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The Speech Act of Arabic Compliment by Instagram Users on Artists' Works

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the Arabic compliments posted by Instagram users on artists' works on Instagram. Most of the studies have explored the use of compliments in different platforms of social media; however, compliments on artists' works have received less attention, especially the compliments that are constructed with emojis. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the syntactic patterns of compliment, types of compliment strategies, compliment topics, and emojis used in compliments on artists' works. Also, the similarities and differences between male and female Instagram users in the use of compliments were explored. The results found that the use of Adjective as a syntactic pattern and the use of religious expression of interjection as a compliment strategy were used more frequently than others. Also, complimenting possessions were the most frequent compliment topic, followed by personality/friendship and ability/performance. The Instagram users employed different types of emojis but the emoji of a smiling face with heart-eyes and red heart were the mostly used one in the compliments to convey enthusiastic feelings of admiration and to express admiration on the artists' works in a non-romantic positive way, respectively. Although the male and female Instagram users showed similarities in constructing compliment, differences appeared in frequency and some compliment strategies that were preferred by a specific gender, such as expressing pride, denying, future comment, giving suggestions, and thanking. These results contribute to understanding cultural expressions of admiration and social interaction dynamics in digital contexts, offering insights into language use in social media communication.

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1. Introduction

Instagram entails photo and video initiated interaction, which attracts written interaction in the comments to formulate a hybrid of spoken and written language. It has become one of the pioneering social media platforms for sharing photos and videos with others. It is known for compliments on appearance, possessions, personality/friendship, ability/performance, etc. that are short and have a simple syntactic pattern. Also, it has become central to social interaction among people of different ages, cultural and educational backgrounds, and socio-economic levels which makes it a fertile ground for conducting linguistic studies. On the same line, compliments play a significant role in social interaction, specifically in social media interactions, divulging cultural norms and values which portray the language use and social interaction. Furthermore, Instagram users employ textual features, which include capital letters for entire sentences in some languages and character repetition to indicate the intensity of emotion, resulting in the recreation of paralinguistic characteristics of speech production. The use of emojis, such as smiley faces, hearts, and other symbols that represent different facial expressions successfully tells something about the tone of the interaction. As a result of the various textual features, Instagram allows users to communicate in a variety of ways that resemble face-to-face conversation.

Although much work has been conducted on studying Arabic compliments in face to face communication, online Arabic compliments have received less attention, especially the studies that have focused on analysing either compliments on artists' works or using emojis in compliments. The significance of the present study lies in not only understanding the construction of Arabic compliments with the use of emojis on the artists' works but also assisting content creators, artists, and social media influencers as well as the marketers to understand the patterns of language use employed by social media users, specifically Instagram. Understanding the specific construction of compliments which hold positive reactions to the artists' works might be of critical importance for decision making by artists. Therefore, this study aimed

to understand the construction of online Arabic compliments on the artists' works on Instagram in terms of answering the following questions:

1. What are the syntactic patterns of compliment used by Instagram users on the artists' works in Arabic?
2. What are the strategies of compliment used by Instagram users on the artists' works in Arabic?
3. What are the compliment topics used by Instagram users on the artists' works in Arabic?
4. What are the emojis used by Instagram users on the artists' works in Arabic in their compliments?
5. What are the similarities and differences between male and female Instagram users in the use of compliment on the artists' works in Arabic?

2. Theoretical Background

Speech Act of Compliment

Compliments function as social lubricants of the wheels of social interaction. Austin^[1] drawn attention to the functions performed by utterances as part of interpersonal communication in the theory of speech act. Searle^[2] resented a fuller classification system for speech acts than that of Austin, and classified compliment under the category of "expressives". They refer to "those speech acts by which the speaker shows a state of affairs" to express admiration, pleasure, like, dislikes, etc., not to exchange information (p. 15). Golato^[3] noted that all people tend to give compliments or occasionally receive them, explaining enhanced attention from numerous researchers in different fields and languages. In this regard, an in-depth analysis of compliments and compliment responses is detailed in twelve different languages and six varieties of English^[3]. Nonetheless, complimenting is a complex sociolinguistic skill due to the involvement of speech acts with the dark side, leading to their interpretation as ironic, sarcastic, patronizing, or offensive^[4,5]. In this regard, Holmes^[5] indicated that providing individuals with compliments is a face-threatening act that creates a complimenter's debt, where the recipient feels obliged to return a

compliment. For instance, complimenting an individual as a professional academician may be interpreted as an attempt to forego gender identity or establish an intimate relationship, making the recipient indebted to the speaker^[4]. Therefore, compliments have a specific motive intended or unintended by the speaker but perceived by the recipient. A compliment is a spoken act that explicitly or implicitly praises someone, specifically the person being complimented, for a perceived good, such as a possession, characteristic, or talent, that both the speaker and the listener value^[5]. Manes and Wolfson^[6] confirmed that compliments are formulaic in meaning and forms extended to other people.

