'Accept' and 'Reject' strategies more than males, while, 'Evade' was more common among males. As results of both NE and E-groups show, females accepted compliments more than males, which is in line with Herbert's (1990) findings. He asserted that males find compliments as potentially face-threatening acts, while females see compliments as a medium to create and maintain solidarity in interaction that seems to be the reason for why females accept compliments more often.

Although similar results between genders in 'Accept' and 'Evade' dimensions were seen in both E and NE-groups, the overall frequencies were found different. Creese (1991) found such differences among genders across American and British language communities. In this regard, according to the results, sum of the rates of 'Accept' strategy used by females in the NE-group is 103 compared to 160 in the E-group, and sum of the rates of 'Accept' strategy used by males in the NE-group is 96 compared to 141 in the E-group. On 'Evade', sum is 62 in the NE-group females' CRs, compared to 36 in the E-group and among males sum rates are 87 in the NE-group to 52 in the E-group. Finally in 'Reject' dimension, sum rate of CRs produced by females in the NE-group is 18 in comparison to eight in the E-group and among males it is 33 to three in the NE-group and the E-group respectively. The influence of English culture on Persian, in producing CRs and CR behavior, is evident in the E-group as a result of exposure. According to the previous studies, English speakers tend to agree with compliments more often, for example, with a ratio of 66 per cent to 0.4 per cent in Herbert's (1986) study, while Persians tend to agree with compliments in a lower rate than English speakers, this is due to the common formulaic expression

of rejecting and evading compliments in Persian culture called 'taarof', for example, with a ratio of 43 per cent, as reported by Boori (1994). Thus, drawing on these studies along with the results of the present one, which showed less frequency in applying 'Reject' and 'Evade' strategies and increase in 'Accept' strategy application by E-group compared to NE-group, the effect of exposure to English on CR behavior shift toward English culture is substantiated. This can be explained through what is called acculturation model by Schumann (1986) in SLA context. Brown (1994), drawing on the model, stated that exposure to second language can lead to behavior change, which was confirmed to occur in the contextualized EFL learning on CR behavior, as well. As authors, we are not making such a big claim as to cultural or behavioral change, the findings only report a change in CR behavior. This part of findings is also in line with Chen and Yang's (2010) study, a replication of Chen's (1993) study, which found that Chinese CR patterns had shifted to those of Americans and the Chinese tended to accept compliments more frequently after lasting exposure to English. Monjezi's (2014) results on the effect of exposure to English and proficiency on CR behavior also confirm the results. By substantiating CR behavior shift and its acculturation to English, the probability of transmission and acculturation of other cultural elements is thought to be probable as well. Although acculturation of CR behavior was confirmed drawing on different frequencies between the two groups, it was hypothesized that the same finding could have also been shown through significance test of the differences between genders across the NE and E-groups, which did not turn out to be the case. In other words, the difference between the groups was not found to be significant.

Furthermore, as the results show, exposure had influenced both genders, and CR behavior acculturation occurred in both of them, implying that despite the differences of compliment appropriateness perception (Herbert 1990) and different strategy application between genders, acculturation of CR behavior had similar influence on both. However, on a smaller scale, the ratios were influenced differently (cf. Figures 3 & 4) implying cognitive differences and different ways of appropriateness and politeness perception in small scales between males and females.

Another implication of the results is the probability of acculturation to foreign culture behavior regarding other culture-specific elements and behaviors, such as other speech acts. It is, therefore, suggested to investigate acculturation of other speech acts as a result of exposure to English. Moreover, it is suggested to study the effect of age on CR behavior and its effect across cultures; because, as it was reviewed, incongruity was seen between the present results and a previous study, Heidari-Shahreza et al. (2011), which was done on teenagers in Iran: therefore, it seems that age can affect CRs.

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Appendix 1

English DCT

Dear participant,

This survey is designed to study compliment responses among male and female English and non-English teachers. In order to help us fulfill this research, please imagine the following situations and fill in the questionnaire.

This questionnaire is anonymous and the information will be kept confidential. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Gender: male ( )   female ( )

Age:

1. You are in a golf court and you hit a long-iron shot that lands two feet from the pin. A player comes to you and says,"It was fantastic!" (ability)

Your answer:

2. After a great success at your work, your boss says to you,"You are the most resourcefull and talented employee I've ever had!" (character)

Your answer:

3. You've recently moved to a new flat ; during housewarming party one of your friends says, "Everything looks brilliant here, Your flat is unique!" (owned object)

Your answer:

4. You help a friend to move to a new flat. As you are about to say goodbye, your friend says: "Thank you! You are really kind and helpful". (character)

Your answer:

5. After you have completed a presentation, your classmate says: ''it was awesome! I hope I can do my presentation the way you did. Well done!'' (ability)

