

SPEECH ACTS OF THANKING AND THANKING RESPONSES BY HIJAZI FEMALES

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I. INTRODUCTION

Subsequent to Austin's (1962) introduction of the seminal theory of speech acts, linguists from different cultures have sought to analyze the speech acts utilized by members of those cultures and the social norms regulating the manner and contexts in which they are used. These studies of speech act behavior indicate that every culture has mandated uniquely significant rules for individuals producing speech acts within culturally specified linguistic parameters.

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. My investigation examines gratitude expressions produced by Hijazi females in three contexts: thanking for a favor, thanking for a meal, and thanking for a gift.

The data of the present study were collected by observing naturally occurring thanking and responses to thanking in Hijazi dialect speaking females' everyday interactions. Because the purpose of the study is to analyze Saudi females' performances of the thanking act by using their Hijazi dialect, the data were collected from native Hijazi dialect speakers living in the western province of Saudi Arabia. This study encompassed 400 thanking exchanges gathered in relatives and friends' houses, hospitals, on a female university campus and at women's stores in Taif city. Relationships between participants included relatives, close friends, acquaintances, and

strangers. I recorded the information on a card by writing down verbatim the expressions of thanking and the responses. I also recorded the thanker and the thankee's approximate ages and the relationship of the interlocutors. In addition, I also noted the time, setting and the occasion at which the thanking and response took place.

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 paper 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.

In Chapter II, I present the objectives of the study in addition to the hypotheses regarding thanking and responses and I explain the significance of the research. In chapter III, I provide background information about Saudi Arabia and Hijazi dialects. Chapter IV provides a literature review of relevant studies. Chapter V explains the methodology of this study. Finally, findings and results are discussed in Chapter VI.

II. OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

II.1 OBJECTIVES

This study sheds a light on how Saudi females express gratitude and respond to these expressions in the Hijazi dialect. In this study, I investigate the strategies employed by Hijazi females in expressing gratitude and responding to such expressions. 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. More precisely, the research is guided by the following two questions:

- What thanking and response strategies do Hijazi females employ?
- Do Hijazi females use different thanking strategies according to the type of benefit received (thanking for a meal, thanking for a gift and thanking for a favor)?

II.2 HYPOTHESES

I hypothesize that the type of benefit is a significant factor that affects the thanker's and the thankee's choice of dialogue strategy. More precisely, this study's hypotheses can be divided into the following thanking expressions and thanking replies:

Hypotheses Related to Thanking Expressions:

- Hijazi females use different strategies in expressing gratitude depending on the type of benefit they receive.
- Hijazi females use *Bald Thanking* as strategy in thanking for a favor more than other strategies.
- Hijazi females prefer to verbalize blessings and prayers to express gratitude in thanking for a meal.
- Hijazi females *Express the Lack of Necessity* to thank for a gift more than any other strategy.

Hypotheses Related to Thanking Responses:

1. Hijazi females use a limited number of strategies in responding to thanking for a meal or a gift.
2. Hijazi female use *Minimizing the Debt* as a strategy in responding to thanking for a favor.

II.3 SIGNIFICANCE

This study is unique since it is the first study that investigates the speech act of thanking in the Hijazi dialect. Several studies investigate the speech act of thanking in other Arabic dialects besides Hijazi. Morsi (2010) studies Egyptian Arabic, Al-Zubaidi (2012) studies Iraqi Arabic, Al-Khawaldeh (2013) studies Jordanian Arabic and Al-Shaer (2013) studies Palestinian Arabic. However, no attention has been paid to how thanking expressions are used and responded to in Saudi Arabic dialects such as Hijazi.

This study helps bridge some of the gaps that exist in the sociolinguistic studies, especially studies of speech acts in Saudi dialects. Also, this study functions as a reference point for other researchers interested in the cross cultural realization of the speech act of thanking. This research allows others of different cultures to understand Saudi interactional norms. Also, since this paper focuses on the Hijazi dialect in western Saudi Arabia, researchers interested in speech act of thanking in Saudi Arabic can use this study for comparison with other Saudi dialects.

III. BACKGROUND: SAUDI ARABIA AND THE HIJAZI DIALECT.

III.1 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF SAUDI ARABIA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Arabic Peninsula. It is located in the western part of Asia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded by King Abdul-Aziz bin Saud in 1932. Saudi Arabia is bounded by Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait to the north, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and the Republic of Yemen to the East; the Red Sea forms its western border. It is divided into 13 regions. Each region has its own capital. Arabic is the native language of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Arabic dialect of the Arabic language is spoken by Saudis in the Saudi Arabia. There are many sub-dialects of the Saudi Arabic dialect. These sub-dialects differ according to region, tribe, Bedouin and urbanity. For instance, there are urban Hijazi and Bedouin Hijazi dialects that spoken in the western province of Saudi Arabia. However, almost every tribe that speaks the Bedouin Hijazi dialect has it is own sub-dialect.



Figure 1. Map of Saudi Arabia.

III.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HIJAZI DIALECTS

Zughoul (1980) states that classical Arabic is "the language of Qur'an, the holy book of Islam ... [which] has served as the chief vehicle of this religion. It is the unifying force in the Arabic world" (1980, p. 203). The variety of Arabic used in the Arabic world today is referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It is the language of books, the media, and education as well as newspapers, magazines and official documents.

The Saudi Arabic regional dialect of the Arabic language is spoken by Saudis in Saudi Arabia. There are many sub-dialects of the Saudi Arabic variety. The Hijazi dialect is one of the sub-dialects of the Saudi Arabic dialect. It is spoken in the Western province of Saudi Arabia, which includes the cities of Makkah, Madinah, Jeddah and Taif along the Red Sea. Omar (1975) adds that the Hijazi dialect is used for official purposes in governmental and commercial settings. Omar stresses that the Hijazi dialect "has become the most widely understood dialect in the Arabian peninsula" (1975, p.V). There are two distinct dialects spoken in the Hijaz region: Bedouin Hijazi dialect and Urban Hijazi dialect.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

IV.1 INTRODUCTION

This section comprises a select review of literature on both theoretical and empirical studies that are closely related to this study. It begins with introducing speech act theory; then a discussion of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness follows. Research on the speech act of thanking is discussed as well as studies that have examined speech acts of thanking in Arabic.

IV.2 SPEECH ACT

Since the present study investigates the speech act of thanking, it is important first to introduce the theory of speech act. One of the most important studies that have contributed to developing the speech act theory was conducted by Austin in a number of lectures in published in a book entitled *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). In his lectures, Austin categorizes speech acts on three levels: "locutionary", "illocutionary", and "perlocutionary acts" (1962, p. 94, 98, 99).

According to Austin, a speaker performing an illocutionary act affects the hearer. He states that "saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons..." (1962, p. 101). He also points out that speech acts can be expressed directly or indirectly (1962, p.32).

The theory of speech act has also interested Searle. Searle claimed that the "unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word, or sentence, [...] but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act." (1969, p. 16). In (1979), Searle subdivided "performatives" into five categories: "assertive", "directives", "commissives", "expressives" and "declarations" (1979, p. VIII).

IV.3 POLITNESS THEORY

Expressing gratitude is like any other speech act that people perform to show politeness. Brown and Levins (1978) have enriched the literature by introducing a politeness theory that is based on the concept of 'face'. They defined 'face' as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1978. p. 61). They claim that there are two aspects of this 'face': 'positive face' and 'negative face' (p. 13). 'Positive face' is defined as a desire to be valued and appreciated while 'negative face' is defined as the desire to have freedom from imposition. In any human interaction, people may threaten others' face because it competes against one's desires and needs. Brown and Levinson called this a Face Threatening Act (FTA).

In light of Brown and Levins's politeness theory, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) consider the speech act of thanking a "complex act" (p 65). They took into the account two points of view. First of all, they refer to Brown and Levins's claims in categorizing speech act of thanking as "a face threatening act in which the speaker acknowledges a debt to the hearer –thus threatening the speaker's negative face. On the contrary, the "positive aspects" of the speech act of thanking are emphasized by Searle (1969); he describes expressing gratitude as "an illocutionary act performed by a speaker based on a past act performed by the hearer that was beneficial" (1993, p65).

IV.4 STUDIES ON THE SPEECH ACT OF THANKING

Many studies have been conducted on the speech act of thanking. Some studies explore the strategies employed by speakers in different languages while other research has focused on analyzing speech acts of thanking with reference to their functions and forms. Others studies

investigate the influence of “pragmatic transfer” on EFL/ESL learners’ performance of speech acts of thanking.

