İLTİFAT YANITLARININ FARKLI SÖYLEM BAĞLAMLARINDA TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYETE GÖRE FARKLILAŞMASI

VARIATIONS IN COMPLIMENT RESPONSES ACROSS GENDER IN DIFFERENT DISCOURSAL SETTINGS

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating compliment responses of female and male Turkish university students in different compliment situations. The data were collected through a written discourse completion task under four situational settings: appearance, performance, character, and possession. 100 undergraduate students (50 males and 50 females) participated in the study. Holmes's (1988a, 1988b) macro and micro categories were adapted and developed to analyze the compliment responses of the participants. The responses of both groups obtained from the discourse completion task were compared qualitatively and quantitatively. Results indicated that the general pattern for participants is Accept, Evade and Reject strategies at the macro level and Appreciation Token and Shift Credit at the micro level. Some statistically significant differences between the responses of females and males were identified. Both at the macro and micro levels, how females and males respond to the compliments vary with respect to the situational context they receive the compliment. Under specific situations participants tend to reply similarly which help us to come up with an ethnographic account of CRs.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı kız ve erkek üniversite öğrencilerinin farklı iltifat durumlarında verdikleri iltifat yanıtlarını incelemektir. Çalışmanın verisi yazılı söylem tamamlama anketi aracılığıyla toplanan dört farklı bağlamı içermektedir: görünüm, performans, karakter ve varlık. 100 lisans (50 kız ve 50 erkek) öğrencisi çalışmaya katılmıştır. İltifat yanıtlarının çözümlenmesinde Holmes (1988a, 1988b) tarafından ileri sürülen makro ve mikro kategoriler geliştirilerek uygulanmıştır. Her iki grubun söylem tamamlama anketi ile elde edilen yanıtlar nitel ve nicel açıdan karşılaştırılmıştır. Bulgular, genel dağılımın makro düzeyde Kabul, Kaçınma ve Ret olarak sıralandığını ve mikro düzeyde Takdir ve Yön Değiştirme stratejilerinin daha çok tercih edildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Kız ve erkek öğrencilerin bazı yanıtları arasında anlamlı farklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Makro ve mikro düzeyde her iki cinsiyette verilen yanıtlar iltifatın hangi bağlamda alındığına göre değişmektedir. Benzer durumlarda katılımcıların verdiği benzer cevaplar Türkçede iltifat yanıtlarına dair etnografik bir betimleme yapmamızı sağlamaktadır.

1. Introduction

Compliments are essential social connectors in everyday interactions. Speakers compliment addressees not only to praise them for owning something nice but also to consolidate solidarity. As Holmes (1988a, p. 485) defines, "[a] compliment 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.)" that is evaluated positively both by the speaker and the hearer. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, complimenting is a strategy of positive politeness because it denotes the complimenter's (Cer, hereafter) remarking of the complimentee's (Cee, hereafter) concerns, as a result, enables the speaker to claim a common ground with the hearer.

On the other hand, compliments may not always be valued positively by the recipients since they have the potential to be perceived as face threatening acts. A face threatening act (FTA) is an act that inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the desires of the other (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Like criticism, praise entails judgment of the addressee, hence, disturbs his/her negative face wants and results in FTA (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001). Holmes also notes that compliments may imply for the recipient that the Cer envies the recipient or would like to possess something belonging to the recipient (1988b). Therefore, what makes an utterance a compliment lies under the *positive value* that both the Cer and the Cee attribute to the complimented thing and how the Cees perceive them, which in turn reflect on the responses.

Compliment responses (CRs) are used as phatic expressions to sustain solidarity in interpersonal relationships. How individuals respond to compliments was first addressed by Pomerantz (1978) who put forth two general conflicting conditions that govern the act of responding to a compliment: 'agree with the speaker' and 'avoid self-praise.' Similar to Pomerantz's dilemma, Leech (1983) proposes two maxims as parts of his Politeness Principles which may cause a conflict in a compliment event. These are the Modesty Maxim and the Agreement Maxim, each of which consists of two sub-maxims. While the Modesty Maxim demands speakers to "minimize praise for self; maximize dispraise of self", the Agreement Maxim demands "minimize disagreement between self and other; maximize agreement between self and other" (Leech, 1983, p. 136). Accordingly, breaking the first sub-maxim of Modesty is to commit the social transgression of boasting. On the other hand, breaking the first sub-maxim of Agreement is to disagree with the Cer, namely, rejecting the compliment. Accordingly, Cees use various solutions to solve this conflict such as praise downgrade or return. In other words, the Cee becomes in charge of seeking for the most efficient way of resolving the dilemma within the boundaries of facework in their culture (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001).

Based on this framework, the present study seeks to describe the CR behavior of Turkish speakers within a more specific dimension, i.e., gender, basically asking these research questions:

1. What compliment response strategies do female and male Turkish university students use in general and in different situational settings?

2. What combination strategies do male and female Turkish university students use to respond to compliments?

The following subsection first provides background information on the role of culture in CRs, then focuses on the relationship between gender and language. After explaining the methodology in Part 2, the findings are presented under three subsections in Part 3. Next, results are discussed in Part 4, following the conclusion in Part 5.

