

## “Wow to Thank You”

### A study on Compliment Responses in a Metropolitan City

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#### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated compliment responses among Karachi inhabitants. It is a qualitative research under observational design. The aim of the research was to find out; how people in Karachi maintain solidarity while responding to compliments. It shows a new beam towards studying compliment response in a multicultural or metropolitan city. On the other hand, it revealed behavior change in language used between what they reported and how they naturally behave in cross cultural communication. The data was collected through discourse completion task (DCT), with four situational setting (possession, appearance, ability, nature) under ten contextualized tasks. A total of 76 DCT were collected, including 760 responses. For triangulating information, observation was used as secondary data collection tool. The data were analyzed by the framework presented by Herbert's (1998) model. The result concluded that people in Karachi has a distinct behavior at responding to the compliments unlike of what has been followed in other part of Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** *Compliment Responses, Metropolitan City, Speech Community, Contextual-bond, Cultural Norms, People In Karachi*

#### INTRODUCTION

Compliment is that speech act which pleases the listener. It plays a significant communicative function and serves to establish conversation smoothly and positively. It has different implications in different cultures as compliments are used for appreciating one's ability to tackle different things or are used when someone helps anyone. However, people are observed to give and receive compliments on physical appearance and possessions. Holmes (1986) defines compliments as

“A speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than speaker, usually the person addressed, for some good (possessions, characteristic, accomplishment, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer” (p.485).

Compliments are often followed by responses having various function based on different factors such as culture, social status, and type of the relationship between the interlocutors. Compliment responses are obvious behaviour which can either be in the form of verbal or nonverbal speeches, with agreement or disagreement, and in few cases compliments are ignored. In addition, whatever compliment is accepted in one culture can be negated in another culture. Likewise, responding to the compliment also depends upon the relationship between the speakers. For instance,

Example [1]

Speaker A: Hey Son, your shirt looks good.

[Compliment]

Speaker B: Thanks Pops. (Smile)

[Response]

Example [2]

Speaker C: Hey dear, your shirt looks good.

[Compliment]

Speaker B: Really...? Actually I have been looking for this type of shirt.

[Response]

The examples [1] and [2] demonstrate same compliments by two different speakers (different relationship and context) but the responses vary in both the situations. These examples show that compliment responses are contextual-bond. Thus, compliment responses are those social ties which depend upon the cultural norms and relationship status of the people in a speech community.

Karachi is a metropolitan city where people from different part of Pakistan live together but share a same cultural understanding at general level. For example, they can be observed to have same type of transactional speeches in social gathering, weddings, funerals, educational settings and at work places. As the conversational patterns are observed same, it can be stated that Karachi is one-speech community. A speech community can be best described as:

“A speech community is not necessarily coextensive with a language community. A speech community is a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language. The boundaries between speech communities are essentially social rather than linguistic, Romaine (2000, p: 23).

In any speech community people tend to say things, usually, depend on their age groups. The teenagers respond the compliment in quite vivacious manner whereas, adults may respond evasively. Likewise, this behavior may be different within another speech community. Therefore, the current study investigated the disparity in compliment responses depending on four age groups in one speech community.

In order to reveal the facts, the study was conducted in natural setting under the qualitative method for investigating the strategies of compliment responses in Karachi. The discourse completion task was employed as a primary tool for getting the written responses from the people of four age groups. Moreover, for validating the data, note taking method was applied as a secondary tool. The real life conversations of different interlocutors were noted and further analysed under different context.

### **Aim and Significance of the Study**

The study aimed to find out how people in multicultural society maintain a frame of solidarity and harmony through responding to the compliments. It investigated how responses are different in various situations. It was also imperative to describe if there are differences between cross-gender communications. In social gathering, educational places, work places and at home environment paying and responding to the compliments can be observed almost in routine in Karachi. People are more talkative; they like to initiate talks in these domains. They often exchange good words to each other.