According to many scholars, the speech act of thanking is a universal illocution across languages and cultures. (Coulmas,1981; Aijmer, 1996; & Schneider, 2005). Jautz points out that gratitude expressions are used "when a speaker wants the addressee to know that s/he is grateful for what the addressee has said or done" (Jautz, 2008, p 142). Aijmer (1996) states that expressing gratitude is considered a stereotypical speech act because the form of *thank you* or *thanks* is almost always used by speakers every time they want to express gratitude. (1996, p. 78). Eisenstein and Bodman (1995) point out that expressing gratitude can “engender feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors” (1995, p.64). Jung (1994) adds in his paper on speech acts of thanking that gratitude expression has the “effect of enhancing rapport between the interlocutors” (1994, p.20). He states that some gratitude expressions may serve different functions depending on the situation such as “conversational openings, stopping, leave takings and offering positive reinforcement”. (1994, p. 20).

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) refer to Rubin’s (1983) analysis of the different functions of the phrase *thank you*. Rubin (1983) showed the different uses of the phrase *thank you*, such as complimenting or signaling the closing of a conversation, or a “bald” thank you at service encounters. (As cited in Eisenstein & Bodman 1986, p.168).

Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) did four experiments to investigate how gratitude is expressed. A corpus of naturally occurring thanking expressions were used in this study. In collecting the data for the first experiment, two techniques were used: field notes and audiotape. The main finding of this study shows that native speakers can express their gratitude by saying

anything they want. The results also show that native speakers employ *lack of necessity* as a strategy in expressing gratitude for a gift.

In 1996, Aijmer conducted a study to investigate the functions and the strategies of gratitude expressions. Her study was based on the London-Lund Corpus of spoken English. Aijmer refers to thanking as an expressive speech act which has “illocutionary force” (1996, p. 34). The findings show that the most frequent conversational routines for thanking were found to be *thanks/ thank you*. In this study, different formulas for gratitude expressions are accounted for in terms of the stem they involve.

Many scholars have dealt with the realization forms of gratitude expressions and responses to thanking in languages, such as Akan (Agyekum, 2010), English (Aijmer, 1996; Einstein & Bodman, 1993), French (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2005; Bujon, 2008), German (Martens-Cleef, 1991), etc. Studies from a cross-cultural pragmatics perspective compare German and Spanish (Mayor, 2006), German and Iraqi Arabic (Ali Mahdi, 2010), English and Iraqi Arabic (Al-Zubaidi, 2012).

IV.5 STUDIES ON ARABIC SPEECH ACT OF THANKING

There are several studies that have been conducted on the speech act of thanking regarding Arabic. However, to my knowledge, none dealt with Saudi Arabic. Below I present some of the studies that discuss speech acts of thanking in Arabic.

Morsi (2010) investigates the speech act of thanking in the Egyptian Arabic dialect. In her study, Morsi states that Egyptian speakers employ different strategies in expressing and responding to gratitude expressions. She points out that Egyptian speakers use “repetition,

redundancy and plenty of formulaic expressions [...] in order to show sincerity and gratitude to the hearer” (2010, p. 5).

Her data consist of 85 examples of thanking expressions and responses. In collecting the data for her study, she observed naturally occurring thanking and responses to thanking in Egyptians’ everyday interactions. She collected data in two neighborhoods in New York City, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and Astoria, Queens. She divides the data according to the “function of thanking” into four categories: appreciation of benefit, leave taking, and opening and closing a conversation. In her study, 36 tokens were collected that serve as appreciation of benefit. In her study, results show that Egyptian speakers show their politeness by using: “formulaic expressions whether explicit mention of thanks, e.g. ‘thanks a million’, ‘don’t mention it’ or blessings, e.g. ‘bless your hand’, ‘bless your heart’, ‘may God reward you’, or other non-religious formulas including good wishes, e.g. ‘may we hear good things about you’” (2010, p. 51).

Regarding the responses to the thanking expressions, the results of this study show that the thankee employs several strategies in responding to thanking expressions, such as acceptance of the thanking, denial of the favor, commenting on the thanking with a compliment, and offering future help. The data also show that older participants (50 years and above) produce more lengthy forms in expressing gratitude than younger participants.

Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac (2013) examine Jordanians’ perceptions of how and the extent to which gender influences the communication of gratitude in some everyday situations. This study investigated the relation between situations, strategies and gender in the culture of Jordan. The participants were 20 Jordanian students from Jordan.

The author interviewed the participants about their perceptions and opinions about gender-related behavioral differences in eight social situations. The interviewers focused on the ways the participants would express gratitude to same and opposite gender interlocutors in each of the eight situations and why they would choose certain ways of expressing gratitude in preference to others.

The results show that women perceive the communication of appreciation and gratitude as more important than men do. Also, the strategies that Jordanian women and men use differ systematically. The outcome of the study also confirms that the gratitude style of women and men varies, depending on the gender of the addressee. The findings also show that women are likely to express gratitude to women more than they do to men, while men tend to express gratitude to women more than to men. The results also show that women vary their gratitude strategies according to the gender of the addressee to a greater extent than men do. Finally, Jordanian women and men use appropriate politeness strategies, especially when addressing higher status individuals. The authors state that the main drawback to this study is that the data did not naturally occur.

Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac (2013) also investigate Jordanian and English native speakers' perceptions about the speech act of thanking. The main aim of this study is to explore the similarities and the differences between Jordanian and English perceptions of expressing speech acts of thanking.

The subjects were male and female native speakers of Arabic and English. They included 20 British and 20 Jordanian postgraduate students studying at universities in Jordan and

the United Kingdom. In this study, the subjects' age-range was twenty one to thirty four. The data for this study were collected during semi-structured audio-taped interviews.

The results of the study show that there are few similarities and many noticeable differences in the perception of the speech act of thanking in the cultures of Jordan and England. The researchers point out that both native groups were consistent in their use of thanking expressions in relation to cultural norms and values. For instance, English participants stressed the idea that expressing gratitude is a sign of politeness as well as being a conventional social norm and cultural value. They also state that thanking is a matter of common decency and manners taught at home and school from an early age. On the other hand, Jordanian participants said that thanking is a good indication of politeness and a reflection of the personal image which facilitates establishing and maintaining good social relationships. 16 out of 20 Jordanian participants stated that their deep commitment to thanking was related to some religious beliefs such as “Those who do not thank humans do not thank God”.

The data reveal that “in both native groups, social familiarity and degree of imposition were found to be the most significant variables” (2013, p. 234). The study also shows that Jordanian and English participants emphasize the idea that the greater the favor received the more elaborate thanking should be. The authors point out that “this is due to the fact that people feel more indebted for receiving favours which require more effort and time” (2013,p. 235).

In “Speech Acts in American English and Palestinian Arabic”, Al-Shaer (2013) studies how both English and Arabic realize promising and thanking speech acts. Al-Shaer analyzes spontaneous naturally-occurring utterances in both English and Arabic. The English examples were collected from Tillitt and Bruder's book entitled "*Speaking Naturally: Communication*

Skills in American English" (1985) In addition, other examples derived from references which contain discussions on speech acts. The Arabic examples were collected from both Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and daily social interactions, as observed and heard by the researcher in his daily interactions with native speakers of Arabic in a Palestinian city, Bethlehem Governorate.

The study showed interesting differences displayed by the two languages as to how they realize speech acts of thanking at the level of structures and lexical items used. The findings of this study show that in informal or colloquial Arabic speech acts people rarely use performative verbs. The author points out that in all cases of thanking, the expressions show politeness, acknowledge the hearer's help, favor or gift, and express deep indebtedness. The results also show that in most cases, religious formulae are found which take the form of a supplication with an explicit mention of the name of Allah (God) at the beginning.

Al-Zubaidi (2013) investigates speech acts of thanking produced by native speakers of American English, native speakers of Iraqi Arabic and Iraqi EFL learners. In his book, Al-Zubaidi investigates the perception and the production of speech act of thanking by those three groups as well as the pragmatics transfer on Iraqi EFL learners. In illustrating these three notions, Al-Zubaidi draws on data from using two elicitation techniques: a discourse completion task (DCT), and a scaled-response task (SRT). Regarding the participants, there were three groups with 50 subjects in each. First, the Iraqi Arabic native speakers group consists of 30 undergraduate students and 20 university instructors. Second, the American English native speakers group consisted of 30 undergraduate students and 20 university instructors. Finally, the Iraqi EFL learners group consisted of 30 undergraduate students and 20 university instructors majoring in either English literature or English linguistics.

