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**Gender differences in Compliments and Compliment Responses in English and  
Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian**

**Rodne razlike u davanju i primanju komplimenata u engleskom i  
bosanskom/hrvatskom/srpskom jeziku**

Final paper

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the usage of compliment response strategies of the native speakers of the Bosnian language and the native speakers of American English with special reference to gender differences. The main goal of this survey is to investigate if there are differences and/or similarities between the two societies regarding compliment strategies in responding to compliments with special reference to gender-based differences, and what are the most frequent strategies of responding to compliments that are used by Bosnian and American English speakers in different situations. Another factor or sociological variable such as social distance were taken into consideration as well since they also inevitably affect the use of language.

Herbert's profound and detailed analysis of the gender-based differences in compliment behaviour in his 1990 research is the basis for ours, as well as the analysis and comparison of the results and conclusions. Herbert considered that different conversational roles of men and women were reflected in different strategies that men and women use in compliment responding (Herbert, 1990). A questionnaire that was designed for the purposes of this research was based on Discourse Completion Test, and it contained ten hypothetical situations. The test was distributed to twenty speakers of the Bosnian language and twenty speakers of American English. Out of twenty Bosnian respondents ten were male and ten female, and the same holds for American respondents. Results were organized according to Herbert's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses, and showed that both males and females favored the use of agreement strategies rather than non-agreement ones. Bosnians and Americans, regardless of their gender, would accept the compliment through tokens such as *thanks, thank you, thank you very much*, etc. Respondents, when complimented on skill/ability and personality, besides Appreciation Token, opt mostly for Reassignment and Return in situations where there is no social distance between the complimenter and them. Such compliment response strategies re(establish) balance between speakers which supports the notion that expressions of solidarity are mostly common between status equal, that is between close acquaintances.

We can conclude that gender plays important role in language use. Besides that, different situations, as well as social distance between interlocutors contribute to the different perceptions and understanding of the utterances, resulting in different language use by men and women.

**Key words:** compliment responses, response strategies, gender

## APSTRAKT

Ovaj rad se bavi istraživanjem strategija primanja komplimenata koje koriste govornici bosanskog i američkog engleskog jezika s posebnim osvrtom na rodne razlike. Cilj ovog istraživanja je ispitati da li postoje razlike i/ili sličnosti između dva društva u vezi sa strategijama primanja komplimenata s posebnim osvrtom na rodne razlike, te koje su najčešće strategije primanja komplimenata koje koriste govornici bosanskog i američkog engleskog jezika u različitim situacijama. Uzet je u obzir i drugi faktor ili sociološka varijabla, poput socijalne distance, koja također neizbježno utječe na upotrebu jezika.

Samo uporište ovog rada, kao i analizu i usporedbu rezultata i zaključaka čini Herbertova detaljna analiza rodni razlika u korištenju komplimenata u istraživanju iz 1990. godine. Smatrao je da se različite uloge muškaraca i žena u konverzaciji odražavaju u različitim strategijama koje muškarci i žene koriste u primanju komplimenata (Herbert, 1990). Upitnik koji je dizajniran za potrebe ovog istraživanja zasnovan je na sociolingvističkom upitniku koji se sastoji od deset hipotetičkih situacija. Upitnik je distribuiran među dvadeset govornika bosanskog jezika i dvadeset govornika američkog engleskog. Od dvadeset bosanskih ispitanika deset je muškaraca i deset žena, što isto vrijedi i za američke ispitanike. Rezultati su organizirani prema Herbertovoj (1986) taksonomiji primanja komplimenata, a pokazali su da muškarci i žene više koriste strategije Slaganja nego Neslaganja. Bosanci i Amerikanci, bez obzira na rod, prihvataju kompliment koristeći izraze kao što su hvala, hvala mnogo, itd. Ispitanici, kada prime komplimente u vezi sa vještinama/sposobnošću i ličnošću, osim što se zahvale, uglavnom prihvataju kompliment i usmjeravaju kompliment na sagovornika ili na ono što se pohvaljuje, ili uzvraćaju kompliment u situacijama u kojima ne postoji socijalna distanca između onog koji daje kompliment i njih. Takve strategije primanja komplimenata ponovo uspostavljaju ravnotežu između govornika što podupire ideju da su izrazi solidarnosti uglavnom uobičajeni između sagovornika jednakog statusa, odnosno bliskih poznanika.

Možemo zaključiti da rod igra važnu ulogu u upotrebi jezika. Pored toga, različite situacije, kao i socijalna distanca između sagovornika doprinose različitoj percepciji i razumijevanju onog što se govori, što rezultira različitom upotrebom jezika, i muškaraca i žena.

**Ključne riječi:** primanje komplimenata, strategija primanja komplimenata, rod

**CONTENTS**

1. INTRODUCTION----- 1

2. COMPLIMENTS AND POLITENESS BEHAVIOUR----- 3

3. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE----- 4

4. COMPLIMENTS----- 6

    4.1. Definitions of compliments----- 6

    4.2. Topics and Forms of Compliments----- 7

5. COMPLIMENT RESPONSES----- 9

    5.1. The significance of Herbert’s study for this research----- 15

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY----- 16

    6.1. Research questions----- 16

    6.2. Corpus and procedure----- 17

    6.3. Instrument and data analysis method----- 18

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION----- 20

8. DIFFERENCES/SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND BOSNIAN COMMUNITY  
----- 31

9. CONCLUSION----- 36

APPENDIX 1----- 38

APPENDIX 2----- 43

REFERENCES----- 48

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.....	11
Table 2.....	20
Table 3.....	21
Table 4.....	22
Table 5.....	24
Table 6.....	25
Table 7.....	26
Table 8.....	27
Table 9.....	28
Table 10.....	29
Table 11.....	30
Table 12.....	31

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The essential part of any communication is politeness. People behave and talk politely in order to show respect and to be respected at the same time. Politeness can be expressed in many ways but paying a compliment is one of the best and most obvious. Compliment plays an important communicative function to establish solidarity in the interpersonal relationships. The ways of expressing and responding to the compliments are different from one person to another. It is because the norms for compliment behaviours vary from one culture to another. Each society has different ways in giving and responding to compliments. A compliment response is defined as an expressive speech act and preferred social act that is structurally expected by the speaker. There is a common view among speakers of English that the prescriptively "correct" response to a compliment is *thank you*. However, American speakers avoid this simple acceptance of compliments (Herbert, 1990).

A great number of the studies on compliment behaviour 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. Herbert (1997), for example, proposed that compliment events reflect socio-cultural values and organization, and the most common topics of compliments can reveal what is valued in some particular society. In other words, complimenting reflects the relationship between the participants' linguistic choices and their socio-cultural norms. One of the most important cross-cultural variations is the difference one can observe between the strategies used by men and women.

There are undoubtedly differences between women and men in language use that intrigued many researchers. Holmes (1995) states that women enjoy talking and view talking as a way of keeping in touch with friends and relatives. Besides, they also focus on personal relationships which they maintain and establish by language use. Women compliment and apologize more, whereas men use language primarily to obtain and convey information. The content of a conversation with a defined beginning and an end is what matters to them.

Herbert (1990) considered that different conversational roles of men and women were reflected in different strategies that men and women use in compliment responding. Therefore, such considerations are at the core of this present research.

This is a small-scale survey that examines the compliment response strategies used by male and female speakers of the Bosnian language and male and female speakers of American English. The aim of this survey is to investigate if there are differences and/or similarities

between the two societies regarding compliment strategies in responding to compliments, and if there are any gender-based differences and/or similarities in responding to compliments between American and Bosnian speakers. Another factor or sociological variable, such as social distance, was taken into consideration as well since it also inevitably affect the use of language and choice of compliment response strategy.

The ultimate goal of our research will be aimed at answering the following three research questions:

RQ1: What are the most frequent strategies of responding to compliments that are used by Bosnian and American English speakers with special reference to gender-based differences?

RQ2: What are the differences and/or similarities between Bosnian speakers and American English speakers in their use of compliment responses?

RQ3: What are the most frequent strategies of responding to compliments that are used by Bosnian and American English speakers in different situations?

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) is used as an instrument for collecting compliment responses. For the purpose of this research, we used an original DCT which was constructed based on DCT's used in previous research. The DCT used in present research was inspired by the one used in Jamil's doctoral thesis *Compliment responses at Higher Education Institutions: A comparative study of Omani and Australian speakers* (2016), and the one used in the research *Just Say "Thank You": A Study of Compliment Responses*, conducted by Al Falasi (2007).

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the second chapter we introduce some of the fundamental notions of complimenting behaviour in terms of politeness behaviour. Gender differences in language use are discussed in the third chapter. In the chapter 4 we provide a review of the literature on the definitions, forms and topics of compliments. Theoretical considerations and previous studies on compliment responses with special reference to gender-based differences is discussed in the chapter 5. The next chapter deals with the research itself. It describes the research methodology used to investigate the research questions, instrument, corpus, data collection process, data analysis method and ends with the results and discussion section. This chapter also represents a brief comparison of Bosnian and American community where the choice of compliment response strategies of native speakers

of Bosnian is compared to the choice of compliment response strategies of native speakers of American English, which are then compared to the results of Herbert's (1990) American data. The conclusions drawn on differences in the choice of strategy within a defined social context and the influence of the various non-linguistic variables (gender and social distance) are presented in the final chapter of the paper.

## **2. COMPLIMENTS AND POLITENESS BEHAVIOUR**

In every day lives, people use speech to convey information, attitudes, feelings, opinions. Speech is one of the universal characteristics of humans. Austin (1962) defines speech acts as the action performed in saying something. However, speaking is a complex behaviour which calls for both linguistic and pragmatic competence and is likewise influenced by sociocultural norms and constraints. Speech is one of the universal characteristics of humans. People constantly choose their language use depending on the situation and interlocutors, trying to show respect to them. Therefore human speech and behaviour are constantly guided by the principle of politeness.