The main reason that engulfed me do this research is one of the conflicting statement against complimenting behavior of people in Karachi which is unlike of how compliments are perceived in another part of Pakistan. Mohiuddin (2007) states,

“Subtlety in Compliments, Please, and Thank You. It is not common to pay direct compliments to another in Pakistan because it may be interpreted as fake.”

The study about compliment responses about a metropolitan city redounds to benefit the people and researchers to understand its language norm and behavior in cross-cultural perspective. Moreover, it disclosed many interesting facts about cross-gender communication.

The researchers, in applied linguistics, have explored many facets of language by studying compliment responses. A great number of the studies on compliment behaviors have concentrated on the general evaluation of compliments and compliment responses; however, the use of various compliment response strategies poses more important questions since they are determined by cultural values and norms.

### **Research Questions**

1. Which compliment response strategies are used by people in Karachi in a casual conversation within different age groups?
2. How do they respond to the compliments in different real-life situations within different age groups?
3. How compliment responses are different in cross- gender communication?

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The compliment responses were studied widely for analyzing them categorically by means of bilingualism, cross-cultural aspects, and in the cross gender communications. However, some research studies also investigated difference in mediated language or written language from how they vary when it is face-to face communication. The focus, then, shifted to study pragmatic transfer; by inquiring the way people perceive and respond to the compliments. Yet, the current review of literature is meant to bridge the gap for studying compliment responses within the context of multicultural society, which is comprised of one speech community among different age groups. However, so far, no research has investigated the compliment responses in metropolitan city within age groups.

Pomerantez (1978) and Herbert (1998) have been the pioneers of studying compliment responses. Herbert (1998) has exploited the strategies of compliment responses, which was proposed by Pomerantez (1978) as stated by Furko and Dudas (2012). Generalizing the aspects in cross-cultural communication, a study in USA by Pino (1981, p. 53-72) examined the compliment responses, through Conversation analysis, between bilingual Mexican-American speaker and monolingual and monolingual English speaking Americans. Basically, it was conducted in a broader aspect of Bilingualism. This study discovered that emphasis on different rules of politeness which can result in loss of distinctions that occur in the immigrant language but that to the language of a new culture so bilinguals were able to use verbal strategies in only one language whereas, bilinguals may, by switching codes and many other languages.

One more study investigated the same phenomenon of compliment responses of multi-cultural society. Wolfson and Manes (1981) researched on compliments from cross-cultural perspective. Having spent three years, they analyzed compliment behavior as a speech act. They have been engaged in analyzing complimenting behavior in American English with other English-speaking people (non-native) as a little attention was paid in that particular domain till that time. They included corpus a sample of compliments collected by non-native speakers of English interacting with speakers of their speech community and in their native language. The recorded conversation made them clear that a single speech act may vary greatly across speech community both in English and their native speech community. They discovered that in American English compliments occur in a very wide variety of situations. They are quite frequent and serve to produce or to reinforce a feeling of solidarity between speakers. Americans give compliments in situations where compliment would be totally inappropriate.

A study by Moore (1996) revealed cross cultural interpretation of a word, which is often used in Spanish culture, 'piropos' described in Spanish textbooks as "sexist compliments" as it was taught as an aspect of Hispanic culture. The information about piropos may indicate differences in interpretation by native and non-native speakers of Spanish speakers. For investigating the behavior towards the use of word piropos, informal interviews and analysis of text were conducted by two groups, that is, Native and Non-native Spanish speakers. The result shows it was one of the causes of misinterpretation, due to pragmatic transfer, in cross cultural communication. Similarly, I observed that pragmatic transfer occur when conversation takes place between two people; one who has always lived in Karachi and another who had come very recently from another city of Pakistan. The choice of words, while paying and receiving compliments has been one of the causes of misinterpretation so that, in some cases, those people are looked down upon.