Al-Zubaidi points out that” the 150 informants of all three groups have provided 6000 responses in the DCT for both thanks giving and responding. As far as the responses to the SRT are concerned, 1200 responses are collected from the whole three groups of informants” (2013, p. 103). According to the data of the study, nine super-strategies are identified: thanking, complimenting, expressing benediction, apologizing, acknowledging the imposition, reciprocating, expressing intimacy, alerting and other (swearing, here-statement, opting-out, non-verbal communication, refusal, stating results, expressing liking). On the other hand, there are seven strategies employed by the preformats of the study: minimizing the debt, expressing pleasure, reciprocating, acknowledging the thanks, expressing intimacy, alerting and other (reassuring, wishing, non-verbal communication, opting-out and greeting).

The results also show that Iraqi native speakers use repetitions and formulaic expressions such as blessing in order to show sincerity and politeness.

V. METHODOLOGY

Analyzing naturally occurring expressions of gratitude and responses to them by Hijazi females will allow me to test the hypotheses summarized in the following statements:

Hypotheses Related o Thanking Expressions:

- Hijazi females use different strategies in expressing gratitude depending on the type of benefit they receive.
- Hijazi females use *Bald Thanking* as strategy in thanking for a favor more than other strategies.
- Hijazi females prefer to verbalize blessings and prayers to express gratitude in thanking for a meal.
- Hijazi females *Express the Lack of Necessity* to thank for a gift more than any other strategy.

Hypotheses Related to Thanking Responses:

3. Hijazi females use limited number of strategies in responding to thanking for a meal or a gift.
4. Hijazi female use *Minimizing the Debt* as a strategy in responding to thanking for a favor.

Verbal thanking has been studied in different cultures and across languages by using different data collection methods. Researchers studying Arabic cultures have concerned themselves specifically with verbal thanking by using three kinds of data collection: the discourse completion task (e.g. Al-Zubaidi, 2012), interviews (e.g. Al-Khawaldeh & Žegarac, 2013), and field observation (e.g. Al-Shaer, 2013; Morsi, 2010). Félix-Brasdefer (2010) states

that it is the researcher's responsibility to decide which method to use to test the hypothesis of their study (p.41). In the following section, I will briefly discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of the most commonly used data collection methods in studying verbal thanking behavior by Hijazi females. Following this discussion I present my rationale for choosing field observation as well as the documentation template I used to collect the thanking expressions and responses. Procedures for the analysis of the speech samples will be provided in this section as well.

V.1 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The most common method of data collection in studying verbal behavior is called the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Participants are provided with a written questionnaire that consists of different social situations in which the participants are expected to express their gratitude or to respond to someone else's expression of gratitude. By using the DCT, researchers can control independent variables, such as age, gender and social status (e.g. Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). Not only that, the DCT enables researchers to collect a large corpus of data quite quickly. However, DCT has drawbacks. Some researchers claim that that data collected by using discourse completion tasks do not reflect "authentic spoken language" (Siebold 2012, p. 159).

On the other hand, field observation reflects the actual use of language (Labov, 1972; Hymes, 1974; and Wolfson, 1983). Wolfson (1983) points out that "ethnographic research is the only reliable method about the way speech acts function in interaction" (p. 95). Kasper (2000) adds that "there are two approaches to collecting authentic spoken discourse data: taking field notes and audio- or video-recording" (p.319).

The aim of this study is to provide a realistic insight into how Hijazi females express and respond to thanking. The data collection for the present study involved field observations as a means by which to gather data.

V.2 MATERIALS

To examine speech acts of thanking among Hijazi females, naturally occurring thanking expressions and responses were collected by the researcher in the west province of Saudi Arabia, especially in Taif city. This study examined 400 thanking exchanges gathered in relatives and friends' houses, hospitals, on a female university campus and at women's stores. Relationships between participants included those of relatives, friends, acquaintances, and strangers.

In collecting the data, I used a documentation template to facilitate the data collection process. I recorded the information on a documentation template by writing down verbatim expressions of thanking and a brief description of the situation as well as the speaker's age. I also recorded the addressee's verbatim responses to the thanking and a brief description of her approximate age. I included four groups in the template: (18-25), (26-40), (41-65) and (66 and older). The data collection template is presented in Appendix A.

I noted as well the time, setting and relationships between the speakers and the occasion. I used this template in public places such as malls, universities and hospitals. However, in collecting data among friends and relatives I used the template on my smart phone to document thanking exchanges to avoid arousing their curiosity and inspire questions about the written template. That way I could preserve the natural and spontaneous character of the thanking exchanges.

V.3 ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The present study is designed to shed light on different strategies employed by Hijazi females to give “thanks” on three distinct occasions: thanking for a meal (dinner or lunch), thanking for a favor and thanking for a gift. The speaker’s choice of a particular strategy for giving thanks depends on different contextual factors such as the relationship between the interlocutors, their ages and the occasion (Al-Zubaidi 2012). All the gratitude expressions and responses to them are coded according to the strategy used. The following tables summarize the coding schemes derived from previous studies to capture different strategies employed in expressing gratitude and responding to it that were used in this study.

Table 1
Coding Schemes in Previous Studies on the Strategies Used to Express Gratitude (Alzubaidi 2012, p. 79)

Eisentein & Bodman (1986),(1993)	Aijmer (1996)	Chang (2005)	Schauer & Adolph (2006)	Chang (2008)
1. Expressing intimacy: mind reading	1. Thanking somebody explicitly.	1. Thanking.	1. Thanking + complimenting interlocutor.	1. Explicit expressing of thanking gratitude.
2. Virtually automatic thanking	2. Expressing gratitude.	2. Appreciation.	2. thanking+ stating reason.	2. Suggesting indebtedness.
3. thanking	3. Acknowledging a debt of gratitude.	3. Positive feeling.	3. Thanking + confirming interlocutor’s commitment.	3. Showing intention to repay.
4. expressing affection	4. Expressing appreciation of the addressee.	4. Apology.	4. Thanking + stating intent to reciprocate.	4. Indicating caring.
5. Complimenting the giver	5. Expressing appreciation of the act.	5. Recognition of imposition.	5. Thanking + stating interlocutor’s non-existent obligation.	5. Implying request.
6. Complimenting the	6. Stressing one’s attitude.	6. Repayment.	6. Thanking + refusal.	6. Asking questions.

person/action				
7. Expressing indebtedness	7. Expressing emotion.	7. Others.		7. Complimenting.
8. Expressing an inability to articulate deep feeling.	8. Commenting on one's own role by suppressing one's importance (self-denigration).	8. Alerters		8. Value judgment.
9. Expressing the lack of necessity.				9. Terms of calling.
10. Non-verbal communication				10. suggesting affection
11. Promising to reciprocate.				11. Expressing relief.
12. Expressing surprise.				12. Further talk.
13. Leave-taking.				13. promising
14. repayment				14. Accepting the offer.
15. Stating a person name.				15. non-verbal communication
				16. Opting out.
				17. pause-filler.
				18. Refusing.
				19. Avoiding.

Table 2
Coding Schemes in Previous Studies on the Strategies Used to Respond to Gratitude Expressions (Al-Zubaidi 2012, p. 80)

Coulmas (1981)	Jung (1994)	Aijmer (1996)	Schneider (2005)	Dumitrescu (2006)
1. Recognizing the object of gratitude and indicating whatever has been done was gladly done.	1. acceptance.	1. Minimizing the favor.	1. Minimizing the favor.	1. Minimizing the favor.
2. Denying the existence of the object of gratitude or playing it	2. denial.	2. Expressing pleasure.	2. Expressing pleasure.	2. Acceptance.

down.				
	3. Reciprocating.	3. Expressing appreciation of the addressee.	3. Expressing appreciation.	
	4. Non-verbal gesture.		4. Returning thanks.	
	5. comment		5. Acknowledging thanks.	
	6. non-response			

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). In his study “Expressions of gratitude in American English and Iraqi Arabic,” Al-Zubaidi developed nine strategies for expressing gratitude (see Table 3). In addition, he developed seven strategies for responding to gratitude expressions: minimizing the debt, expressing pleasure, reciprocating, acknowledging the thanks, expressing intimacy (e.g. body part terms, endearment terms, kinship terms), alerting (e.g. attention getters, address terms), and others (e.g. reassuring, wishing, nonverbal communication, opting-out, greeting).