Politeness refers to expressing respect towards the person you are talking to and avoid offending them. Brown and Levinson (1987) describe politeness as showing concern for people's face. They define the notion of face as the public self-image that one shows or intends to show to other participants. People generally cooperate in maintaining each others' face, since everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained. Therefore, the speech act either saves face or threatens face. Two aspects of face can be distinguished: negative and positive. Negative face is reflected in the need of every individual to be independent, to have freedom of action, and to be unimpeded by others. Positive face is reflected in the desire of every individual to be liked, admired and connected. (Yule, 1996).

If some utterances seem to be a threat to others' face or self-image, it is called a Face Threatening Act (FTA), and if some seem to lessen the threat to others, it is called a Face Saving Act (FSA) (Yule, 2006). Behaviour which avoids threatening others' face is described as evidence of negative politeness, while sociable behaviour expressing warmth towards an addressee is positive politeness behaviour (Holmes, 1995). To keep the conversation going, people will avoid FTAs and use more FSAs that focus on others' positive face or self-image.

As a consequence, the task of the speaker is to select the most efficient means of achieving a particular end.

Politeness can be expressed in many ways but paying a compliment is one of the best and most obvious. Compliments are prime examples of speech acts which notice and attend to the hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods and it is the first positive strategy identified and discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987).

For example, when you say "Your dress is so beautiful" to your female friend, you praise her appearance. By doing so, you make her feel good and happy. This is a positive politeness strategy which can build a strong relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

However, compliments may also be regarded as face-threatening acts (FTA). Brown and Levinson (1987) point out that compliments may be FTAs in societies where envy is very strong. Holmes (1988) agrees that compliments may be regarded as FTAs when they imply that complimenter envies the addressee or wants to have something the addressee has. Different factors such as context, individual interpretations and culture determine whether a compliment is a positive or negative speech act.

### **3. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE**

Women and men are different in many ways and they can be divided into two groups. In biological terms they can be divided into females and males and the term used for such distinction is 'sex'. On the other hand, gender is the term used for socially constructed categories based on sex (Coates, 2004).

Roles of gender and gender differences in language use have been extensively studied by many scholars for the last 50 years. Gender differences in language are not only regarded as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a social phenomenon, therefore they became the popular subject of sociolinguistics too.

Coates (2004) proposes three reasons for this. The first two stem from sociolinguistics' antecedents in dialectology and linguistics and the third is related to changes of women's position in society.

There are undoubtedly differences between women and men in language use that intrigued many researchers. Holmes (1995) states that women enjoy talking and view talking as a way of keeping in touch with friends and relatives. Besides that, they also focus on personal relationships which they maintain and establish by language use. Women compliment and apologize more, whereas men use language primarily to obtain and convey information. The content of a conversation with defined beginning and an end is what matters to them.

According to Coates (1991, p. 64) “Female speakers will use a higher proportion of prestige forms than male speakers. In other words, the prestige norms seem to exert a stronger influence on women than on men.”

Robin Lakoff (1975) states that women use language in a distinctive way because of their insecure position in society. She claimed that linguistic strategies chosen by women in a conversation reflect their hidden attitudes and feelings. Therefore, female speech is said to be indirect, repetitive, unclear and exaggerated, whereas male speech expresses tendency for more clarity, precision and directness.

In Lakoff’s opinion there are four approaches to studying gender and language: the deficit, the dominance, the difference and the dynamic or the social constructionist approach.

Stockwell (2007) describes the deficit approach as expressing the features of women’s language as lacking certain elements, being weak in certain respects, having less semantic or logical content. Maltz & Borker (1982) considered the gender differences as a kind of cultural differences, and the most important are the differences in women’s and men’s rules for engaging in conversation, and their rules for interpreting it. The dominance approach sees women as an oppressed group and men as dominant. Zimmerman and West (1975) argue that men’s dominance in conversation parallels their dominance in society. Male discourse is regarded as a norm and female’s as subordinate.

Most linguists prefer to use the last approach which has to do with the interaction between genders. As Zimmerman and West (1987) put it, this approach places emphasis on ‘doing gender’ rather than ‘being gender’ (Coates, 2004). Researchers who adopt this approach see gender as a social construct rather than as a ‘given’ social category. Language and cultural differences are actually the reflection of social differences.

## 4. COMPLIMENTS

### 4.1. Definitions of compliments

In the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, compliment is defined as: “an expression of praise, admiration, or congratulation”; “ a formal act of civility, courtesy, or respect” and “good wishes, regards”. Compliment is a comment expressing praise or approval of polite words or good wishes. (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary).

From the definitions above, we can conclude that compliments are expressions of praise, approval, admiration and respect. Many researchers provided their own definitions based on the data conducted in their research. Their focus was establishing links between linguistic choice and sociocultural processes. Many of them found gender differences in language use.

Since people tend to be polite in conversation, compliments may be defined in terms of politeness behaviour theory.

Compliments are speech acts which maintain or improve the addressee’s face. They are used as a positive politeness strategy which expresses the addressee’s interests, needs and goods. The main purpose of using a compliment is not to lose one's face which is likely to be lost if a compliment is misused in context. Although language serves many functions, referential and affective are the most important. Compliments serve the affective function which refers to the use of language to convey feelings and reflect social relationships, rather than referential which is conveying information, facts and content (Holmes, 1995). People give and receive compliments on various topics, such as appearance, ability, performance and possessions. According to Holmes (1988) complimenting helps people to be closer to one another. She defines compliment as: “A speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speakers, usually the person addressed, for some “good” (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer” (Holmes, 1988).

The main function of complimenting behaviour, according to Manes and Wolfson (1981), is “to create or reinforce solidarity by expressing appreciation or approval”.

Holmes (1995) lists a number of different functions of compliments as identified by different analysts. These are expressing solidarity, expressing positive evaluation, admiration, appreciation or praise, expressing envy or desire for hearer's possessions and expressing verbal harassment. All these functions are affective since they are used to convey feelings and reflect social relationships.

#### **4.2. Topics and Forms of Compliments**

People give and receive compliments on different topics which is an important aspect of compliments. According to Knapp, Hopper & Bell (1984) the topics of complimenting strategies can be classified into four categories based on objects of compliments: (a) appearance/attire (compliments about clothing, jewelry, physical attributes and features etc.; (b) performance (compliments recognizing individual ability or skills, either work, play, home/domestic, or verbal performance; (c) personality/whole person (compliments that address the totality of the other or a specific characteristic, such as courage; and (d) possessions (compliments about a person's possessions, including children, spouses, and property).

Appearance is very common compliment topic in American society, especially when it comes to new items or results achieved by a great effort. Compliments on skill or performance are the second most frequent topic (Manes 1983).

Compliment behaviour varies due to the different cultures, social status and gender as well.

Holmes (1995) states that women give and receive compliments on appearance more than men do. Women prefer to compliment each other on appearance more often than on any other topic because they consider it as most appropriate and least threatening acts, while men prefer to compliment other men on possessions. For men, compliments on possessions can be interpreted as face-threatening acts because of the possibility that the complimenter will be viewed as expressing envy of the object referred to.

In Holmes's (1988) New Zealand corpus, 56,7% of all the compliments that women received were related to aspects of their appearance, 61% of all the compliments between women were also related to their appearance in contrast to 36% of compliments between males. The predominance of appearance compliments in women's interaction supports the assumption that women consider them as an expression of solidarity, therefore women use compliments primarily for this positive function.

As for the formal characteristics of compliments, it was Manes and Wolfson (1980) who first studied the syntactic structure of compliments in their American English data and pointed to the formulaic nature of compliments. They identified three syntactic patterns which accounted for 85% of their data:

1. NP is/looks (intensifier) ADJ. e.g. "That shirt is so nice", "It looks so comfortable."
2. I (intensifier) like/love NP. e.g. "I really like those shoes", "I love your hair".
3. PRO is (intensifier) (a) ADJ NP. e.g. "This was really a great meal.", "That's really a nice piece of work."

The remaining 15% of the compliments in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) data followed one of the following patterns:

4. You (V) (a) (really) ADJ NP e.g. "You did a good job."
5. You (V) NP (really) ADV (PP) e.g. "You cook really deliciously."
6. You have (a) really ADJ NP e.g. "You have such a great figure!"
7. What (a) ADJ NP e.g. "What a great job you did!"
8. ADJ NP e.g. "Good work!"
9. Isn't NP ADJ! e.g. "Isn't your work praiseworthy!"

The results show that complimenters tend to use five adjectives (nice, good, pretty, great, beautiful) or two verbs (like, love) to present the positive estimate, for example: *I love your glasses*. Examining gender differences in the use of intensifiers, Herbert found that women intensified compliments by using *love* more than men, who tended to use *like*. (Herbert, 1990).

Holmes (1988) collected 484 cases of compliments and compliment responses as linguistic data and replicated the finding from Manes and Wolfson (1980) in her New Zealand research. She found that women used pattern “What (a) (ADJ) NP!” (e.g. “What a beautiful blouse!”) more, while men made use of “ADJ NP!” (e.g. Good work!”) pattern more.

Herbert (1990), based on his studies in the United States of America, also found that there are some syntactic differences between men and women in compliment use and response. He concluded that compliments can be put into three types in terms of personal focus, i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> person focus, 2<sup>nd</sup> person focus and 3<sup>rd</sup> person focus (or impersonal focus). Women and men made different choices. Women preferred to use the first and second person as the sentence subject in complimenting, especially the first person “I/we”, for example: “I like your hair that way.” However, men preferred to use impersonal sentence in complimenting, for example: “Nice haircut.” (1990).

In the analysis of the Polish data Herbert (1991) found that the incidence of adjectival compliments is higher in English than in Polish in which 56% accounts for adjectival compliments and only six adjectives account for more than three quarters of the data: nice or pretty, first-rate, lovely, beautiful, great, and wonderful.

As noted by Manes and Wolfson (1980), adverbial compliments are rare in American English, occurring in only 2.7% of their data. However, in his Polish data, Herbert (1991) found that adverbial compliments are frequent in Polish. They account for 27% of the corpus. Only a small number of lexical items occurs frequently: nice(ly), lovely, well, beautifully, great, with the first two of these accounting for almost 70% of the adverbial compliments. Herbert (1991) states that the reason for the high frequency of adverbial compliments in Polish and their great infrequency in English “is due simply to syntactic differences in the two languages”.