1.1. Cross-cultural Variations in CRs

Speech acts and events might have different forms, functions, frequencies and distributions in different languages depending on the conversational routines each culture possesses. In other words, linguistic preferences related to politeness are accompanied by the cultural schemas (Sharifian, 2008). Literature survey on CRs shows that studies have mainly focused on a single culture (e.g., Danziger, 2018; Golato, 2002; Sharifian, 2005), or cross-cultural similarities and differences (e.g., Chen, 1993; Dörtkulak, 2017; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Golato, 2005; Lorenzo-Dus, 2001; Tang & Zhang, 2009), and to some extent on pragmatic transfers in foreign language learning (e.g., Bu, 2010; İstifçi, 1998, 2017; Sharifian, 2008). These studies generally affirm that how Cees perceive a compliment differs with respect to the culture they grow up in and how cultural schemas operate in responding to compliments.

To illustrate, the Chinese were found to express appreciation for a compliment less and denigrate themselves more in comparison to Australian speakers (Tang & Zhang, 2009). Golato (2002) reported that German native speakers did not use appreciation tokens to acknowledge compliments, but instead sometimes gave an assessment of a compliment in contrast to the American speakers. Lorenzo-Dus (2001) compared British and Spanish speakers' CRs and found that Spanish participants tended to request repetition while the British participants questioned the truth value of the compliment more often. İstifçi (1998) found that Turkish speakers, when compared with English speakers, tended to belittle themselves while responding to compliments with more frequent use of rejecting and deflecting strategies because modesty is highly valued in Turkish culture.

Sharifian (2005) discusses the role of cultural schema of shekasteh-nasfi (lit. broken-self, roughly meaning modesty) in Iranian society in determining the responses of speakers.

Accordingly, Cees are discouraged to accept the compliment and praise directly, while they are encouraged to enhance the face of the social group they belong to. On the other hand, the Arabic CRs included more acceptance especially through the micro strategies of offer and invocation that can be related to the Arab-Islamic cultural heritage. Offering is essentially used as a lip-service to indicate that the Cee is worthy of the item of compliment too rather than a genuine offer, and invocation covers the religious expressions in the daily language use (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Farghal & Haggan, 2006).

In her comprehensive analysis of Turkish speakers' compliment exchanges, Ruhi (2006) reports that accepting is the most preferred strategy followed by reject and evade strategies, while acceptance and agreement are the most common micro type strategies. She proposes that in addition to the Agreement and Modesty maxims, Tact and Sympathy Maxims motivate the choice of response strategies in the Turkish context.

1.2. Gender and Language

Gender refers to the social categories based on sex but including "behavior, roles, and images that, although not biologically determined, are regarded by a society as appropriate to its male or female members" (McCormick, 2001, p. 336). Following Tannen (1990), a growing research has been carried out to prove or disprove the view that men and women acquire different male and female interactional styles as a result of being socialized in different sub-cultures. Both genders are considered to enact their stereotypical gender roles when interacting. This view is widely supported by research on spoken and written language use of females and males of different age groups (e.g., Rubin & Greene 1992; Mehl & Pennebaker 2003; inter alia). Based on several studies on interactional styles of males and females, Holmes (2000) argues that women and men follow different rules of interaction and tend to approach the problem raised for politeness differently. For instance, in a study with children, boys were more likely to respond with a bald disagreement than girls. In another study done with adults, women tended to soften their disagreeing utterances more often than men. Holmes concludes that for females, being negatively polite involves avoiding or minimizing disagreements while "being positively polite involves agreeing with others, encouraging them to talk, expressing support verbally and ensuring they get a fair share of the talking time." In contrast, males "can disagree baldly, challenge others' statements, interrupt and compete for the floor without intending to cause offence" (2000, p. 343).

Such differences in language use also entail that men and women may differ in their perceptions of a compliment, which in turn reflect on their compliment responses. According to Holmes, "women may regard compliments as primarily positively affective speech acts, for

instance, expressing solidarity and positive politeness, while men may give greater weight to their referential meaning, as evaluative judgements, or to...potentially negative face-threatening features" (1995, p. 123). In accordance with this view, several studies reveal gender differences in males' and females' CRs (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Furkó & Dudás, 2012; Herbert, 1990; Heidari, Rezazadeh & Rasekh, 2009; Holmes, 1988b, 1993; Sharifian, Chalak & Dehkordi, 2019), while the studies of Golato (2005) and Danziger (2018) indicate the opposite.

There are a number of Turkish studies that deal with compliments and compliment responses; however, few refer to gender differences. For instance, in her study on women's use of compliments in Turkish, Durmuşoğlu (1990) found that in addition to accepting, Turkish women also downgraded or deflected compliments. However, no study in Turkish has directly focused on the relationship between gender and CRs in different discoursal settings so far. To fill this gap in the literature, the present study focuses on the gender of the Cee as a factor determining the CR strategies and aims to test whether gender plays a role in the CR behavior, and if so, to identify variations in the use of compliment responses between male and female Turkish university students in different discoursal settings.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

100 Turkish undergraduate students (50 females and 50 males) studying at different departments (i.e., Mathematics (n=25), Science (n=38), English (n=23), Pre-school Teaching (n=14)) contributed to this research. Turkish is the native tongue of all participants, and their ages range between 18 and 24. Because the study focused solely on the gender variable, the demographic factors such as the participants' socioeconomic or academic backgrounds were not taken into consideration in the study.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument

The data were collected via a written Discourse Completion Task (henceforth DCT). DCTs are extensively used data gathering tools in language studies to obtain responses from context-specific prompts. Golato (2005, p. 13) states that this method of data collection has several administrative benefits such as enabling the researchers to control certain variables and quickly collect large amounts of data without dealing with transcription. Therefore, it is easier to compare the participants' responses statistically. As a criticism to DCT, some researchers have pointed out that data collected with this method do not always correspond to natural data. On the other hand, the responses of the participants revealed that they perceived the situations as

naturally occurring and contributed the data as realistic as possible by providing non-verbal and paralinguistic cues as to how to interpret their responses such as adding comments like *smiling, laughing,* using exclamation marks and emoticons as well as employing colloquial expressions and discourse markers.