There is a great deal of literature that presented conversational analysis for analyzing compliment responses across cultures. Such as Golato (2002) examined conversation analytic (CA) methodology for studying the preference organization of compliment sequences in German. He compared German and American compliment responses given among families and friends. The data showed that while rejections and turns containing certain agreement and disagreement features are constructed similarly in German and American English, it is in agreement sequences that the two languages differ. His finding suggested that in such sequences, cross-cultural communication can become problematic as one of the instances in the present study noticed a change when compliment was responded in an unpleasant way because of inappropriate phrase used while giving compliment.

Another study of compliment response discovered Pragmatics transfer in cross cultural communication. Bergqvist (2009) investigated the appropriateness in language use is part of pragmatics, and how speakers give and respond to the compliments. According to him compliments are strategies to explicitly or implicitly ascribe qualities that are mutually appreciated by the speaker and the addressee of a compliment. When individuals from different cultures interact in conversations, including the giving and receiving of compliments, and their behavior is based on different conventions, it may lead to misunderstandings. His study examined whether pragmatic transfer occurs in Swedish as first language into English as a second language in compliment responses. It will be assumed that pragmatic conventions are influenced by both linguistic and social norms. A Discourse completion task was used in order to obtain the data. The Discourse completion task consisted of one questionnaire in English, and one translated into Swedish, with situations where a compliment was given and the participant was instructed to imagine him/herself in that situation and give their most probable response to that compliment. The results showed that there was no significant difference

between compliment responses given in Swedish and those given in English by native Swedish speakers. After the compliment responses were analyzed, the result suggested pragmatic transfer from Swedish into English because there was no significant difference between the compliment responses given in Swedish to those given in English.

Farenkia (2004) investigated strategies used in compliments. He conducted a mixed-method study for finding strategies used by English speaking Canadian university students in responding to compliments. The data was collected by discourse completion task. Overall trend showed that verbal responses to boost face for complex responses were the most appropriate strategy however, non-verbal responses were quite rare. In contrast, non-verbal responses were observed as a very regular way of responding to the compliments in Karachi.

Agreeing with what Othman (2011) suggested I found that compliment responses vary in accordance with the difference across cultures. Like Pakistan, Malaysia is a multicultural society with a colonial history. English is spoken widely in the country, side by side with several vernacular languages. Othman (2011) investigated the pragmatics of Malay compliments using Brown and Levinson's (1987) "face" framework and Searle's (1969) speech act framework among Malay speakers in Malaysia. The results showed that compliments when given are more appreciated than denied or rejected by Malay speakers now than before, indicating a shift in the culture of compliments and compliment response in Malaysia. Moreover, he found that compliment responses differ according to the subject of compliment and its relative "distance" to the compliment receiver; closeness causes more compliment rejections, while distance results in compliment acceptance. The same examples were found when the compliment responses were analyzed that the responses are different on the same compliments depending on the relationship with the addressee.

Dehkordi and Chalak (2015) investigated the English compliment response strategies by Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) Learners on social networks. To this end, a sample of 30 Iranian EFL learners who were studying at Islamic Azad University, Khorasgan Branch (IAUKB) was selected from friend's list on social networks. Observing ethical issues, participants' compliments and compliment response strategies were recorded, classified, analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage, and then interpreted. The findings revealed that the most frequent response strategy to English compliments was acceptance strategies at macro level and appreciation token at micro level. The findings enabled me to compare mediated language and language in real settings. They found discrepancies between the real compliment responses with that of many students do on Facebook. Similarly, I found the difference between what participants had attempted to answer through DTC and how they actually respond in real settings.