## **5. COMPLIMENT RESPONSES**

“A compliment response is defined as a verbal acknowledgement that the recipient of the compliment heard and reacted to the compliment.” (Nelson 1996)

Compliment/compliment response interactions have been referred to as adjacency pairs in a "single conversation" (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), a unit of communication in which a single person speaks and a second person replies to the first speaker's utterance. Pomerantz (1978) referred to a system that links compliment responses with prior compliments as that of chained actions. An action chain is a type of organization in which the performing of one action provides the possibility of performing the next one.

According to Manes (1983) compliments and compliment responses provide a "mirror of cultural values", because they show how speakers react to external appraisals of their personal and social identity. Knowing how to give a compliment is as important as knowing how to respond to one. Responding to compliments appropriately is important in maintaining positive face of both the speaker and the addressee. In Brown and Levinson's terms, failing to do so may 'hurt the speaker's face' and compliment responses can be seen as potential FTAs.

There is a common view among speakers of English that the prescriptively "correct" response to a compliment is *thank you*. However, American speakers avoid this simple acceptance of compliments (Herbert, 1990). Most researchers agree with Pomerantz (1978) that responding to compliments usually poses problems for the addressee because of a conflict between the addressee's wish to agree with the complimenter, and at the same time to avoid self-appraise. She was the first researcher who discussed topics of compliment responses and reported a number of different response types.

Using Pomerantz's (1978) discussion, Holmes (1988) classified compliment responses into three main types: accept, reject, deflect/evade, each of these having subcategories to describe her New Zealand corpus. The results showed that both women and men are more likely to accept and least likely to reject a compliment. Even though there are no significant differences between the two genders within the three major strategies, there are some differences in subcategories. Men will ignore or evade a compliment more than women will (19.3% vs 11.2%). These deflect strategies are most likely to be used if a compliment is experienced as embarrassing which supports the hypothesis that men experience compliments as FTAs more than women do (Holmes, 1988).

Coates (2015) cites David Britain who comments that a man, complimented on appearance by another man experiences that compliment as extreme FTA. It is very important not to send wrong signals.

During his study of compliment and compliment responses among Americans, Herbert (1986) revised Pomerantz’ taxonomy of compliment responses. His results showed that speakers are “almost twice as likely to respond with some response other than acceptance” (Herbert, 1986). In his study, only 36.35% of compliment responses were accounted for by acceptance. Therefore, Herbert (1986) summarized 12 types of compliment response strategies. He grouped them into Agreement, Non-agreement and Other Interpretations (Table 1).

<i>Response Type</i>	<i>Example</i>
A. Agreement I. Acceptances 1. Appreciation Token 2. Comment Acceptance 3. Praise Upgrade II. Comment History III. Transfers 1. Reassignment 2. Return	Thanks; thank you; [smile] Thanks, it's my favorite too. Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it? I bought it for the trip to Arizona. My brother gave it to me. So's yours.
B. Nonagreement I. Scale Down II. Question III. Nonacceptances 1. Disagreement 2. Qualification IV. No Acknowledgment C. Other Interpretations I. Request	It's really quite old. Do you really think so? I hate it. It's all right, but Len's is nicer. [silence] You wanna borrow this one too?

*Table 1: Types of CR strategies (adopted from Herbert:1986)*

## A. AGREEMENT

In conversations, both men and women are under the pressure to agree with the complimenter and accept a compliment, at the same time avoiding self-praise. Within the general category of agreements three subtypes of responses are distinguished: Acceptances (Appreciation Token, Comment Acceptance, Praise Upgrade), Comment History and Transfers (Reassignment and Return).

### I. Acceptances

#### 1. Appreciation Token

The acceptance of compliments is usually expressed non-verbally by smiling and nodding or verbally through tokens such as *thank you, thanks, thank you so much, well thank you* (Pomerantz, 1987).

Example 1: C: Nice tie.

R: Thank you.

#### 2. Comment Acceptance

The complimentee accepts the compliment and offers relevant comments about the item or the topic being complimented.

Example 2: C: This shirt looks great on you.

R: It's my favourite color. Thanks!

#### 3. Praise Upgrade

The complimentee does not accept the complimentary force of the speaker's positive evaluation and considers it as being insufficient and he/she increases the evaluation. Herbert (1989:13) suggests that Praise Upgrades typically have a sarcastic connotation, and they may occur only among close acquaintances.

Example 3: C: This cake is delicious.

R: The best cake ever.

### II. Comment History

This type of compliment response involves offering a comment (or series of comments) on the object complimented. The complimentee agrees with speaker's assertion and adds a history comment shifting the force of the compliment from the speaker.

Example 4: C: You have such a nice house

R: It's given us a lot of pleasure. (Herbert, 1989)

### III. Transfers

#### 5. Reassignment

A complimentee agrees with the compliment assertion and transfers complimentary force to some third person or to the object itself.

Example 5: C: You're really a skilled sailor.

R: This boat virtually sails itself.

## 6. Return

In this type of compliment response, a complimentee accepts the compliment and returns the praise to the complimenter. Chen (1993:58) explains that "Returning compliment" can be seen as a direct result of the indebted nature of compliment. It helps the complimentee to get out of the debt by returning the compliment. This compliment is "similar" to the prior compliment and is constructed as agreement. (Pomerantz, 1987)

Example 6: C: Ya' sound (justiz) real nice.

R: Yeah you soun' real good too. (Pomerantz, 1987)

## B. NON-AGREEMENT

As much as interlocutors are under the pressure to accept a compliment, they are as much under the pressure to avoid self-praise. This may lead interlocutors to disagree with a complimenter. A complimentee usually changes the topic, responds to only some aspects or overtly reject a compliment. Within the category of non-agreements, four subtypes of compliment responses can be distinguished: Scale Down, Question, Nonacceptances (Disagreement and Qualification) and No Acknowledgment.

### I. Scale Down

A complimentee disagrees with the complimentary force and scales it down, pointing to some flaw in the object or claiming that the praise is overstated. (Herbert, 1990)

Example 7: C: I like your shirt.

R: It's really quite old.

### II. Question

In this type of compliment response, a complimentee questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of a compliment assertion asking a complimenter for clarification or repetition. In this way, a complimentee avoids self-praise and obliges a complimenter to repeat the compliment.

Example 8: C: You look beautiful today.

R: Oh, do you really think so?

### III. Nonacceptances

#### 1. Disagreement

Complimentee shows disagreement by directly rejecting a compliment and asserting that the object complimented is not worthy of praise and that the first speaker's assertion is an error. (Herbert, 1990)

Example 9: C: You look great.

R: No, I don't.

#### 2. Qualification

This response strategy is merely qualifying the original assertion, usually with *though*, *but*, *well*, etc. (Herbert, 1990)

Example 10: C: Nice dress.

R: Thanks, but yours is nicer.

### IV. No Acknowledgment

In this strategy, a complimentee either gives no indication of having heard the compliment or responds with an irrelevant comment.

Example 11: C: You are such a great person.

R: *Silence*

## C. OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

### I. Request

“Such responses are not compliment responses per se as the addressee does not perceive the previous speech act as a compliment.” (Herbert, 1990). Such responses occur when the complimentee, consciously or not, interprets the compliment as a request rather than a simple compliment.

Example 12: C: Your presentation was excellent.

R: Do you want me to do yours?

Brown & Levinson's theory notes that all forms of nonagreement strategies from Herbert's theory, as well as the transfer and comment history of the agreement strategies, would damage the positive face of the complimentee, since maintenance of a positive face means close relationships with the speaker and desire to be liked and accepted, and nonagreement would damage it. Also their face theory notes that expressing thanks would damage the negative face of the complimentee, i.e. his/her desire to be independent and

unimpeded by others, due to humbling themselves in front of another (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Herbert (1986) compared the Binghamton data with a similar study conducted in South Africa and discovered that acceptances accounted for 76% of the South African compliment responses. He suggests that the gap in percentages arises from different cultural values of the groups compared. He goes on to explain that Americans accept compliments less often than other English speakers due to the dominant value profile of their culture based on democratic idealism and human equality.

### **5.1. The significance of Herbert's study for this research**

Herbert's profound and detailed analysis of the gender-based differences in compliment behaviour in his 1990 research is the basis for ours, as well as the analysis and comparison of the results and conclusions.

Herbert (1990) argues that the majority of American English compliments are not literal statements of admiration, praise and so on, but expression of solidarity, therefore "the speaker's first intention is not to offer positive assessment of some object or concern relevant to the hearer" (Herbert, 1990, p. 209). Therefore, if compliments serve to express solidarity, compliment responses other than ACCEPTANCE may be viewed as similar negotiations on the part of the addressee. If the function of the compliment is to make the hearer feel good, the function of a response other than ACCEPTANCE may be the same. He states that compliments are likely to reflect the relationship between the complimenter and the complimentee, because praise is often directed towards the subordinate or less powerful participant.

However, Herbert (1990) suggested that the gender of the complimenter is a better indicator of the compliment response strategy used by the participants. In particular, compliments offered by males are more likely to be accepted than compliments offered by females, i.e. women are more likely to accept compliments from men (68.6%) rather than from women (22.1%). But this doesn't mean that female accept more compliments than men. In Male-Male interactions 40,4% of compliment responses account for acceptance in contrast to 22,1 % in Female-Female interaction. Compliments offered by males, were much more

likely to be responded to by an appreciation token, than any compliment offered by females, whose compliments are much more likely to be met by a comment history or a disagreement (Herbert, 1990). He considered that different conversational roles of men and women were reflected in different strategies that men and women use in compliment responding (Herbert, 1990).

Another pattern, identified by Herbert (1990) in his American corpus in which women accepted more compliments from men than from women, seems to reinforce Wolfson's (1983) argument that women have a subordinate status in our society. Since it is generally believed that compliments usually go from higher to lower status (Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1995; Wolfson, 1983), acceptance strategy can be understood as the individual with less power trying to avoid disagreeing with a superior. In this case, the fact that women tend to accept more compliments from men indicates the existence of status difference between women and men (Herbert, 1990). The greater likelihood of male compliments being accepted is consistent with the notion that acceptances are most common among status nonequals.