Table 3
Strategies of Gratitude Expression (Al-Zubaidi 2012, p. 102)

Strategies of Gratitude Expression	Sub-strategies
1. Thanking	a. Bald thanking b. Thanking and stating the favor c. Thanking and stating the imposition
2. Complimenting	a. Complimenting the thankee b. Complimenting the thanking act
3. Expressing benediction	a. Explicit benediction b. Implicit benediction
4. Apologizing	a. Expressing apology b. Expressing embarrassment c. Expressing self-denigration
5. Acknowledging the imposition	a. Recognizing the imposition b. Expressing the unnecessary of the favor
6. reciprocating	a. Expressing indebtedness

	b. Expressing repayment
7. Expressing intimacy	a. Body part term. b. Endearment term c. Kinship term
8. Alerting	a. Attention getters b. Address term
9. Other	a. Swearing b. Here-statement c. Opting-out d. Non-verbal communication e. Refusal f. Stating results g. Expressing liking

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As Wong (2009) states, the interlocutor’s choice of different thanking strategies is influenced by “specific situational conditions” (p. 1252). The type of benefit to be derived from expressing gratitude is an important situational condition in which the thanker considers. In the present study, the 400 exchanges were categorized in three groups according to the type of benefit as shown in table 3. Table 4 shows that thanking for a favor make up 51% of the data, followed by thanking for a meal (26.5%), then thanking for a gift make up 22.5% of the data.

Table 4
Distribution of Compliment Exchanges According to the Type of Benefit

<i>Type of the Benefit</i>	<i>No.</i>		<i>%</i>
Thanking for a Favor	T ¹ 102 R 102	204	51.0
Thanking for a Meal	T 53 R 53	106	26.5
Thanking for a Gift (First Turn) Thanking for a Gift (Second Turn)	T 23 R 23 T 22 R 22	90	22.5
Total	400		100

Brown and Levinson (1987) state that the degree of imposition affects the choice of politeness strategies. Therefore, all the examples in this study that involved thanking for a favor in what are considered low imposition situations. These include thanking someone for lending a pen or a book, opening/closing a door, serving water, coffee or tea, giving directions or turning on/off an air conditioner. Ahar and Eslami-Rasekh (2011) differentiates between high imposition favors and low imposition favors by stating,

¹ T stands for thanking.
R stands for responses.

as far as the size of imposition was concerned the big favour indicated either hard work requiring considerable time and/or financial/physical burden for the hearer, or the size of the benefit that the speaker received from the hearer of the conversation; e.g. the favor of a friend who offers 500.00\$ loan to the speaker was considered as a big favor, while giving back the speaker's pen was of fairly low level of imposition, since a small favor involved only momentary actions or an insignificant expense. (p. 122).

Regarding thanking for a meal, in some situations, an invitation for a dinner in Hijazi culture is obligatory. For example, if someone travels to her/his family's city, family members must invite her/him for dinner or lunch. Also, if someone moves to a new house, he/she must invite family and friends to lunch or dinner. In most of such situations, the inviter slaughters cattle and cooks the meat and serves it with rice for the invitees. In other cases, especially between friends, it is less formal and the inviter can cook in the home any kind of food and serve it to his/her friends. The thanking expressions were elicited after the guests were done eating their food.

In thanking for a gift, there are 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.

Consider the following example:

Context: in a wedding party.

A is the bride, B is A's friend

B gave A a gift.

- A (first turn): *Allah yaa'teeki alāafiah + laish taa;bti nafsek*
May God give you wellness, why have you tired yourself?
- B (first turn): *testahelli akthar*
You deserve more
- A (second turn): *Allah yaa'teeki alāafiah, ensha Allah nerodaha fi alafrah*
May God give you wellness, if God wills I will turn it back to you at any happy occasion.
- B (second turn): *Allah yewafgki.*
I wish you good luck.

In the following sections, the results for the three type of benefit will be presented and discussed.

VI.1 USE OF STRATEGIES IN EXPRESSING THANKING

The analysis of the Hijazi females' corpus revealed that Hijazi females use different strategies depending on the type of benefit to express gratitude for (tables 5, 6, 7 &8). Furthermore, they combine two to four strategies to express gratitude. This results sometimes to lengthy expressions.

Table 5
The Distribution of Strategies of Expressing Gratitude for Thanking for a Favor (See sections VI.1.1 -VI.1.8 for definitions of the terms used here.)

Type of strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
Thanking	1. Bald Thanking	18	17.6	22	21.6
	2. Thanking and Stating the Favor	4	3.9		
Complimenting	3. Complimenting the Thankee	0	0	0	0
Expressing Benediction	4. Explicit Benediction	13	12.7	22	21.6
	5. Implicit Benediction	9	8.8		
Apologizing	6. Expressing Apology	4	3.9	4	3.9
Acknowledging the Imposition	7. Expressing the Nonnecessity of the favor	4	3.9	4	3.9
Expressing Intimacy	8. Body Part Term	3	2.9	11	10.9
	9. Endearment Term	5	4.9		
	10. Kinship	3	2.9		
Other	11. Swearing	3	2.9	3	2.9
Combining Tow Strategies	1+4	9	8.8	32	31.4
	1+5	3	2.9		
	1+3	3	2.9		
	4+9	5	4.9		
	2+3	3	2.9		
	4+3	6	5.9		
	5+3	3	2.9		
Combining Three Strategies	1+4+3	3	2.9	3	2.9
Combining Four Strategies	9+2+3+4	1	1.0	1	1.0
Total		102	99.5	102	100.1

Table 6

The Distribution of Strategies of Expressing Gratitude for Thanking for a Meal

Type of strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
Thanking	1. Bald thanking	0	0	0	0
	2. Thanking and stating the favor	0	0		
Complimenting	3. Complimenting the thankee	0	0	0	0
Expressing benediction	4. Explicit benediction	17	32.1	34	64.5
	5. Implicit benediction	17	32.1		
Reciprocating	6. Expressing repayment	0	0	0	0
Combining two strategies	3+4	2	3.8	15	28.3
	4+2	2	3.8		
	5+3	3	5.7		
	4+5	6	11.3		
	5+2	2	3.8		
Combing three strategies	1+4+6	1	1.9	4	7.5
	4+5+3	3	5.7		
total		53	100.2	53	100.3

Table 7

The Distribution of Strategies of Expressing Gratitude for Thanking for a Gift (First Turn)

Type of Strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
Thanking	1. Bald Thanking	1	4.3	1	4.3
Expressing Benediction	2. Explicit Benediction	0	0	0	0
	3. Implicit Benediction	0	0		
Acknowledging the Imposition	4. Expressing the lack of Necessity of the Favor	12	52.2	12	52.2
Combining Two Strategies	2+4	6	26.0	10	43.5
	1+2	1	4.3		
	1+4	2	8.7		
	3+4	1	4.3		
Total		23	99.8	23	100

Table 8

The Distribution of Strategies of Expressing Gratitude for Thanking for a Gift (Second Turn)

Type of Strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
Thanking	1. Bald Thanking	0	0	0	0
Expressing Benediction	2. Explicit Benediction	4	18.2	4	18.2
	3. Implicit Benediction	0	0		
Complimenting	4. Complimenting the Thankee	0	0	0	0
Reciprocating	5. Expressing Repayment	0	0	0	0
Combining Two Strategies	3+4	4	18.2	13	59.1
	1+2	3	13.6		
	2+4	3	13.6		
	2+5	3	13.6		
Combining Three Strategies	1+2+5	5	22.7	5	22.7
Total		22	99.9	22	100

VI.1.1 THANKING

The *Thanking* strategy comprises utterances made up of thanking words such as ‘thank you’ or ‘thanks’ (Al-Zubaidi 2012, p.106). In Hijazi dialect thanking words would be *shukran* ‘thanks’ or *mashkurah* ‘thanks’. This strategy is quite recognizable due to the presence of the word ‘thank’ in the gratitude expression (Aijmer 1996, p.38). Aijmer points out that thanking words can be accompanied with intensifiers e.g. ‘thanks a lot’, ‘many thanks’ or ‘thank you so much’. Arabic intensifiers also occur in the Hijazi data, such as *marrah* in *shukran marrah* ‘many thanks’ and *alf shukr* ‘a thousand thanks’.