Your answer:

6. Your friend has held a party to celebrate the end of semester and you've dressed up for it. As you arrive at the party, one of your friends says: ''hey, you look great! You're really handsome/beautiful today.'' (physical appearance)

Your answer:

1

7. You have bought a new mobile phone. Having looked at and tried some functions of it, your friend says: ''Wow, how smart! Awesome!'' (owned object)

Your answer:

8.You haven't met a relative for years. You meet each other after a long time. S/he says, 'You've grown really more attractive/handsome during these years!'' (physical appearance)

Your answer:

2

25

Persian DCT

شرکت کنندۀعزیز،

این پژوهش جهت مطالعۀ واکنشهای تعریف درمیان معلمان مرد و زن انگلیسی وغیرانگلیسی طراحی شده است. به منظورکمک به ما برای انجام این تحقیق لطفاً شرایط زیر را تصور کرده و پرسشنامه را پر کنید. این پرسشنامه بینام بوده و اطلاعات محرمانه خواهند بود. پیشاپیش مراتب سپاس اینجانب را پذیرا باشید.

جنسیت: مرد ☐   زن ☐

سن:

درصورت شرکت در دوره های آموزش زبان انگلیسی لطفاً زمان و سطح دوره راقید کنید.

1.شما در زمین گلف هستید وضربه ای از راه دور میزنید که در فاصله ای بسیار نزدیک به گودال فرود میآید. بازیکنی به سوی شما میآید و میگوید: "فوق العاده بود !"

پاسخ شما: ………………………………… .

2.پس از یک موفقیت بزرگ درمحل کار شما، رئیس شما میگوید: "شما با استعدادترین و کاردان ترین کارمندی هستید که من تابحال داشته ام !"

پاسخ شما: ………………………………… .

3.شما به تازگی به یک آپارتمان جدید نقل مکان کرده اید؛ در مهمانی ای که به این مناسبت ترتیب داده اید یکی از دوستان شما میگوید:" اینجا همه چیز عالی به نظر میرسد. آپارتمان شما واقعاً منحصربه فرد است."

پاسخ شما: ………………………………… .

4.یکی از آشنایان شما به همراه خانواده اش به خانۀ جدیدی نقل مکان کرده است. او از شما برای انتقال اسباب و اثاثیه درخواست کمک میکند. کمک شما به او چندین ساعت طول می کشد. در زمان خداحافظی دوستتان به شما میگوید: "از شما متشکرم. شما بسیار مهربان و یاریگر هستید !"

پاسخ شما: ………………………………… .

5.بعد از اتمام ارائه در دانشگاه یکی از همکلاسانتان می گوید: " امیدوارم که من هم بتوانم مثل شما ارائه داشته باشم. عالی بود. آفرین !"

پاسخ شما: ………………………………… .

6.یکی از دوستان شما میهمانی ای برای پایان ترم ترتیب داده است و شما به این مناسبت لباس زیبایی به تن کرده اید. زمانی که به محل میهمانی میرسید یکی ازدوستان شما میگوید:"عالی به نظر میرسید. امروز واقعاً خوشتیپ /زیبا شده اید ! "

پاسخ شما: ....

7.گوشی همراه جدیدی خریده اید. دوستتان با نگاه به گوشی و امتحان عملکرد گوشی می گوید:" وای ! چقدر هوشمند ! "

پاسخ شما: ....

8.شما یکی از بستگانتان را مدتهاست که ندیده اید و پس از سالها همدیگر را میبینید. او به شما میگوید: "شما در طول این سالها جذابتر /خوشتیپ تر شده اید ! "

پاسخ شما: ....

Zahra Jalilzadeh-Mohammadi is an MA Graduate of English Teaching at the Science and Research University of Tehran, Iran. Her research interests include topics on the interface between pragmatics and politeness, discourse analysis, socio-linguistics, psycho-linguistics, applied linguistics and ethno-linguistics/cultural linguistics. Her latest publications deal with socio-linguistic effects of foreign and second language learning and pragmatic aspects of discourse among different cultural groups and speech communities.

Address: Zahra Jalilzadeh-Mohammadi, Beheshti Street, Urmia, Iran.
[e-mail: Zahra.mohammadi.91@gmail.com]

Mehdi Sarkhosh is Assistant Professor of English Linguistics at the State University of Urmia, Iran. His research interests include topics on the pragmatics, speech acts, discourse analysis, and language teacher education. His latest publications deal with pragmatic aspects of discourse, compliment response patterns among different generations of Persian speakers, and differential speech act realization among different cultural groups and speech communities.

Address: *Mehdi Sarkhosh*, Valfajr Street, Urmia, Iran.
[e-mail: *m.sarkhosh@urmia.ac.ir*]