According to Herbert's research, acceptance of compliments is considered the appropriate compliment response in western cultures, while disagreement is considered appropriate in eastern cultures. (Herbert, 1990, p. 209).

## **6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The first question asked by any researcher is what type of research should be used. There are many types, but the two most common are quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is used when something needs to be measured, namely the data collected so that the hypothesis could be tested. Qualitative approach is the one where data cannot be quantified and measured (Gass & Mackey, 2005, p. 2). Qualitative approach is used when a question needs to be described and investigated in some depth. We decided to use quantitative approach, since we have data which have to be quantified and evaluated.

### **6.1. Research questions**

Roles of gender and gender differences in language use have been extensively studied by many scholars. We will take Herbert's research on Binghamton data (1990) as a basis for ours,

as well as the basis for the analysis to come. Gender differences in language are not only regarded as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a social phenomenon. The different social position of men and women is reflected in the language use. Many scholars have done research on compliment and compliment responses, and proved that there are differences in the way men and women respond to compliments. In this research, we will first categorize compliment responses strategies according to Herbert's taxonomy of response strategies (1986).

The goal of our research is aimed at answering the following three research questions:

RQ1: What are the most frequent strategies of responding to compliments that are used by Bosnian and American English speakers with special reference to gender-based differences?

RQ2: What are the differences and/or similarities between Bosnian speakers and American English speakers in their use of compliment responses?

RQ3: What are the most frequent strategies of responding to compliments that are used by Bosnian and American English speakers in different situations?

We expect the results to show that there are gender-based differences in choosing the compliment response strategies in both communities, i.e. the differences between males and females when responding to a compliment. We will also observe what compliment response strategies males and females use when they are complimented on different topics.

## **6.2. Corpus and procedure**

This is a small-scale survey that examines the compliment response strategies used by male and female speakers of Bosnian language and male and female speakers of American English. The aim of this survey is to investigate if there are differences and/or similarities between the two societies regarding compliment strategies in responding to compliments, and if there are any gender-based differences and/or similarities in responding to compliments between American and Bosnian speakers. There were forty participants involved in the research, twenty speakers of Bosnian language and twenty speakers of American English. Out of twenty Bosnian respondents ten were male and ten female, and the same holds for American respondents. Respondents were young adults whose ages are all above 18 and

below 35. The questionnaire was distributed during the month of April, 2020 via social media (Facebook), that is with no face to face contact, therefore it was completely anonymous. The respondents had no time limit, so they could take as much time as they needed or stop any time they wished. The only criterion for selecting participants was that they are a native speaker of Bosnian or a native speaker of American English.

### **6.3. Instrument and data analysis method**

Since we decided to use a quantitative method for this study, we choose the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) as an instrument for collecting compliment responses. Golato (2003) describes a Discourse Completion Task, used to investigate compliments, as:

[A] written questionnaire that involves a number of hypothetical scenarios or situations used to elicit a particular speech act. Informants are presented with a situation in which a compliment (or compliment response) is believed to be the next speech act. Then, the informants are invited to note what they would say or how they would react to the situation.

As Lorenzo-Dus (2001, p. 111) argues, there are two advantages for using DCTs. The first one is that it provides reliable information about the respondents' perceived norms of socially appropriate communicative strategies. The second one is that it enables the researcher to obtain relevant and sufficient data in a short period of time. In addition to the advantages proposed by Lorenzo-Dus (2001), DCT enabled us to control the targeted variables i.e. the gender of respondent, topic of compliment and the social distance. The DCT design enabled us to set up the contexts in which the compliments occurred and language in which the responses were given, and made it possible for us to examine and compare the respondents' choices both in English and Bosnian. For the purpose of this research, we used an original DCT which was constructed based on DCT's used in previous research. The DCT used in present research was inspired by the one used in Jamil's doctoral thesis *Compliment responses at Higher Education Institutions: A comparative study of Omani and Australian speakers* (2016), and the one used in the research *Just Say "Thank You": A Study of Compliment Responses*, conducted by Al Falasi (2007).

In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents were presented with the introduction of the study and instructions in terms of filling out the questionnaire. The second part

consisted of basic information of respondents, such as gender and age. The questionnaire contained ten situations that are very common in every day life. However, this DCT is different from the standard DCT in that it gives respondents twelve possible answers in contrast to the standard DCT where they write down their own answers.

Since Herbert's taxonomy of compliment responses was adopted, these responses were created according to it and listed in the following order: appreciation token, comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history, reassignment, return, scale down, question, disagreement, qualification, silence, and request. For each of the situations, the respondents were asked to choose one or more of the twelve responses, i.e. compliment response strategies. The respondents also had an option to write down their answer if none of the offered was their choice, which we analysed in terms of these twelve compliment response strategies. There were four types of situations that the respondents were put into, or the four types of compliment topics they had to respond to. These compliment topics include appearance, possession, skill/ability, and personality. In some of these situations, the participants have equal social power, and in other the complimenter possesses higher social power than the complimentee. This variable is treated as an independent variable, along with the gender of the participants and four situations (appearance, possession, skill/ability, personality). The dependent variable is the choice of the strategy according to the gender of the complimentee.

In order to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and make sure that questions are unambiguous and answerable, we conducted a pilot research on two participants, one male and one female, who are native speakers of the Bosnian language. The results of the pilot research gave the researcher the confidence to go on with the study. The participants didn't have any difficulties interpreting questions and responding to them, therefore there was no need for making any adjustments and changes.

The data were organized and analysed in Microsoft Excel 2020. The same program was used for calculating percentages and making tables.

## 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, results of the research will be presented and analysed. The results of each situation are presented and organized in the table followed by detailed discussion of the findings. What follows then is the table with summary of all compliment response strategies and the main discussion of findings which are compared to the Herbert's (1990) American data. At the end of this chapter we will answer research questions which are the main goal of our research.

### SITUATION 1 - POSSESSION

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>60</b>		<b>80</b>		<b>92,3</b>		<b>85,7</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	3	30	8	53,3	9	69,2	7	50
2. Comment Acceptance	1	10			2	15,4		
3. Praise Upgrade					1	7,7	4	28,6
II. Comment History			2	13,3				
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment			1	6,				
2. Return	2	20	1	6,7			1	7,1
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>6,7</b>		<b>7,7</b>		<b>7,1</b>
I. Scale Down	1	10						
II. Question			1	6,7			1	7,1
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification	1	10						
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response	2	20			1	7,7		
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>				<b>13,3</b>				<b>7,1</b>
I. Request			2	13,3			1	7,1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>99,9%</b>

Table 2

In the first situation in the questionnaire, the respondent is taking a role of a person sitting in a café drinking coffee, and is supposed to respond to a compliment on his/her new mobile phone. The complimentee is a random person from the café, so there is a social distance between them in this situation. Respondents had the option to write their answer if none in the questionnaire was their option, so one American male respondent wrote his own response, i.e. "It's alright." We classified the response as comment acceptance.

The results show that the most common compliment response strategy chosen by both American and Bosnian respondents was the agreement strategy. Within this strategy, respondents opted for a substrategy expressing appreciation. An example of that compliment response strategy is shown in (13):

(13) “Thanks!”

Bosnian males, as mentioned above, choose appreciation token as their number one response in 30% of the cases. The second most used strategies are return and no response 20% respectively. As for Bosnian females, besides appreciation token (53,3%), their most used response strategies are comment history and request, 13,3% each.

Americans, both male and female chose to appreciate the compliment (M: 69,2%; F: 50%), with males adding a comment (15,4%) and females increasing the evaluation by choosing praise upgrade as their second most used response strategy (28,6%). It is interesting to note that Bosnian males, out of all the data, were the ones who decided for nonagreement strategies more than others (40%).

## SITUATION 2 - APPEARANCE

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>85,7</b>		<b>66,7</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>88,4</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	5	35,7	4	26,7	6	42,9	6	35,3
2. Comment Acceptance	1	7,1	4	26,7	6	42,9	2	11,8
3. Praise Upgrade			2	13,3	1	7,1	2	11,8
II. Comment History	6	42,9			1	7,1	2	11,8
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment							1	5,9
2. Return							2	11,8
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>14,3</b>		<b>13,4</b>				<b>5,9</b>
I. Scale Down	2	14,3	1	6,7				
II. Question			1	6,7			1	5,9
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification								
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response								
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>				<b>20</b>				<b>5,9</b>
I. Request			3	20			1	5,9
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100,2%</b>

Table 3

In situation number two, the respondent meets with friends after holidays. During holidays, the respondent worked hard on his/her physical transformation and achieved amazing results. The respondent got a lots of compliments on his/her appearance. Since the relationship between the respondent and complimentees is a close one, there is no social distance, i.e. they are socially equal.

As in the first situation, all respondents agreed with the compliment in almost all cases. Comment history account for 42,9% of all responses by Bosnian males, and appreciation token for 35,7% which are their two mostly used strategies. Women appreciated the compliment followed with an additional comment in 26,7% of all cases respectively, and took compliment as a request in 20%.

American males also agreed with the complimentee 100% and mostly used substrategies such as appreciation token and comment acceptance, 42,9% each. Appreciation token, the mostly used strategy, accounts for 35,3% of all responses by American females. They also opted for a wide range of agreement strategies, especially comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history and return, each 11,8%.

### SITUATION 3 - SKILL/ABILITY

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>83,3</b>		<b>85,7</b>		<b>94%</b>		<b>90,8</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	4	33,3	6	42,9	9	52,9	8	36,4
2. Comment Acceptance	2	16,7	1	7,1			1	4,5
3. Praise Upgrade	1	8,3			3	17,6	2	9,1
II. Comment History			2	14,3	3	17,6	1	4,5
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment	2	16,7					3	13,6
2. Return	1	8,3	3	21,4	1	5,9	5	22,7
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>8,3</b>				<b>5,9</b>		<b>4,5</b>
I. Scale Down								
II. Question	1	8,3			1	5,9	1	4,5
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification								
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response								
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>		<b>8,3</b>		<b>14,3</b>				<b>4,5</b>
I. Request	1	8,3	2	14,3			1	4,5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>99,8%</b>

Table 4

The third situation is the one where the respondent takes the role of a presenter. Namely, he/she presents the latest project. Most of the colleagues attend. As soon as the presentation finishes, a colleague comes forward and compliments on the presentation. Since the complimenter is a colleague, and the situation takes place at work, there is social distance, i.e. they are not socially equal. An American female didn't choose any of the answers provided in the questionnaire, and wrote her own - "Thanks. I worked really hard on it." The answer was acceptable, so we classified the first part as appreciation token and the second as praise upgrade.