Similarly, in several other cross-cultural studies it has been shown that culture has an influence on how people deal with compliments. Lorenzo-Dus (2001) compared reactions to compliments from Spanish and British participants and found that Spanish people often request for repetition and sometimes even for an expansion of the compliment, while this seems to be a typical for British people. Likewise, in culture of Karachi many people can be observed to show disagreement in order to, perhaps, get expansion in compliments.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To inquire the phenomenon, the qualitative paradigm was used. The data was collected through Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and note taking technique while using observational method in natural settings; such as social gathering, educational and work places along with some instances at domestic talks. The methodology followed as:

First, a Discourse completion Task (DCT) was designed with ten conversational situations (see appendix) which was piloted from ten respondents/

Having piloted the DCT, other participants were asked to write, in the blank lines provided, what they thought to be the socially appropriate verbal responses to the compliments. Since compliments can be responded to in more than one way, they were requested to write down the way they behave in natural setting to those situations.

Simple Random sampling technique was employed for collecting data for avoiding gender, class, or ethnic bias from the population. In addition male and female participants were randomly selected from work place, university and other social gathering. Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which is known as the most successful ways of eliciting information, was employed. A total of 76 DCT were filled by 4-age groups of people.

As a secondary tool, note taking was used as an important technique for observing compliment responses in different social gatherings including events because spontaneity in different situation is more naturalistic way to observe the trend. Then, data was first analysed under Herbert's (1998) framework. Later, a thick description was provided in comparison with DCT and observational method.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis has been divided into two phases. First, the examples from DCT were compared with the reference to the Herbert's (1998) model. Then, this model was compared with the compliments responses in the real settings. As this model comprises of three categories which was analyzed according the age groups of DTC. Finally, DCT and Real conversation were analyzed comparatively following the same model.

### **Phase I. Analysis through Discourse Completion Task**

I have briefly presented Herbert's (1998) taxonomy of micro and macro level CRs, which has provided the basis as the framework for the current study. He proposed the macro CRs of Agreement, Non-agreement and Request Interpretation and twelve micro CRs as illustrated in the following table:

<b>I-Agreement</b>	
<b>Types</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Appreciation token:</b> a verbal or non-verbal acceptance of the compliment.	Thank you! [nod]
<b>Comment acceptance:</b> addressee accepts the complement and offers a relevant comment on the appreciated topic.	Yeah, this is my favorite, too!
<b>Praise Upgrade:</b> addressee accepts the compliment and contributes to the force of the compliment.	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
<b>Comment History:</b> addressee offers a comment on the object of the compliment, usually some information about how s/he has acquired it	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.
<b>Reassignment:</b> addressee agrees with the compliment, but the complimentary force is transferred to some third person.	My mother gave it to me.
<b>Return:</b> the praise is shifted or returned to the addresser.	So is yours.

<b>II-Non-agreement</b>	
<b>Types</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Scale down:</b> addressee disagrees with the complimentary force, pointing to some flaw in the object or claiming that the praise is overstated.	It is really quite old.
<b>Question:</b> addressee questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of the compliment.	Do you really think so?
<b>Disagreement:</b> addressee asserts that the object of the compliment is not praiseworthy.	I hate it.
<b>Qualification:</b> Addressee merely qualifies the original assertion, usually with though, but, well etc.	Well, it is all right but Kim's is nicer.
<b>No Acknowledgement:</b> addressee gives no indication of having heard the compliment. The addressee either responds with an irrelevant comment or gives no response.	topic shift/no response.

<b>III-Request Interpretation</b>	
Addressee interprets the utterance as a request rather than a simple compliment.	You wanna borrow it?

Table 1: Types of Compliment Response strategies (adopted from Herbert: 1998)

#### i- Compliment Responses from the Age Group of 15-19

The data analysis from discourse completion tasks (DCT), from the age group 15-19, shows Praise Upgrade the largest in number. This age group tends to upgrade the compliment responses than any other group. For instance:

Situation 3: While capturing selfies your friend happens to see the mobile phone that you have recently bought and says: "Wow, What a cellphone! It's so smashing. It has all the latest

features with a lovely color. You have really a good taste in choosing cellphones. I really loved it.”

Compliment Response: Well, thank you. This is the latest cellphone of this generation. It has all the features and its android is lollipop 5.3, and ...this color is the expensive and great looking color.