In general, Hijazi females prefer *Thanking* strategies, which make up 21.6% of their thanking for a favor corpus. Al-zubaidi (2012) divided the *Thanking* strategy into two sub-strategies: *Bald Thanking* and *Thanking and Stating the Favor*. In the *Bald Thanking* strategy, Hijazi females use formulaic expressions that contain the word *shukran* ‘thank’ (17.6%), such as,

- *Shukran jazelan*
Thanks a lot
- *Shkran marrah* or *marrah shkran*
Thanks a lot or many thanks.

On the other hand, Hijazi females use *Thanking and Stating the Favor* as a strategy to express gratitude four times (3.9%) in thanking for a favor corpus. In this strategy, the thanker mentions the favor in the gratitude expression, such as,

- *Shukran āla alqahwa*
Thanks for the coffee.
- *Shukran āla alšwar*
Thanks for the photos.

However, in thanking for a meal, this strategy was not used alone but instead was combined with other strategies (see V.1.9 COMBINING STRATEGIES). Regarding thanking for a gift, this strategy is used once alone in the first turn (4.3%), as shown in the following example, and two times in combined with other strategies in both turns.

- A is a bigger sister, B. is a younger sister
A gave B a gift for her graduation.
B (1): *Allah esh hathi?*
Oh, what is this?
A (2): *hathi hajah basitah bemonasabat altaxroj.*
This is a simple gift for your graduation.
B (3): *Allah shukran.*
Oh God, thanks
A (4): *sheddy ħeilek oqbal aldoctorah en shallah.*
Work hard to get your PH.D

As shown in the above example, the beneficiary (the younger sister) expresses her gratitude by using *Bald Thanking* unlike the other examples of thanking for a gift in which the beneficiary acknowledges the imposition by *Expressing the Non-necessity* of the favor.

VI.1.2 COMPLIMENTING

Paying compliments is another strategy Hijazi females use to express gratitude. The data reveals that Hijazi females avoid using this strategy alone, but they prefer to combine it with other strategies such as *Thanking* or *Expressing Benediction* as shown in IV.1.9. COMBINING STRATEGIES.

VI.1.3 EXPRESSING BENEDICTION

In this strategy, the thanker uses blessings and prayers to express thanking. In Muslim cultures, people really appreciate blessing and prayers. At the same time they show the extent to which people are sincere in their thanking. Jaradat (2014) points out that “Allah expressions have permeated all aspects of a Muslim’s life, and that they have been spread to be used of Arabic speakers of all creeds” (p.67). Sometimes people use formulaic expressions, such as *Jazaki allah xair* ‘May God reward you’; at other times, they come up with expressions wishing good to the favorer.

Al-zubaidi (2012) differentiates between two types of *Benediction Expressions*: first, *Explicit Benediction*, second, *Implicit Benediction*. In the first type, *Explicit Benediction*, the word *Allah* ‘God’ appears in the expression, while the second type, *Implicit Benediction*, the word *Allah* doesn’t appear in the blessings or the wishes but is understood by both the hearer and the speaker.

The analysis of the Hijazi females’ corpus revealed that Hijazi females prefer using *Expressing Benediction* to express gratitude, which makes up 21.6% of the thanking for a favor data. Specifically, the *Explicit Benediction* strategy makes up 12.7% of the data. On the other

hand, the *Implicit Benediction* strategy makes up 8.8% of the collected data in thanking for a favor.

Explicit Benediction:

- *Allah yaʔteki alāfyah ya rab.*
May God give you wellness.
- *Allah yesādki yarab.*
May God make you happy.
- *Jazaki Allah xair.*
My God reward you.

Implicit Benediction:

- *Yāteki alāfiah.*
Give you wellness
- *Yeslamoo*
Bless you.

In thanking for a meal, *Expressing Benediction* is by far the most prevalent strategy (64.5%). Hijazi females prefer blessings and prayers to express gratitude in thanking others for a meal and they believe that this strategy will save their faces. Interestingly, both *Explicit Benediction* and *Implicit Benediction* are used equally (32.1%). Also, these two sub-strategies were combined together (11.3%) to express thanking for a meal. The data also showed that in combining two or three strategies one of these two strategies, *Explicit Benediction* or *Implicit Benediction* must be expressed in combination. This shows the importance of this strategy in thanking others for serving a meal.

Explicit Benediction:

- *Kathar Allah Khairakum*
- May God give you more
- *Akramakum allah*
May God be generous with you

Implicit Benediction:

- *Teslam yadek*
Bless your hand
- *Sufrah daymah*
Permanent feast.

Regarding thanking for a gift, Hijazi females avoided using this strategy alone in the first turn, but used it combined with other strategies twice. In the second turn, *Explicit Benediction* was used four times (18.2%) and also it was combined with other strategies.

Explicit Benediction

- *Allah yesādki yarab*
May God make you happy
- *Allah yeāteki alafyah*
May God give you wellness.

VI.1.4 APOLOGIZING

Apologizing expressions can be used to express thanking. Long, (2010) points out that the reasoning behind using apology to express thanking has to do with “the speaker’s recognition of a burden suffered by the hearer (i.e., the person who performed the act that serves as the object of gratitude)” (p. 1061). The feeling of indebtedness to the favorer is the main reason behind using apology to express gratitude by Hijazi females. This strategy is used four times (3.9%) in the thanking for a favor corps.

- *Samħona āla alezāaj*
Forgive us for the annoying
- *Maālaish taābtek*
I am sorry, I bothered you.

Hijazi females avoid using this strategy in thanking for a meal or a gift.

VI.1.5 ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPOSITION

Acknowledging the imposition is another strategy employed by Hijazi females. By using this strategy, the thanker recognizes the imposition or the favor done to her to relieve the burden. There are two sub-strategies of this strategy: *Recognizing the Imposition* and *Expressing the Unnecessity of the Favor*. Unlike Iraqi speakers, the first strategy, *Recognizing the Imposition*, was not used at all by Hijazi females. On the other hand, the second sub-strategy, *Expressing the Unnecessity of the Favor* was used in thanking for a favor and thanking for a gift. Intachakra (2004) points out that “The speaker expresses gratitude indirectly by means of a seemingly discouraging statement, indicating unnecessary of the bestowed favour and the belief that the hearer should not have taken the trouble” (2004, p. 53). Hijazi females did not use this strategy a lot in thanking for a favor (3.9%). Moreover, they avoid using this strategy in thanking for a meal. However, in thanking for a gift (first turn), *Expressing the Unnecessity of the Favor* is the most prevalent strategy (52.2%). Hijazi females employ this strategy to save their faces and to acknowledge their debt. In Saudi culture, inviting for a dinner in some occasions is obligatory, while buying a gift for a friend or a family member is an optional choice. Also, women utilize this technique to show politeness although they don't mean it.

- *Ertāhi*
Don't bother yourself
- *Makan lah daāi*
It was not necessary
- *Laiāh kalafti āla nafsek?*
Why did you bother yourself?

VI.1.6 RECIPROCATING

With this strategy, the thanker expresses gratitude by offering to reciprocate the favors usually by mentioning repayment. Al-Zubaidi divided this strategy into two sub-strategies: *Expressing*

Indebtedness and *Expressing Repayment*. The first sub-strategy was not used at all by Hijazi females. Interestingly, the second strategy, *Expressing Repayment*, did not appear alone. It appeared once in combining with other two strategies (1.9%) in thanking for a meal (see V.1.9 COMBINING STRATEGIES). It also used in thanking for a gift (the second turn) in combination with other strategies. It appeared with *Bald Thanking* (13.6%) in the combining two strategies corpus. In the combining three strategies corpus, it appeared with *Bald Thanking* and *Explicit Benediction* (22.7%). In the Hijazi females corpus, there were some expressions that used to express repayment, such as, *ensha Allah nerodaha fi alafrah* ‘if God wills I will turn it back to you at any happy occasion’ and *Insallah nejeki fi zawaj benteck* ‘If God wills, we will come to your daughter’s wedding’.

VI.1.7 EXPRESSING INTIMACY

While expressing thanking, the thanker sometimes uses certain terms to express “solidarity”, “harmony” and to “reduce the social distance” with the donor or the benefactor (Al-Zubaidi, 2012, p. 131). The data revealed that this strategy is only used in thanking for a favor. Al-Zubaidi (2012) divided these terms into *Body Part Terms*, *Endearment Terms*, and *Kinship Terms*. It is common for some Hijazi women to address or answer other women with intimacy terms (10.9%). In some instances *Body Part Terms* (2.9%) are used. Only two body part terms are found in Hijazi females’ corpus: *qalb* ‘heart’, *āain* ‘eye’. In other instances, *Endearment Terms* (4.9%) also are used, such as *āasal* or *āasoulah* ‘honey’, *qamar* ‘moon’ and *ħabibaty* ‘darling’:

- *Sukran ya qalbi*
Thanks my heart
- *Shukran ya āyooni*
Thanks my eyes
- *Sukran ya a’asal*

Thanks honey.