In her study on New Zealand compliments, Holmes asserts that a great part of compliments pertains to a few general topics: "appearance, ability, or a good performance, possessions, and some aspect of personality, or friendliness" (1988a, p. 496). In accordance with this statement, in DCT, the participants were provided four situational settings in which they received compliments about their appearance, performance, character and possession, and they were asked to write down what they would respond in each situation as stated in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Situational settings in DCT

Situation 1 (appearance)	Your friends have organized a party to celebrate the end of semester. You've dressed up for the party. As you arrive at the party, one of your friends says: "Hey, you look great! You're really handsome/beautiful today."
Situation 2 (performance)	After you have completed a presentation, one of your classmates says: "Wow, that's brilliant, I loved your presentation. Well done!"
Situation 3 (character)	You took a friend who got ill at school to the hospital. After the medical help and you took the test results, while leaving the hospital your friend says: "Thank you! You're really helpful and caring."
Situation 4 (possession)	You have bought a new mobile phone. When you receive a call, your friend notices that your phone is a different one. Having looked at it and tried some functions, s/he says: "Wow, how smart! My mobile does not have such functions. It is really great!"

Three of these situations were adapted from the study carried out by Tang and Zhang (2009), and then developed by the researcher. Additionally, in order to divert participants' attention from the aim of the survey, three different situations were added in which they were asked to make an explanation, and to respond to an apology and a request. As Ruhi and Doğan state, compliments in Turkish take place largely in equal positions, friendly relationships and between individuals who have a common background in Turkish (2001, p. 356). Consistent with this view, in these four situations the Cer is a friend of the Cee, thus the relationship between the receiver and the sender of the compliment is equal, which can be considered as a factor influencing the CRs. It is important to note that the word "friend" (lit. arkadaş) is a gender-neutral word hence may be perceived as either male or female by the Cee. To limit the scope of the study, the gender of the Cer was not included in the study as a determining factor of CRs, and the participants were allowed to answer the questionnaire based on their own presumption.

2.3. Semantic coding of compliment responses

In order to investigate the variations in CR strategies, Holmes's (1988a, 1988b) threefold taxonomy, which consists of several subcategories was adopted. The 'macro level' refers to the three general strategies of Accept, Reject and Deflect/Evade and the 'micro level' refers to the more specific categories within the macro categories. As Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001, p. 1489) state, "a macro-function is viewed as a general attitude involving different formulae and degrees which reflect the various illocutions (i.e., micro-functions) selected by Cees when responding to compliments." This macro-micro classification of Holmes has received noticeable attention by the scholars interested in CRs and has been applied in plenty of studies.

Chen (2010) regards Holmes' (1988a) categorization as a scale which has acceptance on its one end, evasion in the middle and rejection on the other end. Because these two ends indicate "the 'extremes' a responder can do about a compliment, it is potentially capable of measuring all compliment responses" (Chen, 2010, p. 94). In order to make the categories more objective and transparent within the Turkish setting, the present coding shifts and adds some subcategories into the major strategies of Holmes, based on the classifications of Chen (1993), Herbert (1990), Ernawati 1996 (cited in İstifçi, 1998) and Ruhi (2006). First of all, different from Holmes (1988a), the Accept category covers Praise Upgrade, Joking, Encouragement/Wish and Offer subcategories as employed by Herbert (1990), Ruhi (2004, 2006) and Chen (1993). For Herbert (1990, p. 208), in Praise Upgrade "addressee accepts the compliment and asserts that the compliment force is insufficient." Ruhi (2006) describes the Joking subcategory as humorous utterances that tease the Cer on implicatures inferable from the compliment. The Encouragement sub-category heartens the Cers that they could get or do the same thing (Chen, 1993; İstifçi, 1998). As a frequently observed response type in the data, Wish is added to Encouragement category and covers all the good-wishes and invocations.

Secondly, in accordance with Ruhi (2004, 2006), Downgrading was included under the Reject macro level, since as Herbert puts it, in Downgrading "the addressee disagrees with the complimentary force, pointing to some flaw in the object or claiming that the praise is overstated" (1990, p. 209). Table 2 illustrates the macro and micro categories employed in the study.

Table 2. Compliment response categories

Macro level CRs	Micro level CRs	Examples
Accept	(1) Appreciation token	*Thank you. Thanks a lot. Cheers.*
	(2) Agreeing utterance (+ expressing gladness)	*I'm glad you think so. I think it's lovely, too.*
	(3) Praise Upgrade	*I'm always like this. I know I'm beautiful.*

	(4) Return compliment	*You look great too. Yours is better.*
	(5) Offer	*I can help you if you want. You can use it.*
	(6) Encouragement/Wish	*I hope you can get one too.*
	(7) Joking	*Hey, I make everything look good, don't I?*
Reject	(8) Disagreeing utterance	*No, it is old. I don't like it much.*
	(9) Downgrading	*It's my duty. It's nothing special.*
	(10) Challenge sincerity	*You don't really mean that.*
Evade	(11) Shift credit	*My mother sewed it. We're friends.*
	(12) Informative comment	*I've worked hard for it. I bought it yesterday.*
	(13) Ignore	*It's very hot here.*
	(14) Request reassurance	*Do you really think so? Honestly?*

2.4. Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

DCT was administered in the form of an online questionnaire through Survey Monkey to reach students. They were given enough time to complete the survey.