As table 3 shows, the most common answer given by all respondents was appreciation token. The majority of other responses fall into the agreement category (comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history, reassignment and return). Only few respondents interpreted compliment as a request or questioned the statement.

When it comes to Bosnian respondents, males agreed with the complimenter (83,3%). Besides the appreciation token (33,3%) they choose comment acceptance and reassignment as the second mostly used strategies, each accounts for 16,7% of all responses. The reassignment is the strategy the respondent used to agree with the compliment but shift the force to the complimenter as in (14):

(14) It wouldn't be this good without your help.

Similarly, females appreciated the compliment in 42,9% of all cases, and returned the compliment (21,4%).

American male respondents, similarly to Bosnian, used appreciation token (52,9%) and comment history (17,6%) as primary responses. However, Americans asserted that the compliment force is insufficient and went for praise upgrade (17,6%).

Response strategies by American female respondents are similar to those by Bosnian. They too went for appreciation token (36,4%) and return (22,7%) as the two most used answers.

## SITUATION 4 - PERSONALITY

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>82,3</b>		<b>73,7</b>		<b>60</b>		<b>93,3</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	5	29,4	7	36,8	5	33,3	5	33,3
2. Comment Acceptance								
3. Praise Upgrade								
II. Comment History	1	5,9						
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment	3	17,6	3	15,8	3	20	7	46,7
2. Return	5	29,4	4	21,1	1	6,7	2	13,3
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>5,9</b>		<b>10,5</b>		<b>26,7</b>		<b>6,7</b>
I. Scale Down					1	6,7		
II. Question								
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification	1	5,9	2	10,5	2	13,3	1	6,7
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response					1	6,7		
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>		<b>11,8</b>		<b>15,8</b>		<b>13,3</b>		
I. Request	2	11,8	3	15,8	2	13,3		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5

In the fourth situation, the respondent receives a compliment on his/her personality. At the farewell gathering, a friend stands out and says loudly, "You are such a great person!" An additional answer was provided by an American male, who chose to answer in his own way by saying "Gracias amigo(a)." It is a Spanish way to say "Thank you my friend." The answer was classified as an appreciation token.

Table 5 shows that the most frequently used response in this situation was appreciation token, however, the respondents also choose different strategies. Namely, Bosnian males' mostly used strategies were appreciation token and return, which account for 29,4 % respectively of all answers. They agreed with the compliment assertion and transferred complimentary force to the complimentee, therefore their another mostly used response strategy was reassignment (17,6%). Females similarly responded to the compliment by choosing appreciation token (37%) and return (21%) as their answers. What we also observed is that Bosnian females interpret compliments as a request a lot. So, in this situation this kind of response accounts for 15,8% of all of their responses.

American males as all other respondents, answered with appreciation token (33%). They too, reassigned the complimentary force by using reassignment strategy in 20% of all cases. It

is interesting to note that the general nonagreement category accounts for 26,7%, which is rare. Females decided to reassign the complimentary force, which is the strategy they mostly opted for and accounts for 47%, and the second is appreciation token with 33%.

#### SITUATION 5 - POSSESSION

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>91,6</b>		<b>92,7</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	4	33,3	2	18,2	6	50	8	57,1
2. Comment Acceptance	5	41,7	3	27,3			1	7,1
3. Praise Upgrade	3	25	3	27,3	4	33,3	2	14,3
II. Comment History			1	9,1	1	8,3	1	7,1
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment			1	9,1			1	7,1
2. Return			1	9,1				
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>						<b>8,3</b>		
I. Scale Down								
II. Question					1	8,3		
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification								
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response								
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>								<b>7,1</b>
I. Request							1	7,1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>99,8%</b>

Table 6

The fifth situation is the one in which the respondent receives a compliment on his/her possession. A friend comments on the clock saying that it looks great in the living room. There is no social distance between the respondent and a complimenter since they are friends. In this situation, an American male didn't choose any of the offered answers in the questionnaire, but responded with "It took a while to pick out but I think it works.", which we classified as a comment history.

The results showed that all respondents agreed with the complimenter. Bosnian respondents, regardless of their gender, agreed 100%. Within the agreement category, males responded with comment acceptance (42%), appreciation token (33%) and praise upgrade (25%). The two response strategies that were mostly used by females were comment

acceptance and praise upgrade, each 27%. The second most used strategy was appreciation token. Only a few of them decided for reassignment and return.

When it comes to American respondents, males used disagreement strategy in 8% of the cases and agreed in 92% within which appreciation token accounts for 50% and praise upgrade for 33,3%. Females responded similarly as men, with appreciation token 57,1% and praise upgrade 14,3% of all responses.

#### SITUATION 6 - APPEARANCE

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>60</b>		<b>78,5</b>		<b>90,9</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	4	36,4	5	33,3	7	50	3	27,3
2. Comment Acceptance	5	45,5	2	13,3	3	21,4	7	63,6
3. Praise Upgrade	1	9,1			1	7,1		
II. Comment History			1	6,7				
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment			1	6,7				
2. Return	1	9,1						
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>				<b>33,3</b>		<b>21,4</b>		
I. Scale Down			5	33,3	1	7,1		
II. Question					2	14,3		
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification								
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response								
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>				<b>6,7</b>				<b>9,1</b>
I. Request			1	6,7			1	9,1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 7

The sixth situation is about respondent's appearance. A colleague compliments a shirt that a respondent is wearing, emphasizing how great color it is.

Generally, all respondents agreed with the complimenter, however it is very interesting to see the distribution of response strategies by Bosnian female respondents. They chose to scale down the compliment (33,3%) by responding that they bought it in the sales and that it's so cheap as in example (15):

(15) Oh, it's so cheap! I bought it in the sales!

They evenly split between scaling down and appreciating the compliment. The observation shows another interesting result. In situation 2, when the appearance was also the

topic of the compliment, Bosnian females responded similarly. 66% of the compliments was agreement strategy, whereas nonagreement accounted for 14% and other interpretations 20% of the cases. We can conclude that, when it comes to appearance, they find it somehow difficult to accept or agree with the complimenter. In contrast to females, Bosnian males agreed 100% with the complimenter. They accepted the compliment adding a short comment.

Appreciation token was a substrategy mostly chosen by American males (50%) with additional comment on the object complimented (21,4%). Here we have again men's tendency not to agree with the complimenter, so they opted for nonagreement strategy in 21,4% of all answers.

### SITUATION 7 - SKILL/ABILITY

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>64,2</b>		<b>58,8</b>		<b>76,6</b>		<b>72,3</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	5	35,7	4	23,5	5	29,4	8	44,4
2. Comment Acceptance	3	21,4			1	5,9		
3. Praise Upgrade	1	7,1	2	11,8	2	11,8	1	5,6
II. Comment History			1	5,9	2	11,8	1	5,6
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment			3	17,6	1	5,9	1	5,6
2. Return					2	11,8	2	11,1
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>21,4</b>		<b>23,5</b>		<b>23,5</b>		<b>16,7</b>
I. Scale Down								
II. Question					1	5,9	1	5,6
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification	3	21,4	4	23,5	3	17,6	2	11,1
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response								
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>		<b>14,3</b>		<b>17,6</b>				<b>11,1</b>
I. Request	2	14,3	3	17,6			2	11,1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100,1%</b>

Table 8

In situation 7 the respondent has friends over and on that occasion, he/she bakes a cake. Friends comment on the great skill by saying that it tastes yummy. An American male provided his own answer which was classified as a comment acceptance. The answer is "Glad you like it." Also, an American female responded with "Thank you, I love baking." This answer was classified as appreciation and comment history.

As table 8 shows, the most frequent response to this compliment was an appreciation token. There was also a wide range of different responses than in other situations. There was an increased frequency of nonagreement strategies, especially qualification, which is shown in (16):

(16) Not like my mom's, but I tried my best.

Respondents interpreted the compliment as a request a lot more than in any other situation. Namely they offered a recipe to the complimenter as in (17):

(17) Do you want me to give you a recipe?

But still, Bosnian males appreciated the compliment in 37%, with comment acceptance and qualification 21% each. Females opted for appreciation token and qualification in 23% respectively, and reassignment and request in 18% each of all the cases.

Mostly used strategy by Americans is appreciation token (M: 29%; F: 43%). However, American males also opted for qualification as the second highly used strategy - 17%.

#### SITUATION 8 - PERSONALITY

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>60,1</b>		<b>75,1</b>		<b>53,4</b>		<b>83,3</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	5	33,3	6	37,5	6	40	9	50
2. Comment Acceptance	1	6,7						
3. Praise Upgrade								
II. Comment History	1	6,7	1	6,3	1	6,7		
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment	1	6,7	1	6,3			2	11,1
2. Return	1	6,7	4	25	1	6,7	4	22,2
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>33,3</b>		<b>6,3</b>		<b>46,7</b>		<b>11,1</b>
I. Scale Down	2	13,3	1	6,3	5	33,3	2	11,1
II. Question	1	6,7						
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification	2	13,3			1	6,7		
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response					1	6,7		
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>		<b>6,7</b>		<b>18,8</b>				<b>5,6</b>
1. Request	1	6,7	3	18,8			1	5,6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100,2%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9

Situation eight is the one in which the respondent is taking a role of an organizer of a charity event. A friend who has been helping to organize a charity event compliments the respondent's personality.

Table 9 shows that the most frequently used response in this situation is appreciation token. However, there is a frequent use of nonagreement strategy by male respondents, while females mostly agreed with the complimenter.

