The speech act of thanking, in varied permutations and contexts, is probably one of the most common speech acts in the daily life of every culture. In the Hijazi dialect spoken in the western province of Saudi Arabia, thanking behavior has significant social value. This is why the failure to express or respond to gratitude expressions according to the social norms that are known among Hijazi speakers can affect the relationship between the interlocutors.

In this study, I investigate the speech act of thanking and the strategies employed by Hijazi females in Saudi Arabia to express this. To explore these strategies, a corpus of naturally occurring thanking exchanges is analyzed. 400 exchanges were gathered based on an ethnographic approach that uses field observations to create a corpus. My investigation examined gratitude expressions produced by Hijazi females in three contexts: thanking for a favor, thanking for a meal, and thanking for a gift. To determine what strategies of expressing or responding to gratitude expression Hijazi female use, gratitude expressions and their responses were coded according to the model pioneered by Al-Zubaidi (2012).

Results indicated that Hijazi females use various strategies in expressing and responding to thanking for a low imposition favor, such as, Thanking and Expressing Benediction. In expressing gratitude for a meal, Hijazi female speakers do not employ the wide variety of the
thanking strategies posited in the literature. Rather, they prefer using *Expressing Benediction* to verbalize their thanking. On the other hand, thanking for a gift generally requires two turns. In the first turn, the beneficiary has to express her indebtedness. In response, the benefactor tries to minimize the debt. In the second turn, the beneficiaries express their willingness to offer repayment or just express thanking while the benefactor responds by acknowledging the thanking or by expressing blessings or prayers.

Previous studies have investigated the speech act of thanking in certain Arabic dialects such as Jordanian, Iraqi and Egyptian Arabic. However, scholarly attention has yet to be paid to how thanking expressions are used and responded to in Saudi dialects. This study functions as a reference point for other researchers interested in the cross-cultural realization of the speech act of thanking. Also, since this paper focuses on Hijazi dialect at the western part of Saudi Arabia, researchers interested in the speech act of thanking in Saudi Arabic can use this study for comparison with other Saudi dialects.