Finally, *Kinship Terms* make up 2.9% of the data. These are used to reduce the social distance. These words are appeared with the imperative verb *ejlossi* ‘sit down’. These *Kinship Terms* are used by the thanker to remind the thankee with the kinship between them, therefore, there is no need to act formally.

- *ejlossi wana kalatki*
Sit down, and I am your aunt
- *ejlossi wana oxtak*
Sit down, and I am your sister.

VI.1.8 OTHER

VI.1.8.1 SWEARING

Al-Zubaidi (2012) divided this super strategy to seven strategies: *Swearing*, *Here-Statement*, *Opting-out*, *Non-Verbal Communication*, *Refusal*, *Stating Results*, and *Expressing Liking*.

However, Hijazi females only use one strategy which is *Swearing*.

As Al-Zubaidi (2012) states that swearing is “a religious vocative utterances employed by the speaker to assure his/her interlocutor of what s/he said or done is true” (p. 141). By using swear words, the speaker confirms what she is saying. Furthermore, using swear words in speech is considered a “social politeness” (Almutlaq, 2013).

Some swear words are cultural-specific. For instance, Al-zubaidi found some swear words in Iraqis’ corpus, such as, *besharafi* ‘by my honor’, *wrooh abooya* ‘by my father’s soul’ and *Walla* ‘by God’. The first two swear words are not used by Hijazi speakers, but the last example, *Walla* ‘by God’, is for sure used by Hijaz females.

Using *Swearing* as a strategy to express thanking is only employed by Hijazi speakers in thanking for a favor which makes up 2.9% of the collected data. There is only one expression of this that occurs in the corpus three times:

- *Bellah ertahi*
By God, sit down.

In the previous example, the thanker expressed her thanking to her friends when she poured some tea for her. The thanker used the swear word *Bellah* ‘by God’ in this context to prove that what she said is sincere.

VI.1.9 COMBINING STRATEGIES

The analysis of the Hijazi females’ corpus revealed that Hijazi females combine some of the strategies to form new strategies and sometimes to form lengthy expressions. The data revealed that Hijazi females may combine up to four strategies. In thanking for a favor corpus, combining two strategies makes up 31.4 % of the data which indicates that Hijazi females prefer to combine two strategies together. The most preferable combination between strategies is combining *Bald Thanking + Explicit Benediction* (8.8%), and then *Complimenting the Thankee + Explicit Benediction* (5.9%). On the other hand, combining three strategies is less preferable (2.9%), and there is only one instance of combining four strategies (1.0%) (For an overview of the relative frequency of combination strategies, see Table 4, 5, 6 & 8):

Combining Two Strategies in Thanking for a Favor:

Bald Thanking + Explicit Benediction:

- *Shukran Allah yaāteki alāafiah*
Thanks, may God give you wellness

Explicit Benediction + Complimenting the Thankee:

- *Allah yaātekum alāfyah, maqassartum*
May God give you wellness, you did not fail to satisfy us.

Combining Three Strategies in Thanking for a Favor:

Bald Thanking + Explicit Benediction + Complimenting the Thankee:

- *Shukran Allah yaāteki alāafiah, maqassarti*
Thanks, may God give you wellness, you did not fail to satisfy us.

Combining Four Strategies in Thanking for a Favor:

Endearment term + Thanking and stating the favor + Complimenting the Thankee+ Explicit Benediction:

- *Shukran ya āsal āla ehtemamek we soa'lek, maqassarti, Allah yejzaki xair.*
Thanks honey for caring and asking about me, you did not fail to satisfy us, may God reward you.

Combining two strategies is also preferable in thanking for a meal corpus (28.3%). The most employed combining form includes *Implicit Benediction + Explicit Benediction* (11.3%). On the other hand, combining three strategies is less preferable; it makes up 7.5% of the data. Combining *Implicit Benediction + Explicit Benediction + Complimenting the Thankee* makes up 5.7% of the data.

Combining Two Strategies in Thanking for a Meal:

Implicit Benediction + Explicit Benediction:

- *Teslam yadek Allah yaāteki alāafiah*
Bless your hand, may God give you wellness

Combining Three Strategies in Thanking for a Meal:

Implicit Benediction + Explicit Benediction + Complimenting the Thankee:

- *Sufrah daymah Allah yaa'teeki alāafiah, maqassarti*
Permanent feast, may God give you wellness, you did not fail to satisfy us.

In thanking for a gift (first turn), Hijazi females prefer to combine two strategies (43.5%). *Explicit Benediction + Expressing the Unnecissity of the Favor* are preferred (26.0%) over other combinations. There is no instance of combining three strategies in thanking for a gift in the first turn. On the other hand, in thanking for a gift in the second turn, combining two strategies (59.1%) is also preferred by Hijazi females; the one they use the most in combining is *Implicit Benediction + Complimenting the Thankee* (18.2%). In contrast, combining three strategies (22.7%) is less frequent than combining two strategies in the second turn. The three strategies that are combined in the second turn are *Bad Thanking + Explicit Benediction + Expressing Repayment*.

Combining Two Strategies in Thanking for a gift (first turn):

Explicit Benediction + Expressing the Unnecissity of the Favor

- *Allah yaāteki alāafiah + laish taābti nafsek*
May God give you wellness, why did you bother yourself?

Combining Two Strategies in Thanking for a gift (second turn):

Explicit Benediction + Expressing Repayment:

- *Allah yaāteki alāafiah, ensha Allah nerodaha fi alafrah*
May God give you wellness, if God wills I will turn it back to you at any happy occasion

Combining Three Strategies in Thanking for a Gift (second turn) :

Bald Thanking + Explicit Benediction + Expressing Repayment:

- *Mashkurah, Allah yaāteki alāafiah, ensha Allah manehdeeky fi zawaj benteck.*
Thanks, may God give you wellness, if God wills, we will turn it back to you at your daughter's wedding

As expected, combining between strategies is higher in thanking for a gift in the first and second turn than thanking for favor or a meal (combining two strategies in thanking for a gift in the first turn makes up 43.5% of the data, combining two strategies in thanking for a gift in the second turn makes up 59.1% of the data and combining three strategies in thanking for a gift in the second turn makes up 22.7% of the data, combining two strategies in thanking for a favor makes up 31.4% of the data, combining three strategies in thanking for a favor makes up 2.9% of the data, combining two strategies in thanking for a meal makes up 28.3% of the data, combining three strategies in thanking for a meal makes up 7.5% of the data). The main reason behind the high frequency of combining strategies in thanking for a gift is Hijazi females' feeling of indebtedness. Expressing thanks is considered as a face-threatening act in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). The speaker acknowledges a debt to the hearer, therefore, threatens speaker's negative face. In case of Hijazi females, the beneficiary combines different strategies to acknowledge a debt to the hearer. Actually, when hijazi females combine different strategies, they show their gratefulness and indebtedness to the benefactor.

VI.2 USE OF STRATEGIES IN RESPONDING TO THANKIN

As Jung (1994) noted the thanker assumes that the thankee or the "benefactor" will reply appropriately to thanking expressions (p.11). The data in this section have been coded according

to Al-Zubaidi's (2012) classifications. Hijazi females used different strategies based on the type of benefit they were giving thanks for (see tables 9, 10, 11 & 12).