The responses show this age group particularly involve in speaking more than other groups. They are more interested to talk in greater details about the possessions they have. Moreover, they particularly like accepting the compliments and they respond in quite a positive manner.

The other examples from DCT show not only acceptance but also exaggeration towards adding more appraisals to it. This can be assumed that people of this particular age group like to be appreciated and to receive comment but they also tend to add many phrases to the receives compliments.

#### ii- Compliment Responses from the Age Group of 20-24

Likewise, this category also accepts all types of compliments frequently with smile and nod. However, it is very unlikely that this age group would reject any compliment.

One more noticeable feature from the responses are NO responses were reported in RETURN, SCALE DOWN and NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, which can be interpreted as young people may have more tendency to appreciate when complimented and they do not vary from each in nature in majority when responding to the compliments. They rather feel happy while accepting to them and they hardly QUESTION when they receive compliments, for example, Oh really? haven' t noticed it.

From Situation 5 of DTC, I have elicited these answers from most of the people in this age group. “In a social gathering at your home someone compliments your eyes by saying “Wow, Your eyes are so charming.”

Response i: oh really	[Question]
Response ii: so are yours	[Return]
Response iii: Thanks!	[Appreciation Token]

In addition to it, their responses are also about the complimented objects and its HISTORY. They like sharing information about their possession and whom they got that from. For example, in situation 3: Cellphone: While capturing selfies your friend happens to see the mobile phone that you have recently bought and says: “Wow, What a cellphone! It's so smashing. It has all the latest features with a lovely color. You have really a good taste in choosing cellphones. I really loved it.”

Response i: I have been looking for this for so long	[Comment Acceptance]
Response ii: My father gifted me.	[Reassignment]

One important element was discovered about REASSIGNMENT. This age group specifically reassigns compliment responses to their friends, parents and to God.



For Example, from situation no. 6, that is, interpersonal skills and, situation no. 7 Education accomplishments, most of them show reassignment by writing these responses:

Response i: No, it's because of you guys. [Reassignment to other people]  
Response ii: It's because of Allah. He gave me knowledge. [Reassignment to God]

We can see from the responses that this age group shows more humbleness than the group of 15-19. Perhaps, at this age, people become more conscious about responding to the things and show more solidarity in different domains.

### iii- Compliment Responses from the Age Group of 25-29

This category has observed a different trend. Appreciation token, Comment acceptance and Scale down were observed to be the highest in response. However, Reassignment and Return also show second highest responses.

Examining the situation no. 1, that is, Dress and situation no. 2, they have mostly answered in such a way:

Response i: Thank you. [Appreciation Token]  
Response ii: Yeah, I tried a new saloon for this hair-cut. [Comment Acceptance]  
Response iii: Yours look good too. [Return]

It can be interpreted that this particular group shows high level of considerate behavior while responding. Secondly, the category of Praise Upgrade and No Acknowledgement were not found anywhere in DCT.

### iv- Compliment Responses from age group of 30-35

The age group from 30-35 seems to be reserved comparatively. Majority of the people accepted the compliment while saying "Thank You"[Comment Acceptance]. Neither complimenting behavior was seen common nor responding to the compliments.

For instance in situation 9, that is, good nature and 10, that is, good physical stamina, majority responded as;

Response i: Yeah [Comment Acceptance]  
Response ii: Thanks [Appreciation Token]

Not only in these situations but in the rest of the situations they responded evasively. These responses vary from the rest of the age group.

To sum up the elicited responses from DTC, we have discovered, so far, that people in Karachi exhibit different behavior while responding to the compliments in different situations. It can also be concluded that DTC could gather required responses; however, the truth can further be analyzed through Observational Technique in the next phase.

## Phase II. Analysis through Observation:

Besides the interpretation from DCT, observation was used as secondary tool. The interesting facts were explored while observing social gatherings, discussions at families, informal talks for gathering data. I am able analyze and interpret data through field notes randomly.