Namely, Bosnian males chose nonagreement strategy as an answer in 33% of all the cases, whereas American males in 46%. They mostly scaled down the assertion, more precisely, Bosnian males scaled down in 13,3% and American males in 33,3% of all the cases, which is their second mostly used strategy. The first one si above mentioned appreciation token.

Bosnian females appreciated the compliment by responding with "Thank you!" in 38% of all the cases and returned the compliment in 25%. American females showed similar behaviour with slight difference in percentages.

#### SITUATION 9 - PERSONALITY

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>90</b>		<b>64,2</b>		<b>78,4</b>		<b>76,5</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	6	60	3	21,4	1	7,1	5	29,4
2. Comment Acceptance					3	21,4	6	35,3
3. Praise Upgrade			1	7,1	5	35,7		
II. Comment History	2	20	3	21,4	1	7,1	1	5,9
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment					1	7,1		
2. Return	1	10	2	14,3			1	5,9
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>10</b>						
I. Scale Down	1	10						
II. Question								
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification								
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response								
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>				<b>35,7</b>		<b>21,4</b>		<b>23,5</b>
1. Request			5	35,7	3	21,4	4	23,5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>99,9%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>99,8%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10

In situation nine, the respondent is approached by a stranger, precisely a tourist who is delighted by the country and people in it. Since the respondent sees this person for the first time, there is great social distance between them.

The respondents mostly agreed with the complimenter, but what is interesting is that many interpreted the compliment as a request.

Bosnian males answered with appreciation token 60%, and in 20% provided a comment on the people from his/her country. Females interpreted the compliment as a request, therefore the most frequently response is a request (37%). The other two most used responses are appreciation token and comment history (each 21%).

American males thought that the compliment force was insufficient and chose praise upgrade as an answer (37%) as in (18):

(18) The best people in the world.

It is very important to note that only one answer was appreciation token unlike in all other situations where the appreciation token was the mostly used strategy.

American females accepted the compliment adding a comment in 35% of all cases, and the second most frequently used strategy is appreciation token (29%).

#### SITUATION 10 - APPEARANCE

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>80</b>		<b>84,7</b>		<b>45,5</b>		<b>76,9</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	3	30	6	46,2	4	36,4	7	53,8
2. Comment Acceptance	3	30	3	23,1	1	9,1	1	7,7
3. Praise Upgrade								
II. Comment History			1	7,7				
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment								
2. Return	2	20	1	7,7			2	15,4
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>15,4</b>		<b>54,6</b>		<b>23,1</b>
I. Scale Down								
II. Question	1	10	1	7,7	4	36,4	3	23,1
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement								
2. Qualification			1	7,7				
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response	1	10			2	18,2		
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>								
I. Request								
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100,1%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 11

In the tenth situation, the respondent goes shopping and a salesperson approaches him/her and compliments on the new shirt. However, the respondent is socially distant since the salesperson is an unknown person.

The agreement strategy accounts for 80 % of all responses by Bosnian males and nonagreement for only 20%. The two most used strategies are appreciation token and comment acceptance, each 30%. Bosnian females agreed most of the time (84,7%) and disagreed in 15,4% of the cases. They showed similar behaviour as males in choosing the response strategies. None of the Bosnian respondents interpreted the compliment as a request.

However, American males responded with nonagreement strategy in 54,6% of all the cases, which is the first time that the aforementioned strategy is the one mostly used as the compliment response. Within this strategy, males questioned the assertion in 36,4% or didn't answer in 18,2% of the cases. In contrast to American males, females chose the agreement strategy as their answer (77%), of which the appreciation token is the most used strategy (53,8%). Nonagreement strategy is used only 23,1%, i.e. question.

## 8. DIFFERENCES/SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND BOSNIAN COMMUNITY

	Bosnian				American			
	M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>A. Agreement</b>		<b>80</b>		<b>73,8</b>		<b>77,4</b>		<b>84,8</b>
I. Acceptances								
1. Appreciation Token	44	35,2	51	34,2	58	40,8	66	41,5
2. Comment Acceptance	21	16,8	13	8,7	16	11,3	18	11,3
3. Praise Upgrade	6	4,8	8	5,4	17	12	11	6,9
II. Comment History	10	8	12	8,1	9	6,3	6	3,8
III. Transfers								
1. Reassignment	6	4,8	10	6,7	5	3,5	15	9,4
2. Return	13	10,4	16	10,7	5	3,5	19	11,9
<b>B. Nonagreement</b>		<b>15,2</b>		<b>11,4</b>		<b>18,9</b>		<b>7,6</b>
I. Scale Down	6	4,8	7	4,7	7	4,9	2	1,3
II. Question	3	2,4	3	2	9	6,3	7	4,4
III. Nonacceptances								
1. Disagreement	0	/	0	/	0	/	0	/
2. Qualification	7	5,6	7	4,7	6	4,2	3	1,9
IV. No Acknowledgment								
1. No response	3	2,4	0	/	5	3,5	0	/
<b>C. Other Interpretations</b>		<b>4,8</b>		<b>14,8</b>		<b>3,5</b>		<b>7,5</b>
I. Request	6	4,8	22	14,8	5	3,5	12	7,5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>99,8%</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>99,9%</b>

Table 12

Table 12 shows that women and men in American and Bosnian corpus responded to compliments in similar ways. Generally, the most used overall strategy by all respondents was agreement strategy. The most common response by both women and men is an appreciation token. It was relatively rare for a respondent not to respond to a compliment, and when that was the case, men were the ones who opted for that strategy. The results also show that none of the respondents overtly disagreed with a compliment. Disagreeing responses were also uncommon in Herbert's American data, where only 10% accounts for disagreement responses (Herbert, 1990).

The larger category of AGREEMENT includes both ACCEPTANCE-type responses and Comment History and Transfers which may be characterized as nonacceptance agreements. As discussed in section 5, ACCEPTANCE-type responses are verbal acceptance of the compliment, or an acceptance with an additional comment, or acceptance with an upgrade of a compliment. The nonacceptance-type responses express the compliment recipient agreement with the force of the compliment, but he/she doesn't explicitly accept it. Therefore, agreement is implicitly expressed by shifting the complimentary force via Comment History and Transfers. As aforementioned, the appreciation token was the mostly used strategy by all respondents regardless of their age. Bosnian data show that there were almost no differences among males and females in deciding for this strategy (M: 35,2%; F: 34,2%). Americans opted for this strategy more than Bosnians did, but answers were almost equal when it comes to gender (M: 40,8%; F: 41,5%). In Herbert's American data, by contrast, women (34, 5%) were more likely than men to offer this response (23%).

The acceptance type-responses account for around half of all the answers provided by all respondents. Therefore, we can conclude that both Bosnian and American respondents accept the compliment most of the time. Even though at first it may appear that in Herbert's American data (1990) women were more likely to accept the compliment (42,5%) than men (28,9%), it was the gender of the complimenter that serves as a better predictor of compliment acceptance. Herbert's results show that men also accept compliments when one compares the roughly 40% acceptance rate in Male-Male interactions with the 22% acceptance rate in Female-Female interactions. He concluded that compliments offered by men were more likely to be accepted, especially by women, which is the reason for such a difference in rate.

The result that stands out in our American data is the male preference for Praise Upgrade response strategy (12%), which is their the second mostly used strategy. Bosnian respondents, both male and female, showed similar behaviour, however American men decided for this

strategy more than American women (6,9%). Herbert (1989, p. 13) suggests that Praise Upgrades typically have a sarcastic connotation, and they may occur only among close acquaintances. However, our American data shows that it is not the case. Namely, in situation 9, where the complimenter is a complete stranger, American men consider the compliment force as being insufficient and the Praise Upgrade accounts for 35,7% of all answers in that situation. In all other situations, it appears to be a common answer by American men.

When it comes to nonacceptance agreement strategies, Return was the most frequent one. The Bosnian data show that there was no difference in choices by men and women (M: 10,4%; F: 10,7%). However, in 11,9% of all cases, the Return strategy was the option chosen by American females, which is their second mostly used strategy. In contrast to women, this type of response accounts for only 3,5% of all responses by American men. In this type of compliment response, a complimentee agrees with the compliment and returns the praise to the complimenter. It seems that Bosnian respondents and American females feel as in debt, so to get out of it, they return the compliment (Chen, 1993, p. 58). On the contrary, in Herbert's American corpus, there is a high occurrence of nonacceptance agreement responses to female compliments, especially the Comment History strategy (26,9%), in which the addressee offers a comment or series of comments on the topic of the compliment.

As much as interlocutors are under pressure to accept a compliment, they are under pressure to avoid self-praise. A complimentee usually changes the topic, responds to only some aspects or overtly reject a compliment. Bosnian data again shows a similar frequency of nonagreement responses by both males and females. In contrast, there is a striking difference in such responses by American males and females (M: 18,9%; F: 7,6%). There is less likelihood of nonagreement occurring in female responses, both Bosnian and American. Perhaps, women feel more pressure to acknowledge the compliment. Men, on the other hand, disagreed with the compliment asserting that it is false or overstated (Herbert, 1990, p. 215 ). They also questioned the compliment force or didn't respond. Bosnian males in 5,6% of the cases qualified the original assertion, and American men mostly questioned the assertion (6,3%). None of the female respondents opted for remaining silent, whereas men did that on several occasions. In Herbert's (1990) data, too, males were most likely to ignore or question compliments, especially from other males, and No Response strategy is most common in Male-Male interactions (11,4%). These nonagreement responses provide support for the suggestion that compliments are more often experienced as face-threatening acts by men than by women.

The category of Other Interpretations has been treated as something other than AGREEMENT or NONAGREEMENT, because the complimentee understood it as an unrelated speech act (Herbert, 1989). We will treat it the same, because it didn't have any significance on the result that we observed in our data. This type of response accounts for 14,8% of all responses by Bosnian females and 12% of all responses by American females. Both Bosnian and American men decided for this response in approximately 4% of all cases. In Herbert's Binghamton data such responses are most common in Male-Male interactions, although the difference in frequency of occurrence is not statistically significant. "Such responses are not compliment responses per se as the addressee does not perceive the previous speech act as a compliment." (Herbert, 1990, p. 209). Such responses occur when the complimentee, consciously or not, interprets the compliment as a request rather than a simple compliment.