Table 9

The Distribution of the Strategies of the Responses for Thanking for a Favor

Type of Strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
1. Mininmizing the Debt		23	22.5	23	22.5
2. Expressing Pleasure		10	9.8	10	9.8
3. Reciprocating		13	12.7	13	12.7
4. Acknowledging the Thanks		13	12.7	13	12.7
5. Expressing Endearment	5a. Endearment Terms	0	0	0	0
6. Alerting	6a. Attention Getters	0	0	0	0
7. Other	7a. Wishing	9	8.8	36	35.3
	7b. Nonverbal Communication	7	6.9		
	7c. Opting out	19	18.6		
	7d. Question	1	1.0		
Combining Two Strategies	1+5a	1	1.0	5	4.9
	1+7a	1	1.0		
	1+4	1	1.0		
	1+6a	1	1.0		
	2+6a	1	1.0		
Combining Three Strategies	1+3+5a	2	2.0	2	2.0
Total		102	100	102	99.9

Table 10

The Distribution of the Strategies of the Responses for Thanking for a Meal

Type of Strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
1. Mininmizing the Debt		13	24.5	13	24.5
2. Expressing Pleasure		10	18.9	10	18.9
3. Other	3a. Wishing	16	30.2	16	30.1
	3b. Apology	0	0		
Combining Two Strategies	2+3a	5	9.4	14	26.4
	1+3b	5	9.4		
	3a+1	4	7.5		

Total		53	99.9	53	99.9
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Table 11

The Distribution of the Strategies of the Responses for Thanking for a Gift (First Turn)

Type of strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
1. Minimizing the debt		17	73.9	17	73.9
2. Other	2a. Wishing	1	4.3	2	8.7
	2b. Apology	0	0		
	2c. Advice	1	4.3		
Combining two strategies	1+2b	4	17.4	4	17.4
Total		23	99.9	23	100

Table 12

The Distribution of the Strategies of the Responses for Thanking for a Gift (Second Turn)

Type of Strategy		N	%	Total	
				N	%
1. Acknowledging the Thanks		10	45.5	10	45.5
2. Other	2a. Wishing	12	54.5	12	54.5
Total		22	100	22	100

VI.2.1 MINIMIZING THE DEBT

This term has been discussed in the previous literature under different labels, such as, ‘denial’, ‘minimizing the favor’ and ‘denying the existence of the object of gratitude or playing it down’ (Coulmas 1981; Jung 1994; Aijmer 1996; Schneider 2005; Dumitrescu 2006). Through the use of this strategy Hijazi thankers seek to assure the thanker that their action that generated the benefit was performed without imposing any sort of burden. Jung (1994) states that “the responder in this category may humble himself or herself by denying that he/she favored the beneficiary” (1994, p.13). This strategy is favored by Hijazi females according to three kinds of benefit: thanking for a favor, thanking for a meal and thanking for a gift (only in the first turn).

In thanking for a favor, Hijazi females employed *Minimizing the Debt* the most (22.5%). In thanking for a meal, Hijazi females employ this strategy frequently (24.5%). In thanking for a gift in the first turn, *Minimizing the Debt* was the strategy Hijazi women used the most (37.9%). The strategy *Minimizing the Debt* is used alone and also it comes with other strategy. However, This strategy was not used at all in the thanking for a gift in the second turn. Consider the following examples:

Minimizing the Debt in Thanking for a Favor:

- *Alāafo or āafwan*
Not at all
- *Āadi maswait shai*
It is O.K. I did nothing

Minimizing the Debt in Thanking for a Meal:

- *mahi megdarak*
This is nothing.
- *haq we wajib, maswena shai*
It is our duty to serve you, we did nothing

Minimizing the Debt Thanking for a Gift (First Turn):

- *testahelli akthar*
You deserve more
- *yashikhah hathi hajah bašitah*
Oh lady, this is a tiny thing.

VI.2.2 EXPRESSING PLEASURE

By expressing pleasure, the thankee expresses her happiness in serving the thanker. Using *Expressing Pleasure* as a strategy to respond to gratitude expressions makes up 9.8% of the collected data in thanking for a favor. On the other hand, *Expressing Pleasure* makes up 18.9% of the collected data in thanking for a meal. This strategy was not used in thanking for a gift during either the first or second turn.

Expressing Pleasure in Thanking for a Favor:

- *Allah yeḥayki*
May God welcome you
- *Eḥna belxedmah*
We are at your service

Expressing Pleasure in Thanking for a Meal

- *Belāafyah*
Bon appetit
- *sharaftona*
We are honored to have you

VI.2.3 RECIPROCATING

According to this strategy, the thankee says ‘thank you’ to respond to thanking expressions (Jung, 1994). The thankee employs this strategy to “reduce indebtedness” (Ohashi, 2008). This strategy has been identified only when thanking for a favor (12.7%). This strategy is used most in women’s stores (e.g. clothes stores) when both customers and the female-sales personnel thank each other. This strategy is generally avoided when thanking for a meal or for a gift.

VI.2.4 ACKNOWLEDGING THE THANKS

Acknowledging the Thanks means that the thankee accepts a gratitude expression. If the thanking is expressed in the form of a blessing or prayers, acknowledgment of these thanks expressions will be stated as *amen* ‘amen’ or *ajmaāeen* ‘for all’ (Al-Zubaidi, 2012). This strategy is only found in thanking for a favor (12.7%) and thanking for a gift in the second turn (45.5%). The following expressions are used by Hijazi females to accept expressions of gratitude:

- *Amen*
Amen
- *Ajmaāeen*
For all

VI.2.5 EXPRESSING ENDEARMENT

Endearment terms include words or a phrases the thankee uses to express affection. This strategy occurred only in thanking for a favor ; it occurred twice in combination with other strategies (V.2.8 COMBINING STRATEGIES). Only one term of this type has been identified in the two examples: *āasal* ‘honey’.

VI.2.6 ALERTING

Alerting is an expression that is used to grab the hearer’s attention (Al-Zubaidi, 2012). This overall strategy is divided into two sub-strategies: *Attention Getters* and *Address Terms*. In the Hijazi corpus of thanking behavior, only the *Attention Getters* strategy has been identified. This strategy is used only in thanking for a favor in combined with other strategies. It was observed once in concert with *Minimizing the Debt* (1.0%) and one other time with the strategy of *Expressing Pleasure* (1.0%). Only one expression has been identified in these two instances; this is *walaw* ‘nonetheless’, ‘nevertheless’ or ‘though’. This expression occurred once before the thanking response act and in the other example it occurred after the response. This contradicts Al-Zubaidi’s assertion that *Attention Getters* come before the thanking response (Al-Zubaidi, 2012).

Minimizing the Debt + Attention Getter

- *masawena illa alwajeb walaw*
We did nothing nonetheless.

Attention Getter + Expressing Pleasure

- *walaw ehna belxedmah*
Nevertheless, I am at your service.

VI.2.7 OTHER

According to the Al-Zubaidi coding scheme, *Other* is an overall strategy that contains five sub-strategies: *Reassuring*, *Wishing*, *Non-Verbal Communication*, *Opting out* and *Greeting*. In the Hijazi thanking corpus, only three strategies have been identified: *Wishing*, *Non-Verbal Communication* and *Opting out*. Moreover, three other three strategies have been used by Hijazi females: *Question*, *Apology* and *Advice*. These three strategies were not found in the Al-Zubaidi coding scheme of thanks responses.

V.2.7.1 WISHING

Wishing is one of the preferred strategies for responding to gratitude expressions in the Hijazi thanking corpus. Through *Wishing*, Hijazi females thankees express their hope that the thanker enjoys happiness, welfare or success. They might include blessings and prayers in their responses. Al- Zubaidi (2012) states that employing this strategy “add extra flavour of politeness and sincerity to thanks responding” (p.167).

Wishing strategy comprised 8.8% of the thanking for a favor corpus. This strategy is not as popular among Hijazi females in thanking for a favor because in some contexts the thanker and the thankee are strangers; sometimes both are in rush, or the favor might be too simple like lending a pen or passing the salt to warrant the strategy. In these cases Hijazi females prefer other strategies such as *Opting out* or *Nonverbal communication*.

- *Bettawfeeq*
Good luck
- *Alf ħamdellah āala assalamah*
A thousand praise to God for your safety.

In thanking for a meal, the *Wishing* strategy comprised 30.0% of thanking for a meal corpus. Hijazi females find it to be the most preferable strategy in terms of responses for thanking for a meal. Certain expressions are used to respond to thanking for a meal, such as,

- *āwafii*
 - *belāafyah*
 - *alf shāh we hana āla qalbak*
 - *fiieh alāafiah*
- Bon appetit (all the above expressions mean ‘bon appetit’)

In thanking for a gift (first turn), the *Wishing* strategy makes up 4.3% of the data (only one instance), while in the second turn, it makes up 54.5% of the data. The thankee uses this strategy to show that she is sincere and in the same time to give hints to the thanker that this is the end of the conversation.

- *Allah yewafgki*
I wish you good luck.

VI.2.7.2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal communication is another strategy employed by Hijazi females to respond to gratitude expressions. Nonverbal communication includes eye gaze, facial expressions and pointing gestures.