It is imperative to notice that the data collected through observation has an edge over the data elicited from DCT. It may be possible because real responses can be noted in very natural setting rather than an imaginary context.

First, I would focus on the observation which is gender-based. As a matter of fact, women are more expressive than men at most of the situations. In Karachi, where men and women work and study almost everywhere in different setting, men avoid complimenting women in a gathering while they are observed to compliment in small group or in one-two-one talks.

Compliment A: aaj tu aap bohat hi pyaari lag rahi~ he~ (Today, you look so lovely)  
Compliment Response B: sachii? roz nahi~ lagti kya (Really? Don't I look lovely every day?)

This type of compliment response (CR) was very frequently observed in cross-gender conversation among small groups and one-two-one conversation. For example,

A: Your shoes look good.  
B: Thanks [smile]

Comparatively, women were observed to speak more while responding and in most cases, their compliment responses prolong in the form of a great discussion about the topic. Let's say, when a woman receives a compliment, she responds in such a manner the discussion about that object keeps going. For instance,

Woman A: You drive the car very well. [Compliment]

Woman B: I have driven it since I was a teenager. My father made me learn driving and...umm... you know even my husband appreciates my driving. [Response as History]

Woman A: Your husband says this? It really means to you, doesn't it?

Woman B: Yes, once you learn driving, you should keep practicing it otherwise...you know...we might forget it. (this conversation lasts for 10 minutes approx..)

On contrary, men often compliment informally and respond wittily in Karachi. They do not give long responses as compared to women. They even are found to give "No Acknowledgement" (according to Herbert's Model 1998) that we used. Teenagers were seen to respond more informally than the senior ones. They mostly compliment the indirect objects and people such as cricketers, actors and news. In domestic setting, male give brief compliments but with strong force and women either confirm what they say or do not respond. For example,

A [Male]: Food is amazing, esp. the pulses. Wow, it is delicious.

B [Female]: No response

Another, interesting observation was found among males and females both, that is, Disagreement while responding to the compliment for the sake of getting more appraisals. It can be seen commonly, usually, by gestures that they really agree but shows denial to they heard about. For instance;

A: Your dress is so different; I mean it really suits you.

B: C' mon, don't try to lie. I know I am not looking good.

A: You look damn awesome. Trust me.

To analyze the finding, we can see some discrepancies between DCT and real observations. People came with two different notions. First, they behave differently in real setting but when they had to imagine them in the same situations they stated things against their real action. It may be due to the fact that writing is more conscious than speaking esp. when one is self-reporting about things. Second, they were observed to be silent (No Acknowledgement) in real setting but DCT found no such responses. Subsequently, Karachi inhabitants have had a culture of paying and responding to the compliments. They often use religious terms "Masha'Allah", Subhan'Allah" as complimenting strategies in some settings whereas, in response, "Jazak'Allah" is said as an acceptance.

Since people keep migrating from rural areas too. Therefore, when compliment response was observed, it showed an evidence of pragmatic transfer in meaning.

A: Sir, you are looking beautiful today.

B: Excuse me! [stared]

In this conversation the person A was new in Karachi (came from a rural area). When he complimented his male teacher with the word "beautiful", it sounded weird to person B, since he may not accustomed to hear the word "beautiful" as a man.

This type of error not only shows cultural misunderstanding but also lack of exposure to the natural setting of a foreign language. However, in educational or employment domains, compliments are exchanged correctly, as far as language is concerned.

Although Karachi is embedded with many sub-cultures, it can be assumed that each individual share same norm at a general level. Even people, who are not the city dwellers but have lived here for long, share the same set of compliment behavior. However, with the reference to my research, people in Karachi pay and receive compliments quite positively; hardly a misinterpretation may occur during casual conversations.

From the analysis of both the phases, we posit the following behavior of the compliment responses in accordance with Herbert's model (1998).