When it comes to the topic of compliments, i.e four different situations, we found some interesting results too. When the compliment is about a possession (as in situation 1 and 5), all respondents are most likely to accept it by using appreciation token, adding a comment or praising the possession, regardless of the social distance between the complimenter and the respondent.

When respondents are complimented on appearance (as in situation 2, 6, and 10) they are most likely to thank the complimenter, provide short comment or history and in some cases question the assertion. Americans, both males and females, were the ones who questioned the compliment given by a complete stranger as in situation 10, whereas Bosnians thanked and provided short comment regardless of the social status of the complimenter.

Skill/ability (as in situation 3 and 7) is the situation in which respondents, besides appreciation token, opted for reassignment, and return. It is important to note that one nonagreement strategy, namely Qualification is very much used as an answer by all respondents, especially in situation where interlocutors are socially equal. In situation 3, in which the respondent is complimented by a colleague, therefore socially distant, he/she is more likely to appreciate the compliment adding a comment, history, or praising the assertion. Only females, both Bosnian and American, decided to return the compliment after expressing appreciation. However, in situation 7, when respondents' friend compliments his/her ability, all respondents, regardless of their gender, appreciates the compliment and qualifies the assertion, which are the two mostly used responses. The example of qualifying the compliment force is shown in (19):

(19) Not like my mom's, but I tried my best.

As in the situation 3, in this one too, females offered Transfer strategies (Reassignment and Return) slightly less than qualification.

When it comes to compliments on personality, respondents showed similar behaviour in the choice of strategies. In situations 4, 8 and 9, respondents appreciated the compliment and returned or reassigned the force to the complimenter. Interestingly, when the compliment was given by a stranger, i.e. there is a social distance, return and reassignment are not options. Such example can be seen in situation 9, in which all respondents, regardless of their gender, prefer to thank and provide short comment, and sometimes to praise the assertion.

After the discussion and observation of the results and findings, we are now able to answer the research questions discussed in the section 6.1.

Firstly, we will summarize the mostly used strategies, which is our first research question. Namely, all respondents, regardless of their gender choose the prescriptively correct answer *thank you*, i.e. Appreciation Token as their mostly used strategy. However, the participants have never opted only for that strategy. Bosnian males, besides Appreciation Token, decided for Comment Acceptance as the second mostly used strategy. Bosnian females opted for the Return strategy, therefore expressing solidarity with the complimenter. American males appreciated the compliment but thought that the compliment force was not enough, so Praise Upgrade was their second mostly used response strategy that complemented the assertion. American females showed their solidarity and after appreciation they mostly returned the compliment.

When it comes to the second research question there are similarities and differences between the two communities regarding compliment response strategies. As aforementioned, all participants showed similar behaviour in choosing Appreciation Token as their mostly used strategy. Bosnian and Americans, regardless of their gender would accept the compliment through tokens such as *thanks*, *thank you*, *thank you very much*, etc.

It is also very interesting that females, both Bosnian and American, decided to return the compliment, which was their second most favoured response strategy. Women were much more likely to accept the compliment and express the solidarity with the complimenter. On the other hand, Bosnian and American males showed similar behaviour in the usage of nonagreement strategies, which supports the claim that they experience compliments as FTAs more than women do. The difference that we observed in our research is the low frequency of

Transfers (Reassignment and Return) used by American males in contrast to Bosnian respondents and American females. American males don't feel the need to return the compliment and praise the complimenter. On the contrary, they mostly directly express that the compliment force is insufficient. We can conclude that there are more similarities than differences between the two communities, and that the gender differences in responding to compliments are more evident.

We also observed the behaviour of respondents in different situations and found out that respondents, when complimented on skill/ability and personality, besides Appreciation Token, opt mostly for Transfer strategies (Reassignment and Return) in situations where there is no social distance between the complimenter and them. Such compliment response strategies re(establish) balance between speakers by the mutual exchange of compliments (Herbert, 1990, p. 211). This supports the notion that expressions of solidarity are mostly common between status equal, that is between close acquaintances.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

Compliments are speech acts which maintain, improve or support the addressee's face. They are used as a positive politeness strategy which notices the addressee's interests, wants, needs and goods. People give and receive compliments on various topics, such as appearance, ability, performance and possessions.

This paper has investigated the different compliment response strategies used by Bosnian and American females and males. The overall results reveal that all respondents, regardless of their gender, agree with the complimenter and respond to compliment by using Appreciation Token strategy. None of the respondents overtly disagreed with a compliment and only men, in some cases, decided not to respond to a compliment.

The findings of this study show that there are not as many differences between the two communities, as there are differences between females and males when it comes to responding to compliments. Even though, all respondents' first choice is appreciating a compliment, there is a high tendency of returning a compliment to the interlocutor by female respondents, both Bosnian and American. When it comes to nonagreement strategies, men are more likely to use them, since they experience compliments as FTAs more than women do. On the other hand, women interpret compliments as a request, which is not the case in males' responses. The difference that we observed in our research is the low frequency of

Reassignment and Return strategies used by American males in contrast to Bosnian respondents and American females. American males don't feel the need to return the compliment and praise the complimenter. On the contrary, they mostly directly express that the compliment force is insufficient. Therefore, there are more similarities than differences between the two communities, and that the gender differences in responding to compliments are more evident.

We also found out that respondents, when complimented on skill/ability and personality, besides Appreciation Token, opt mostly for Transfer strategies (Reassignment and Return) in situations where there is no social distance between the complimenter and them. Such compliment response strategies, according to Herbert (1990) re(establish) balance between speakers by the mutual exchange of compliments. This supports the notion that expressions of solidarity are mostly common between status equal, that is between close acquaintances. We can conclude that gender plays important role in language use. Besides that, different situations, as well as social distance between interlocutors contribute to the different perceptions and understanding of the utterances, resulting in different language use by men and women.

## APPENDIX 1

### Upitnik

Hvala Vam što ste pristali da učestvujete u ovom kratkom online upitniku, koji će se koristiti za izradu magistarskog rada. Svrha ove studije je utvrditi najčešće strategije primanja komplimenata koje koriste govornici bosanskog/hrvatskog/srpskog jezika. Vaša anonimnost će biti zagarantovana.

**Spol:**        **M**        **Ž**

**Vaša starosna dob:** \_\_\_\_\_

UPUTA: Ispred Vas se nalazi niz situacija u kojima biste se mogli naći. Pročitajte ih i odaberite jedan ili više odgovora. Ukoliko Vaš odgovor nije niti jedan od ponuđenih, napišite svoj odgovor na za to predviđeno mjesto.

#### Situacija 1

Nedavno ste kupili najnoviji mobilni telefon. Dok ste pili kafu u kafiću, vaš mobilni telefon je slučajno zazvonio. Svi koji su tamo sjedili okrenuli su se i gledali u vas. Jedna osoba je rekla, „Wow, taj telefon izgleda zaista fenomenalno!”

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. I ja mislim da je sjajan!
3. Kamera je najbolja stvar na ovom telefonu!
4. Kupio sam ga za putovanje u Švedsku.
5. To je bio poklon od mog brata (ili nekog drugog).
6. I tvoj je sjajan.
7. Može slati SMS kao i drugi mobilni telefoni.
8. Stvarno tako misliš?
9. Nimalo mi se ne sviđa.
10. Okej je, ali tvoj je bolji.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Da li želiš bolje pogledati?
13. Vaš odgovor: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 2

Imali ste višak kilograma pa ste tokom ljetnih praznika išli u teretanu. Kad ste se sreli sa svojim kolegama, svi su bili iznenađeni vašom izuzetnom fizičkom transformacijom. Zgodni ste i u formi. Jedan od vaših prijatelja prokomentarisao je u nevjerici. "Jesi li to ti? Izgledaš odlično! Šta si radio/radila?"

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. Da, smršao/smršala sam puno!
3. Sad mogu trčati 20 kilometara!
4. To sam morao/morala učiniti za svoje zdravlje.

5. Moj lični trener odgovoran je za ovakav izgled.
6. I ti si u formi!
7. Ma nije to ništa posebno.
8. Jel stvarno misliš tako?
9. Ne izgledam.
10. Iako sam smršao/smršala, ti ipak izgledaš bolje.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Želiš li da ti pokažem neke vježbe?
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

### Situacija 3

Prezentovali ste svoj najnoviji projekat. Većina kolega je prisustvovala. Čim ste odgovorili na pitanja o vašoj prezentaciji, jedan kolega je prišao i rekao: „Odličan posao! Tvoja prezentacija je dobro strukturirana i promišljeno održana!”

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. Pa, i ja tako mislim!
3. Nemaš pojma koliko sam naporno radio/radila na tome.
4. Proveo/Provela sam čitavu sedmicu pripremajući se za ovu prezentaciju.
5. Ne bi bilo tako dobro bez pomoći IT momka.
6. I vaša prethodna prezentacija je bila sjajna.
7. Nije bilo baš tako dobro.
8. Zar stvarno to misliš?
9. Ja ne mislim tako.
10. Bila je dobra, ali tvoja je bila bolja.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Želiš li da ti pomognem oko tvoje prezentacije?
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

### Situacija 4

Svi se dive vašoj dobronamjernoj osobnosti. Na dan odlaska u stranu zemlju organizovali ste oproštajno druženje. Na kraju druženja, prijatelj pride i glasno reče: "Ti si tako sjajna osoba!"