The study adopts both a qualitative analysis of the DCT data and a quantitative, descriptive survey for cross-gender comparison. A contrastive analysis of compliment response strategies between male and female Turkish university students was carried out in terms of the macro and micro levels described in Table 1. Students' responses gathered by the DCT were first categorized, and then the frequency of occurrence for each type was quantified. The results were compared through percentages and the Pearson's chi-square test (X^2) to explore associations between the two groups.

Secondly, the data were analyzed in terms of the combination strategies of the participants. The distinction between Intrinsically Complex Responses, where two micro strategies within the same macro strategy are employed (e.g., thanking + agreeing) and Extrinsically Complex Responses, where two micro strategies that belong to different macro strategies are employed (e.g., thanking + downgrading) (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001) was determined by calculating the frequencies and percentages of responses.

3. Results

Findings are presented in three parts: (1) general patterns (macro level), (2) patterns in the four settings (including micro levels) and (3) combination strategies. In translating the example sentences into English, the general senses of the sentences were taken into account, since some Turkish formulaic expressions cannot be translated into English literally.

3.1. The General Pattern of CR Strategies

Data analysis shows that the general pattern used by both male and female participants at the macro level follows Accept, Evade and Reject strategies (Figure 1). There is a considerable difference between the frequencies of Accept and that of the other two strategies. Pearson's chi-square test reveals significant relationship among three macro strategies for both females (X^2=162.597; p<0.05) and males (X^2=104.333; p<0.05), which denotes that the participants generally prefer accepting compliments the most and rejecting the least.
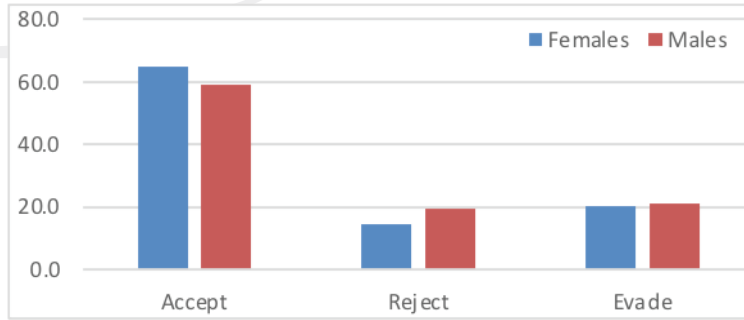

Figure 1. Percentages for the macro patterns of CRs

When the general percentages are compared between the gender groups, females are more likely to use Accept (F=65.1% vs. M=59.2%) whereas males are more likely to use Reject (F=14.6% vs. M=19.6%) and Evade (F=20.3% vs. M=21.1%). Pearson's chi-square analysis reveals significant relationship between gender and the response categories of Accept (X^2=7.448; p<0.05) and Reject (X^2=12.167; p<0.05). However, there is no significant relationship between gender and the Evade category (X^2=0.062; p>0.05). Therefore, we can conclude that participants differ in the way they accept or reject compliments in relation to their genders.

3.2. The CR Patterns Related to the Four Situations

In order to further investigate possible gender differences to answer the first research question, participants' responses in the four discoursal settings, namely, appearance, performance, character and possession were analyzed.

3.2.1. CRs for Appearance

In the first situation, the Cee receives a compliment on his/her appearance from one of his/her friends at a party. As Figure 2 demonstrates, both groups preferred to accept the

compliment more than the other two strategies (F=79% vs. M=78%). This indicates that both females and males are happy to accept compliments on their appearance. In fact, appearance is the only case where participants' acceptance of compliments has the highest percentage. The percentages of female and male data are almost the same, and Pearson's chi-square analysis shows no significant relationship between genders in terms of the likelihood that they accept X^2=0.036, p>0.05) or evade responding (X^2=0.031, p>0.05). Reject has the lowest frequency of use (2% for both groups) in all four situations, hence could not be calculated in X^2 test.

Figure 2. The macro strategies for the appearance CRs

At the micro level, both groups prefer the Appreciation Token (F=49%; M=46%), Return Compliment (F=25%; M=20%) and Shift Credit (F=15%; M=17%) more than the other micro strategies. Participants generally follow the Agreement Maxim (Leech, 1983), but in order not to sound too boastful to their Cer they tend to compliment back or shift credit to third parties as in the example (1a-b). It is especially through the formulaic expressions "It is your beauty" or "Beauty is in the eyes" used to divert the attention on the kindness of the Cee (1c). When the genders are compared, no significant relationship between the two groups' preference of micro strategies are identified.