From the analysis of both the phases, it can be concluded that the following behaviors of the compliment responses can be observed with Herbert's model(1998).

### **Limitation and Practical Implication of the Study**

People responded with the conventional dialogues as they may have learnt to deliver on DCT, whereas, real conversation revealed more clear talks. It can be assumed that it happened due to the relationship with the addressee and the surroundings.

The same respondents, who filled DCT, behaved against what they wrote in DCT; such as, tumhari eyes bohat pyari lag rahi he~ (Your eyes looks beautiful). The responses from DCT are, 'Thank you' in almost all the age groups), whereas, the real responses were, chal jhuute (Shut up, you liar!, sab kheryat tu he? (Is everything Ok?) [in dubious manner]. This trend was observed at a few places.

These differences vary because when people respond in real situations, they know quite well how their personal bonding allows them to give such responses. Especially, the teenagers and people in early twenties reply in very informal ways by saying colloquial phrases, which are understood only by the people in Karachi (highly culture specific).

This research also has one more limitations such as, 780 responses which may not generate the exact behavior as seemingly limited number of participants because shortage of time. But the study can be a useful way for investigating this area in future for the other researchers. Future researchers can discover more interesting facts about compliment responses and relationship in accordance with difference in age group.

### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, my research found three main answers about the behavior of compliment responses among people in Karachi. First was to inquire the compliment response strategies are used by people in Karachi in a casual conversation, second to their real responses in different context and different situation and what major differences are found in compliment responses in cross-gender communication.

Having analyzed the data by Herbert's (1998) model, it is discovered people in Karachi exhibit different strategies while responding to the compliment unlike of what is stated by Mohiuddin (2007) about Pakistanis complimenting behavior. In addition, it was also observed that people show divergence at what they write and to what they respond in real settings, such as they responded more informally with cultural specific words. The compliment responses in the culture of Karachi depends upon the closeness of the speakers; cultural and relationship-bond strategies are observed. In cross-gender conversation, men compliment women in domestic setting and women are seen to give no response mostly. Women use more description about things and their qualities while responding to compliments and usually go deeper in Comment History which becomes a topic of conversation. Yet, men briefly respond to the compliments.

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## Appendix

### Discourse Completion Task

**Aim: The aim of the DCT is to get real responses when compliments are given in your culture.**

#### Situation 1: Dress and Color

In a family event, one of your relatives come to you and says; “Your dress looks awesome; this color really suits you.

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#### Situation 2: Hairstyle

You meet a friend outside and s/he says; “Your haircut is cool. You look good in it.”

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#### Situation 3: Cellphone

While capturing selfies your friend happens to see the mobile phone that you have recently bought and says: “Wow, What a cellphone! It’s so smashing. It has all the latest features with a lovely color. You have really a good taste in choosing cellphones. I really loved it.”

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#### Situation 4: Physique

You are meeting one of your relatives after a few years and gets a compliment about your physique (figure). “You have become so smart since you put off much weight. I guess you must have been dieting. What is the secret?”

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#### Situation 5: Eyes

In a social gathering at your home someone compliments your eyes by saying “Wow, Your eyes are so charming.”

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Situation 6: Interpersonal skills

Recently you have completed a group activity quite well. After finishing the work one of the members thanks you by saying; “Had it not been for your help, our activity would not have been successfully accomplished. It is your nice personality that helps us avoid possible disagreement with others”

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Situation 7: Education

Your older compliments you on your educational achievement after observing your throughout performance by saying: “I am really proud of you. Good job and keep it up!”

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Situation 8: Computer skills

After helping someone downloading an important software you receive a compliment from your him/her: “You are cheetah(expert) by all means. Thank you so much!

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Situation 9: Nature

After seeking your help, your friend/relative compliments you by saying: “You are such a kind person. I am really grateful to you.”

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Situation 10: Sports

After watching your performance at any sports you performed well, you receive a compliment by other people: “You really did well today. You have a good stamina.”

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