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. I ja tako mislim!
3. Mogao/Mogla bih biti uzor mnogima.
4. Nije bilo lako doći do ovoga gdje sam sad.
5. Ne bih bio/bila ovakva osoba da nema vas!
6. I ti si sjajna osoba!
7. To je samo izgovor da te pozovem na druženje!
8. Jel' stvarno misliš tako?
9. Ne bih se složio/složila sa tobom.
10. Ja sam oduvijek mislio/mislila da si i ti dobra osoba.
11. Bez odgovora

12. Moraš opet doći da se družimo!

13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 5

Pozvali ste prijatelje Vašoj kući. Jedan od njih gleda na sat koji visi na zidu i kaže: „Sviđa mi se tvoj sat. Izvrsno izgleda u tvojoj dnevnoj sobi!“

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Sviđa ti se. Hvala ti!
2. Da, svidio mi se kad sam ga kupio/kupila!
3. Stvarno daje poseban šarm mojoj dnevnoj sobi.
4. Kupio/Kupila sam ga u Harrods-u!
5. Prodavač mi ga je zapravo preporučio.
6. Tvoj sat je također fenomenalan.
7. Ma bilo je i boljih satova u prodavnici.
8. Stvarno? Da li ti se stvarno sviđa?
9. Ja ne mislim tako.
10. Nije sjajan kao tvoj.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Moraš ga uzeti.
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 6

Nosiš novu majicu i kolega te pogleda i kaže: „Ova košulja odlično izgleda na tebi! Ta ti boja sjajno stoji.“

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. Ah, to je moja omiljena boja. Hvala!
3. Zaista mi ističe oči, zar ne?
4. Kupio/Kupila sam je prije 2 mjeseca.
5. To je poklon.
6. To je zato što imate dobar ukus!
7. Ah, tako je jeftina. Kupio/Kupila sam je na sniženju!
8. Jel' stvarno to misliš?
9. Ne. Znam da je to samo kompliment.
10. Nije savršena, ali sam se potrudio/potrudila.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Želiš li i ovu posuditi?
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 7

Došli su Vam prijatelji i rođaci na kafu i kolač koji ste Vi ispekli. Neko od njih reče: "Kako je ukusan!"

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. Da, i ja mislim da je ukusan!
3. Najbolji kolač ikad!
4. To je porodični recept.
5. Moja mama mi je dala recept.
6. Vaši su kolačići također bili ukusni!
7. To je samo običan kolač.
8. Da li ti se stvarno sviđa?
9. Ne bih se složio/složila sa tobom.
10. Nije kao kod moje mame, ali dao/dala sam sve od sebe.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Daću ti recept.
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 8

Tokom prošle sedmice pomagali ste u organizaciji dobrotvorne akcije u vašem gradu. Prijatelj, koji vam također pomaže, kaže: "Ti si prava osoba za ovu vrstu posla. Tako si dobar/dobra prema drugima i znaš kako izbjeći nesuglasice sa svima."

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. I ja tako mislim.
3. U ovom svijetu bi trebalo biti više ljudi poput mene.
4. Počeo/Počela sam to raditi prije mnogo godina.
5. Ja sam ovako dobra osoba zahvaljujući mojim roditeljima.
6. I ti si sjajna osoba!
7. To je samo mala stvar koju treba učiniti za zajednicu.
8. Stvarno tako misliš?
9. Ne mislim tako.
10. I ja mislim da si ti dobra osoba.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Moraš mi pomoći da organizujem i sljedeći događaj!
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 9

Sjedite na klupi i osoba vam prilazi te razmjenjujete pozdrave. Ta osoba je turistički u vašoj zemlji i posjetila je razna mjesta u njoj. Shvativši da se razlikuje od drugih zemalja, rekao/rekla je: "Jako mi se sviđaju ljudi u vašem gradu!"

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. Ne mogu se više složiti!
3. Najbolji ljudi na svijetu!
4. Drugi ljudi su mi također rekli koliko su velikodušni ljudi iz moje zemlje.

5. Pa, život ih je učinio dobrim ljudima.
6. I meni se sviđaju ljudi u vašem gradu.
7. Nisu baš najbolji u zemlji.
8. Stvarno tako mislite?
9. Ne mislim tako.
10. Nisu bolji od ljudi u vašoj zemlji.
11. Bez odgovora
12. Trebate doći ponovo!
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situacija 10

S prijateljem/prijateljicom ste kupovali majicu, a neznanac prilazi i govori: "Ovo bi izgledalo fenomenalno na tebi!"

Vaša reakcija na kompliment je:

1. Hvala!
2. Slažem se!
3. Uistinu ističe moje savršeno tijelo.
4. Treba mi za posao.
5. Moj prijatelj/prijateljica je izabrao/izabrala!
6. To je zato što imate dobar ukus!
7. Ah. Tako je jeftina!
8. Zar stvarno to mislite?
9. Ne mislim tako.
10. Nije kao Vaša, ali potrudio/potrudila sam se!
11. Bez odgovora
12. Morate je uzeti!
13. Vaš odgovor \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### Discourse Completion Test

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this brief online questionnaire as part of my master thesis. The purpose of this study is to determine the most frequent strategies of responding to compliments that are used by American English speakers. Your anonymity will be guaranteed.

Gender: F M

Age:

#### Test Directions:

Below are a number of situations in which you might be involved. Please read them and choose one or more answers. If your answer is none of the offered or you have a compliment response to add, please write your answer in the space provided for it.

#### Situation 1

You have recently bought the latest mobile phone in the market. While you were drinking coffee at the cafe, your mobile phone rang accidentally. Everyone sitting there turned their gazes to stare at you. A person said, "Wow. That phone looks really awesome!"

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thanks!
2. I think it is awesome too!
3. The camera is the best thing on this phone!
4. I bought it for the trip to Sweden.
5. It was a gift from my brother (or someone else).
6. So is yours.
7. It can send SMS as other mobile phones.
8. Do you really think so?
9. I hate it.
10. It is okay but yours is better.
11. No response
12. Do you want to have a closer look?
13. Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 2

You used to be overweight before going to the gym in the summer holiday. When you met your colleagues, everyone was surprised at your remarkable physical transformation. You were completely fit and in shape. One of your friends spoke out in disbelief. "Is that you? You look great! What did you do?"

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thanks!
2. Yes, I've lost a lot of weight!

3. I can run 20 miles now!
4. I had to do this for my health.
5. My personal trainer is responsible for this body.
6. You are in shape too!
7. It's nothing special.
8. Do you really think so?
9. No, I don't.
10. I lost weight, but you look better.
11. No response
12. Do you want me to show you some exercises?
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

### Situation 3

You gave a formal presentation on your latest project. Most of the colleagues attended. As soon as you finished answering the questions about your presentation, a colleague came forward and said, "Good job! Your presentation was well structured and thoughtfully delivered!"

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thanks!
2. Well, I think so too!
3. You have no idea how hard I worked for that.
4. I spent an entire week preparing for this presentation.
5. It wouldn't be so good without help of the IT guy.
6. Your previous presentation was awesome too.
7. It was not that good.
8. Do you really think so?
9. I don't think so.
10. It was good, but yours was better.
11. No response
12. Do you want me to help you with your presentation?
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

### Situation 4

Everyone admires your good-natured personality. Upon the day of departure to a foreign country you arrange a farewell gathering. At the end of the gathering, a friend stands out and says loudly, "You are such a great person!"

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thank you!
2. I also think so!
3. I could be a role model.
4. It was not easy to come to this point.
5. I wouldn't be such a person without you guys!
6. You are a great person too!
7. It is just a small thing to invite you for!
8. Do you really mean that?

9. I wouldn't agree with you.
10. I have always thought you are a good person.
11. No response
12. You have to come again to hang out!
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 5

Some friends are over at your house. One of them looks at a clock hanging on the wall and says, "I like your clock. It looks great in your living room!"

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. You like it. Thank you!
2. Yes, I loved it when I bought it.
3. It really gives a special touch to my living room.
4. I bought it in Harrods!
5. The salesperson actually recommended it.
6. Your clock is awesome too.
7. Oh, there were better clocks in the store.
8. Really? Do you really like it?
9. I don't think so.
10. It's not that great as yours.
11. No response
12. You must take it.
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 6

You are wearing a new shirt and a colleague looks at you and says: "This shirt looks great on you! That is a great color for you."

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thanks!
2. Oh, it's my favourite color. Thanks!
3. Really brings out the sparkle in my eyes, doesn't it?
4. I bought it 2 months ago.
5. It was a gift.
6. This is because you have a good taste!
7. Oh, it's so cheap. I bought it in the sales!
8. Do you really think so?
9. It doesn't. I know it's only a compliment.
10. It's not perfect, but I've tried my best.
11. No response
12. You wanna borrow this one too?
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 7

You have some friends and relatives over for coffee and cake that you baked. Someone says: “Tastes yummy!”

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thanks!
2. Yes, I think it’s delicious too!
3. The best cake ever!
4. It’s a family recipe.
5. My mom gave me the recipe.
6. Your cookies were delicious too!
7. It’s just an ordinary cake.
8. Do you really like it?
9. I wouldn’t agree with you.
10. Not like my mom’s, but I’ve tried my best.
11. No response
12. I will give you a recipe.
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 8

Over the past week you’ve been helping to organize a charity event in your town. A friend, who has also been helping you, says: “You are the right person for this type of job. You are so nice to the others and know how to avoid disagreements with everyone.”

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thank you!
2. I also think so.
3. It should be more people like me in this world.
4. I started doing this many years ago.
5. I’m such a good person thanks to my parents.
6. You are a great person too!
7. It is just a small thing to do for the community.
8. Do you really think so?
9. I don’t think so.
10. I have always thought you are a good person too.
11. No response
12. You must help me organize the next event!
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 9

You were sitting on the bench and a person approached you and you exchanged greetings. The person had been travelling in your country and had visited various parts of it. Finding it different from other countries, he/she said, “I really like the people in your city!”

1. Thank you!
2. I can’t agree more!

3. The best people in the world!
4. Other people had also told me how generous people from my country are.
5. Well, life made them good people.
6. I also like the people in your town.
7. They are not the best in my country.
8. Do you really think so?
9. I don't think so.
10. Not better than people in your country.
11. No response
12. You should come again!
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### Situation 10

You were shopping for a shirt with your friend and a stranger approaches you and says: "This would look amazing on you!"

Your reaction to the compliment is:

1. Thanks!
2. I agree!
3. It really shows off my perfect body.
4. I need this for my job.
5. My friend choose it!
6. This is because you have a good taste!
7. Oh. It's so cheap!
8. Do you really think so?
9. I don't think so.
10. Not like yours, but I've tried my best!
11. No response
12. You must take it!
13. Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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