1. a. Canım, teşekkür ederim. Sen de çok şıksın. (F26)

    Honey, thank you. You look stylish, too. (Appreciation + Return Compliment)

    b. Eyvallah, sen de öylesin. (M37)

    Thanks, you, too. (Appreciation + Return Compliment)

    c. Teşekkür ederim. Güzellik gören gözdedir. (F19)
    Thank you. Beauty is in the eyes. (Appreciation + Shift Credit)

3.2.2. CRs for Performance

The second situation in the DCT is about a compliment uttered after a class presentation. Here a classmate appreciates and praises the participant for his/her brilliant accomplishment of the presentation. Figure 3 shows that similar to the general and appearance macro patterns, participants are more likely to accept a compliment on their presentation skill. Although the figure suggests that females' percentage of acceptance is higher than that of males (83% vs. 76%), the relationship is not significant statistically (X^2=1.323, p>0.05). The results are the same for Evade (X^2=0.377, p>0.05) and Reject (X^2=0.978, p>0.05) categories, which implies that both groups generally follow the same pattern at the macro level.
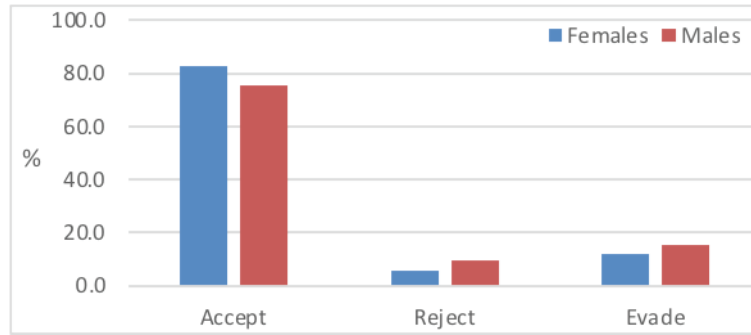

Figure 3. The macro strategies for performance CRs

At the micro level, Appreciation Token (F=41%; M=31%) and Encouragement/Wish (F=24% vs. M=26%) are the most salient patterns employed by both groups. After thanking for the compliment, both gender groups tend to respond more with an encouraging statement or a wish to express that their friends can perform successfully, too (2a-b). This reveals that the Agreement maxim dominates the preferences of informants, and in order not to assert superiority, they mostly combine appreciation with an encouraging expression. When the micro strategies were compared between the genders, a significant difference was identified only in Agreeing Utterance (X^2=5.560, p<0.05), which signifies that males are more likely to agree with the compliments on their performance (2c).

2.   a.   Teşekkürler, darısı senin başına. (F5)

   Thanks, same to you. (Appreciation + Encouragement/Wish)

   b.   Teşekkür ederim bence sen de yapabilirsin. (M49)

   Thank you, I think you can do it as well. (Appreciation + Encouragement/Wish)

   c.   Sağol kardeş, tevazuya gerek yok. (M27)

   Thank you, bro; no need for humbleness. (Appreciation + Agreeing Utterance)

3.2.3. CRs for Character

The third situation is designed to elicit responses for a compliment which is directed towards the personality of the participant after helping a friend with a health problem. Figure 4 illustrates the macro pattern of character CRs which differs from the general macro patterns presented in the previous figures with an increase in the Evade and Reject strategies. Overall, character CR is the only case where participants employed more Reject (F=49%; M=41%) and Evade (F=41%; M=38%) strategies. This suggests that participants think that helping friends out is nothing special, thus they feel free to turn down or deflect such compliments. Statistically no significant association was found between the two groups' responses in Accept (X^2=3.623, p>0.05), Reject (X^2=0.915, p>0.05) and Evade (X^2=0.192, p>0.05) patterns.
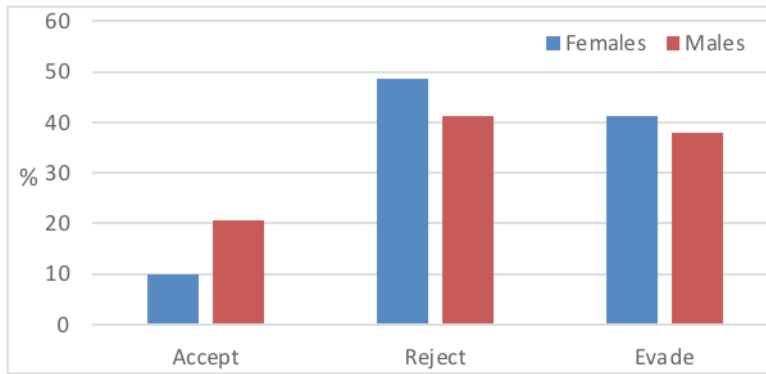

Figure 4. The macro strategies for character CRs

At the micro level, when receiving a compliment relating to character, both groups tend to either downgrade (F=35%; M=34%) or shift credit (F=35%; M=38%) more, which are considered as self-praise avoidance strategies (Chen, 1993). Modesty maxim takes priority over the Agreement maxim for this compliment event. Additionally, Disagreeing Utterance was observed to have the highest frequency of use among the four situations (F=14%; M=7%) which includes expressions of direct rejection. The chi-square test didn't reveal any significant relationship between the two groups' preference of micro strategies.

3. a. Ben yapmam gerekeni yaptım. Ben hasta olsam sen de bana aynı şeyi yapmaz mısın? (F18)

    I did what I had to do. Wouldn't you do the same if I were ill? (Downgrading + Shift Credit)

    b. Ne demek kanka, deli misin arkadaşlar bu günler içindir. (F41)

No big thing dude; are you crazy, friendship is for these days. (Disagreeing Utterance + Information Comment)

c.   Eminim sen de benim için yapardın. Değil mi? (M36)

I am sure you would do (the same) for me, wouldn't you? (Shift Credit)

3.2.4. CRs for Possession

The last situation is about a compliment directed toward a possession of participants, namely, a new mobile phone. As seen in Figure 5, both groups prefer the Accept strategy over Evade and Reject when they are complimented for their new telephone. Statistical analysis shows significant relationship between respondents' gender and the likelihood that they accept and reject compliments. Females are more likely to accept compliments than males (81% vs. 62%; X^2=7.448, p<0.05) whereas males tend to reject it more than females (28% vs. 7%; X^2=12.167, p<0.05) by scaling down the qualifications of their mobile phones.