This strategy only occurred in the thanking for a favor corpus (6.9%) but neither in the thanking for a meal nor thanking for a gift corpus. It is considered rude in Hijazi culture to not respond to gratitude expressions for a gift or meal. Five tokens of gratitude responses out of seven were elicited by university professors responding to their college students’ thanking; the other two tokens of *Nonverbal communication* were elicited by strangers. The nonverbal communication examples that are found in the Hijazi corpus of thanking behavior are:

- A smile
- A head nod
- A gentle pat on the shoulder

VI.2.7.3 *OPTING OUT*

By employing the *Opting out* strategy, Hijazi females signaled that they preferred not to respond to gratitude expressions in several situations. This strategy has been identified only in the thanking for a favor situations (18.6%). Jung (1994) states that “in a situation where someone is hurrying or worrying, no response was elicited” (p. 17). In the Hijazi females’ thanking corpus, the *No Response* strategy was used in several situations usually with strangers. For example, *No Response* was elicited by female cashiers in a crowded university’s cafeteria or female receptionists in busy hospitals.

VI.2.7.4 QUESTION

This strategy was not found in Al-Zubaidi’s coding scheme of thanking responses. It is only used once between close friends in thanking for a favor (1.0%). This strategy is used to change the subject. In the following example, a Hijazi female (A) thanks her friend (B) for lending her lecture notes:

- (A) : *yaāteki alāafiah*
 (May God) give you wellness
 (B) : *esh almadah illi btesajliha alterm aljai?*
 What course are you going to register for?

VI.2.7.5 APOLOGY

This strategy also was not found in the Al-Zubaidi (2012) coding scheme. However, it is employed by Hijazi females to respond to thanking expressions. Kotani (2010) emphasizes that “the use of a particular linguistic form, ‘I’m sorry,’[...] accomplishes a function other than apology” (p. 41). Hijazi females try to be modest by using apology as a thanking response. Two expressions have been identified in the corpus: *eāthorona āla altaqšeer* and *samhona āla altaqšeer*. Both signify “forgive us for our shortcomings”. It seems that Hijazi females generally avoid using this strategy in thanking for a favor. In thanking for a meal and thanking for a gift (first turn), Hijazi females did, however, use *Apology* as strategy to respond to gratitude expressions. However, this strategy was always combined with *Minimizing the Debt* in thanking for a meal (9.4%) and thanking for a gift in the first turn (17.4%) (See VI.2.8 COMBINING STRATEGIES)

VI.2.7.6 ADVICE

This strategy also was not identified in Al-Zubaidi’s (2012) study but it is employed by a Hijazi female in the thanking for a gift corpus (4.3%). In this study, only one instance of using advice as response to a thanking expression was observed. In the following example, a mother gave her daughter some money as a gift for her graduation:

The daughter: *shukran ya mama, Allah yetawel fi omrik*
Thanks mom, may God give you long life
The mother: *la teDayeāiha*
Don’t lose it.

In this example, the mother responded to her daughter’s thanking by advising her be careful with the gift of money.

VI.2.8 COMBINING STRATEGIES

According to the analysis of data observed and collected for this study, Hijazi females combine variety of different strategies in responding to gratitude expressions. In thanking for a favor, combining two strategies makes up 4.9% of the data, while combining three strategies makes up 2.0% of the data. In most observed combining instances, *Minimizing the Debt* was combined with other strategies, such as *Endearment Terms* (1.0%), *Wishing* (1.0%), *Attention Getters* (1.0%), or *Acknowledging the Thanks* (1.0%).

Combining Two Strategies in Thanking for a Favor:

Minimizing the debt + Endearment term

- *afwan ya āasal*
Not at all honey

Combining Three Strategies in Thanking for a Favor:

Reciprocating + Minimizing the Debt + Endearment terms

- *we yesādki yarab, āfwan ya āasal*
And may God make you happy, don't mention it, honey.

In the thanking for a meal corpus, two strategies account for 26.4% of this thanking strategy. *Minimizing the Debt* was combined with other two strategies: *Apology* (9.4%) and *wishing* (7.5%). The other combination of strategies was between *expressing pleasure* and *wishing* (9.45%).

Combining Two Strategies in Thanking for a Meal:

Minimizing the Debt + Apology

- *haq we wajib, we othorna āla algšor*
It is our duty to serve you and forgive us.

Wishing + Expressing Pleasure

- *belāafyah, hyaki Allah*
Bon appetit, may God welcome you

In thanking for a gift in the first turn, *Minimizing the Debt* was combined with *Apology* (17.4%). There were no other examples of combining other strategies. In thanking for a gift in

the second turn, Hijazi females avoided combining strategies. This is their way of ending the conversation; because if they combined different strategies that would encourage the thanker to continue thanking the benefactor. Therefore, Hijazi females end the conversation by using two strategies: *Acknowledging the Thanks* or *Wishing*.

Combining Two Strategies in Responding to Thanking for a Meal:

Minimizing the Debt + Apology

- *testahelo akthar, we samehona ala alquṣor*
You deserve more, please forgive us

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study revealed interesting differences in the way Hijazi females express gratitude and respond to it depending on the kind of benefit. A corpus of 400 naturally occurring Hijazi thanking exchanges was collected and coded. Then an in-depth analysis of the strategies used in expressing gratitude and responding to gratitude expressions in three situations was conducted: thanking exchanges for low imposition favors, thanking exchanges for serving a meal and thanking exchanges for receiving a gift. The results were used to determine whether Hijazi females choose different gratitude expressions according to the type of benefit they receive.

The results show that Hijazi females use various strategies in expressing and responding to thanking for a low imposition favor. On the other hand, Hijazi females use a limited number of thanking and response strategies in thanking for a meal and gifts (according to Al-Zubaidi's (2012) coding scheme; nine strategies for expressing thanks and seven strategies for thanks responding).

In expressing gratitude for a favor, Hijazi females prefer the *Bald Thanking* strategy. Since some of the interlocutors involved in the thanking for a favor corpus are strangers, this strategy is highly used between strangers. *Bald Thanking* expressions are brief and suitable to use without distracting any of the interlocutors from everyday activity. On the other hand, if the interlocutors are relatives or friends, then the preferable strategy is *Explicit Benediction* or combining variety of thanking strategies to show sincerity.

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. Using blessings and prayers to express gratitude to the

host is considered a key social aspect of Hijazi society; it is considered the most polite way in which to show appreciation. As a matter of fact, using *Thanking* strategies (whither *Bald Thanking* or *Thanking and Stating the Favor*) to thank the host, such as *shukran*, ‘thanks,’ sounds odd to female Hijazi ears. This is why they combine it with *Benediction* expressions.

In expressing their gratitude for a gift, Hijazi females adapt *Expressing the Non-necessity of the Favor* as a strategy as soon as they receive the gift. Then when the donor replies, they thank the donor again by combining three strategies together (Bald Thanking + Explicit Benediction + Expressing Repayment) to show their sincere and deep gratitude. This result may also be achieved by using *Explicit Benediction* alone or combining *Implicit Benediction* and *Complimenting the Thankee*.

In responding to thanking for a favor, this study’s results revealed that Hijazi females prefer *Minimizing the Debt* if the interlocutors are acquaintance, relative or friends. Otherwise, they will utilize the *Opting Out* strategy if their interlocutors are strangers.

In responding to thanking for a meal, Hijazi females also exhibited a rather limited range of response strategies. In the majority of the cases, there is a preference to use *Wishing* as a strategy to respond to gratitude.

In responding for a gift, Hijazi females adapt *Minimizing the Debt* to “restore the imbalance between the participants” (Ajmer, 1996, p. 40). Then, in the second turn, they use *Wishing* and *Acknowledging the Thanks*.

The role of further thanking variables, such as age, social status, social distance and the length of gratitude expression were not addressed due to the limited data collected for this study. All of the data in this study was collected in one city in Hijaz region. Further research to explore

Hijazi female thanking behavior and rationales could in the future be conducted in different cities in the Hijaz region and even in different regions of Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, I feel this research has introduced and carefully analyzed important social behaviors mandated by Hijazi culture.

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IX. APPENDIX A

Documentation Template

Information on the thanker	Information on the thankee
<p>Exact gratitude expression:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 66 and older</p> <p>Relationship to the thankee:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Type of benefit:.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Exact response</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 66 and older</p> <p>Relationship to the thanker:.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Setting</p> <p>1. Place:</p> <p>2. Time:.....</p> <p>3. Topic of Conversation:</p> <p>4. No. of Interactants:.....</p>	