Figure 5. The macro strategies for possession CRs

At the micro level, Encouragement/Wish has the highest amount of use in both sets of data (F=31%; M=21%). Accordingly, expressing their wishes to their friends to have a mobile phone like or better than theirs is more important for both groups (4a-b). The second mostly used response is Appreciation Token for females (25% vs. 14%) whereas it is Downgrading for males (6% vs. 16%; X^2=4.170, p<0.05) with a significant difference between the two groups. This finding demonstrates that females adopt the Agreement maxim in their responses while males are more likely to apply the Modesty maxim that requires "maximize dispraise for self" by scaling down the compliment or disagreeing with their Cer (Leech, 1983). Because males are more interested in technological developments in mobile phone industry, they may not

evaluate the compliment positively, and even view it as a FTA as in the example (4c). One of the male participants stated in parenthesis that he wouldn't feel happy with such a comment and would even sell his phone.

4. a. Teşekkürler, daha iyileri senin olsun. (F31)

    'Thanks, may you have better ones.' (Appreciation + Encouragement/Wish)

    b. Allah sana da nasip etsin. (M48)

    'May Allah grant you too.' (Encouragement/Wish)

    c. Teknoloji ilerliyor. Yakında bu modelin de havası biter. (M16)

    'Technology is improving. This model becomes out of date soon.' (Informative Comment + Downgrading)

3.3. Combination Strategies

Data analysis discloses that Cees may respond to compliments in various ways. While some participants prefer simple responses, (i.e., responses comprising one strategy), others may respond with complex responses (i.e., responses comprising more than one strategy). The complex responses are further divided as the intrinsically complex (i.e., responses belonging to the same macro strategy) and extrinsically complex (i.e., responses belonging to two different macro strategies) responses (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001).

Table 3 demonstrates that out of 400 responses gathered from 100 participants in four settings, complex responses (63.8%) are more common than simple responses (36.3%). When simple and complex responses are compared in terms of the two genders, male Cees are more likely to use single responses (f=79; 39.5%) than female Cees (f=66; 33%). On the other hand, females tend to respond with complex responses (f=134; 67%) more than males (f=121; 60.5%). Differences in the percentages imply that single responses (such as a single 'thank you') might seem less sincere for a compliment from a friend, hence participants, especially females, tend to respond with more utterances to sustain solidarity with their Cers or to compensate for their first responses. Another factor might simply be an effect of DCT. Since writing allows the participants some extra time to elaborate on the message they want to convey, they may have been urged to write more than one response.

Table 3. Simple vs. complex responses

Groups	Simple Responses		Complex Responses				Total
			Intrinsically		Extrinsically		
	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	ƒ	%	
Female	66	**33**	69	**34.5**	65	**32.5**	200 (%100)
Male	79	**39.5**	59	**29.5**	62	**31**	200 (%100)
Total	145	**36.3**	128	**32**	127	**31.8**	400 (%100)

Within the intrinsically complex responses, at the macro level, employing a combination of Accept + Accept is the most frequently used strategy among others. 50.7% of the females' complex responses and 44.6% of the males' complex responses include this type of combination. This indicates that participants have a tendency to confirm their acceptance with a second or sometimes a third utterance. A close analysis on how the participants use different micro strategies together shows that there are a variety of combination patterns. Among these, the common trend is to use Appreciation + Return Compliment (F=17.9%; M=16.5%) for both groups especially in the appearance situation. In their study, Tang and Zhang (2009) also found the same pattern among the Australian and the Chinese participants. This similarity entails a general tendency of using an appreciation token and return compliment together as a response to a compliment. The second most common type of combination is Appreciation + Encouragement/ Wish (F=23.9%; M=12.4%). Invocations and good wishes for the Cer are common patterns used after thanking for the compliment. This pattern is mainly observed in the performance and possession situations, and it is more likely to be used by the female participants.

In terms of the extrinsically complex responses, the combination of Accept + Evade (F=14.9%; M=16.5%) and Reject + Evade (F=13.6%; M=14.9%) is more common for both genders than other combinations (e.g., Accept + Reject or Evade + Reject). The pattern of Downgrading + Shift Credit (F=10.4%; M=10,7%) and Appreciation + Shift Credit (M=9.9%; M=10.4%) are the most common micro combinations. Unlike the intrinsically complex responses that strengthen the illocutionary force of acceptance, extrinsically complex responses, which include contradictory illocutionary forces weaken the degree of acceptance (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Ruhi, 2006).

4. Discussion

The findings of the study evidence that overall, the prevailing strategy is Accept for both groups followed by Evade and Reject. This general preference accords with the previous findings on Turkish (İstifçi, 2017; Ruhi, 2006) as well as other languages (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001;

Furkó & Dudás, 2012; Heidari et al., 2009; Holmes, 1988a, 1988b; Tang & Zhang, 2009). The high preference of acceptance is most probably because the compliments were received from a friend who participants have a symmetrical relationship with, they were valued positively. This finding contradicts with the notion that acceptances are most habitual among people with unequal status (Herbert, 1990). When the two groups are compared in terms of the macro strategies in general and in different discoursal settings, we found some effect of gender on CRs similar to previous studies (Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1988b, 1993; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001).

At the micro level, the general tendency for both groups is to reply with the Appreciation Token (Figure 6). In other words, thanking the Cer is the most common response, especially for the females. Complimenting addresses the positive face needs of the Cee, therefore the Cee is urged to acknowledge such a favor and to express their gratefulness for it, because rejecting blocks saving the positive face of the Cer. Accordingly, the most frequently used response was *teşekkür et*-AOR-SING/PLU (lit. I do my gratitude) in Turkish data, which is a more respectful form of thanking, used commonly in more formal settings. The other common expressions of thanking are the shortened plural form (*çok*) *teşekkürler* (lit. (many) gratitudes) which is less formal, and *sağol-* (lit. be.alive/well) which implies a greater indebtedness. Another expression of appreciation was *eyvallah* - a colloquial expression meaning thank you in addition to other meanings - which was found only in the males' data.

Although thanking is the most common type of response within both simple and complex responses, it is more often combined with other strategies. Of the total 89 Appreciation Tokens employed by the males, only 15, and of the total of 111 Appreciation Tokens of females, only 17 were single response type. Similar tendencies were also observed by İstifçi (1998) who explains the reason of this as follows:

> …the utterance 'Teşekkür ederim' by itself is not a sufficient response and needs to be supplemented by additional words since by itself it may sound flat and awkward and it appears to signal the end of the conversation. Instead, native Turkish subjects employed 'Explaining' strategy a lot and they explained about their physical appearance, possessions, achievements or they shifted credit to another person. Pomerantz (1978) states that these types of responses are solution types to the dilemma of avoiding self-praise without disagreeing with the complimenter. (1998, p. 61)

In accordance with this view, the participants used Appreciation Token most frequently with Return Compliment followed by Encouragement/Wish and Shift Credit respectively to avoid Pomerantz's dilemma.
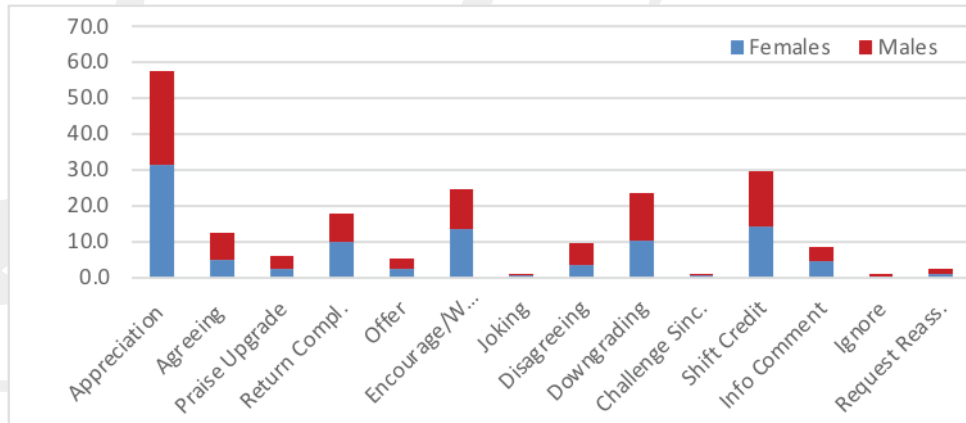
Figure 6. Overall distribution of CRs

The second widely used micro pattern is Shift Credit for both genders, as presented in Figure 6. Evading responding to a compliment implies that the specific compliment can be perceived as face threatening at times and the Cees aim to establish the balance between direct acknowledgement and refusal of the compliment. It mostly co-occurs with other strategies to divert attention from the target of compliment to the Cer or to 3rd person or an aspect of the topic. Shifting to Cer (e.g., it is your beauty; it is your heart's kindness) is a culture-specific type of credit shift in Turkish CRs including reciprocations with formulaic expressions (Ruhi, 2006). In this way, the Cees are able to secure mutual good will and maintain the face of the Cer. Additionally, shifting to 3rd person (e.g., anybody would do the same) is an output of the collectivist cultural model that highlights the worth of strong ingroup membership (Hofstede, 1991).

The third most preferred micro pattern differs between genders. As seen in Figure 6, females preferred to encourage their Cer or expressed their wishes/invocations more which are the salient ways of rapport talk as introduced by Tannen (1990). Females seem to create and strengthen affiliations, hence, to emphasize common ground, with their Cer with these responses as a part of positive politeness strategy. Being positively polite involves encouraging the contributions of others in addition to confirming and agreeing (Holmes, 2000). The speaker attends to the hearer's interests or needs, or satisfies hearer's wants by offering gifts in the form of goods, sympathy, understanding or cooperation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It also accords with the Tact Maxim that prescribes maximizing the expressions which imply benefit to others as well as the Sympathy Maxim that prescribes maximizing sympathy between the self and others (Leech, 1983).

Males, in contrast, preferred to scale down the impact of the compliment more as the third mostly used strategy. This accords with the view that males favor communicative

independence, thus use more distancing (negative politeness) strategies (Tannen, 1990). Brown and Levinson (1987) identify negative politeness by self-effacement, formality, restraint and the speaker's centering on his/her want to be unimpeded. Then, males, unlike females, feel freer to refrain from establishing common ground for the sake of preserving their negative face. Holmes states that "males are quite prepared to disagree baldly and to challenge the statements of others overtly" (2000, p. 342). Moreover, the males' using more Shift Credit and Downgrading after the Appreciation Token also implies that they experience Pomerantz's dilemma more than the females. As Wolfson (1989) proposes, as a solution to Pomerantz's dilemma, the Cee downgrades the compliment by mentioning another characteristic of the object, thus lessens the force of the compliment without disagreeing with the Cee and praising herself/himself.

When the four situations are considered, both groups are inclined to accept compliments on appearance, ability and possession but reject compliments on character. This finding shows that a compliment on one's personality is not always valued positively, therefore is more likely to be perceived as a FTA. Modesty and humility are highly valued in interpersonal communication in Turkish (Ruhi & Doğan, 2001; Zeyrek, 2001). Turkish socio-cultural structure tends to have a collectivist nature which prioritizes group goals over individuals' goals (Hofstede, 1991). A substantial feature of collectivist cultures is that "people belong to in-groups and collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty" (Zeyrek, 2001, p. 49). As Sifianou states "the in-group is 'one's family, relatives, friends and friends of friends' where intimacy, support and generosity hold among individuals" (1997b, p. 167, cited in Zeyrek, 2001, p. 49). Therefore, helping others (especially friends) is something one should do in Turkish culture, and acceptance of the compliment can be perceived as conceitedness and insincerity. As a result, both genders were preoccupied with expressing friendliness and care for their friends in their responses. Turning our point to the politeness principles of Leech (1983), we can say that the informants generally follow the Agreement maxim in their responses except for the character compliment where they follow the Modesty maxim.

In this regard, the present study reveals that the participants' linguistic preferences can be controlled by the topic of compliment as it determines whether a compliment is regarded as an aspect of positive politeness or not. The effect of the discoursal setting on the participants' responses is observed more clearly at the micro level strategies. Except for the two cases, the frequencies of the groups showed no significant variation. It is particularly the performance compliment that males significantly agreed with their Cer, and the possession compliment that they significantly downgraded the complimentary force. Past research has demonstrated that contextual factors have more impact on language use than any other factors. As Thomson, Murachver and Green put it, language is "a process whereby people adapt their language to fit the situation" (2001, p. 171). This explicates the similar frequencies of macro/micro strategies.

Most of the replies were found to include more than one response. In other terms, either accepting or not, participants tended to respond with multiple expressions. According to Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001, p. 1492), simple responses may be an indication of "decisiveness on the part of the complimentee", since simple responses are direct articulations of one illocutionary force such as offer or disagreeing. Conversely, complex responses may signal indeterminacy or hesitation which results in weakening the responses especially when the micro functions belong to different macro functions. The higher percentages of complex responses suggest that Turkish respondents experience more uncertainty and hesitancy in giving responses to compliments. When the general percentages are divided into the setting of compliment, it is observed that Situation 3 has the highest percentage of extrinsically complex responses for both females and males (13.5% vs. %12.5, the total frequency of responses per situation). This shows that compliments on the respondents' personality cause more indeterminacy that leads to more conflicting responses.

As a last remark, the least preferred response types for both groups are Joking, Ignore, Challenge Sincerity and Request Reassurance. Since the Cer is their friends or classmates, the participants don't often need to question the accuracy of the compliment they receive, neither do they disregard it. Finally, we can conclude that complimenting is a complex speech event that needs to be investigated from different angles.

5. Conclusions

The present study aimed at exploring and describing CR strategies of Turkish female and male speakers from a socio-pragmatic perspective. Results indicated that although there are gender-related variations in CR preferences in some situations, in some others, the respondents are more likely to respond in a similar fashion regardless of their genders. Discoursal setting plays a crucial role in determining the response types of the participants. Also, combinations are highly typical of Turkish complimenting. The variations in CRs in the present study can be satisfactorily explained along the lines of the linguistic politeness theoretical framework, as put forth by Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987). Moreover, the study revealed that in contrast to the generalization of Chen (2010) that Turkish is one of the languages that posits at the rejection end of the Acceptance-Evasion-Rejection scale, the responses of the participants gathered on the acceptance end of the scale most.

Gender as a social variable has proven to be one of the factors affecting spoken and written language use. The study demonstrated that we should also take the cultural schemas into consideration as a factor in studying the CR strategies as they operate as "templates for guiding and organizing thought and behavior" (Sharifian, 2008, p. 56). The social rules that govern the

CR speech act are internalized during the socialization process and are installed in the minds of language users more or less in a similar fashion. This results in not only cross-gender but also within-gender variations. Therefore, a cultural account on politeness studies is essential to get a wider perspective on the topic of investigation.

It should be noted that although the findings of the study are suggestive, generalizing to all females and males in Turkish culture will be inappropriate since the data of the study are limited to the participants enrolled. A more extensive study can be carried out in the future with more participants of different age groups. Also, cross-gender CRs can be examined to check if the way individuals respond to a compliment change according to the gender of their Cer, the status of the Cer can be changed to see if differences in the status of the compliment giver and compliment recipient bring about differences between genders. Additionally, a comparative study with naturally occurred data can be carried out to compare the combination strategies of the micro patterns, that is, the sequential organization can be analyzed to see if males and females make use of the same response patterns. Still, the present study is important in the sense that for the first time it investigates gender triggered compliment responses in terms of different discoursal settings in Turkish context.

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