Manes^[7] defined compliments as acts similar to a window in society that enables individuals to view critical values in each culture. According to Smadi^[8], complimenting is the most effective technique of expressing solidarity since it acts as a socializing strategy. The idea is portrayed by Kasper and Schmidt^[9] as a specific relationship between a speaker and addressee in which the speaker expresses or implies credit for a positive characteristic, skill, or possession valued by the parties. Searle and Vanderveken^[10] perceived compliments as sentiments for expressing approval of the hearer for something good such as heroic or self-sacrificing behaviour. Compliment focuses on expressing admiration or approval of another person's work, confirming, or maintaining solidarity, and replacing gratitude, greeting, apologetic, or congratulatory acts.

Compliments are sentiments that express positive evaluation in everyday conversation among interlocutors of equal or varying status. In this regard, compliments open conversations or smoothen conversational interaction by supporting solidarity links between interlocutors. Notably, individuals utilize compliments to appreciate qualities such as accomplishments, skills, personal appearance, possessions, etc. Nonetheless, cultural differences significantly influence compliments, their content, and their frequency. Compliments serve different purposes depending on the context of the interactions, such as the occasion and the relationship between the speakers. For instance, they foster strong bonds between the givers and receivers since they elevate the latter. Thus, using compliments in some contexts offer praise and show admiration as opposed to showing solidarity or fostering the exchange of gifts. However, compliments are also used a strategy for accomplishing certain goals as opposed to being

sincere.

According to Bergqvist^[11], appropriateness in language focuses on the ability of speakers to give and respond to compliments, which explicitly or implicitly ascribes qualities mutually appreciated by the speaker and the compliment's addressee. Lewis^[12] noted that the speech act of complimenting in most speech communities is an established politeness strategy. However, giving and responding to compliments is a universal concept across diverse languages and cultures, but compliments' form, frequency, and function and their responses have a significant variance.

Context is a crucial factor in determining interlocutors' comprehension, meanings, and intents. Compliment during an interaction, in this case, requires interlocutors to get things done while maintaining interpersonal bonds. To produce efficient and meaningful communication compliments as derivatives of pragmatics involve grammatical structures, expressions, linguistic aspects, latent psychological skills, and specific human elements^[13]. Furthermore, a healthy and efficient connection necessitates the commitment of discussion participants, the consideration of social and cultural standards, and the expression of society and language conventions. The communicative competence model articulates compliments by outlining required knowledge and skills for effective communication, including sociolinguistic competence, grammatical competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence. In addition, Language is influenced by a range of socio-cultural factors: situation-specific contextual factors, such as the relationship between participants, and factors that are related to participants' identities and their different social and cultural membership in groups. According to^[14], cultures function as a source of cultural meanings. Wierzbicka^[15] defines the meaning of culture as "ways of living, speaking, thinking and feeling widely shared in a particular society" (p. 580). They appear in the co-occurring regularities through talk as Spencer-Oatey^[16] explains "found in a wide range of elements, including basic assumptions, fundamental values, deep-seated orientations to life, attitudes, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioural conventions" (p. 4). However, the formulation of effective compliments is a combination of syntax, morphology, phonology, and phonetics that enable people to understand and generate a language^[17]. Compliments are used by speakers towards different topics. Therefore, Holmes^[5, 18] classified the com-

pliment topics into five categories:

- (1) Appearance refers to compliments that are related to personal physical attributes.
- (2) Ability/performance refers to compliments that are related to commendable behavior or a specific positive performance, ability, skill, etc.
- (3) Possessions refer to compliments that are related to what someone owns.
- (4) Personality/friendship refers to compliments that are related to character qualities.

Other.

Compliments are constructed in different types of syntactic patterns. Wolfson^[19] classified the syntactic patterns into nine categorizations:

- (1) NP (is/looks) (really) ADJ (e.g., Your sweater is really nice.)
- (2) I (really) (like/love) NP (e.g., I like your car.)
- (3) PRO is (really) (a) ADJ. NP (e.g., That is a good question.)
- (4) You V. (a) (really) ADJ. NP (e.g., You did a great job.)
- (5) You V. NP. (really) ADV (e.g., You sang that song really well.)
- (6) You have (a) (really) ADJ. NP (e.g., You have a beautiful living room.)
- (7) What (a) ADJ. NP! (e.g., What a pretty skirt!)
- (8) ADJ. NP! (e.g., Good shot!)
- (9) Isn't NP. ADJ! (e.g., Isn't that ring pretty!)

3. Literature Review

3.1. Compliments in Arabic in Face to Face Communication

Studying compliments have been investigated widely in face to face communication in many Arabic dialects. For example, it was found that males and females have different uses of compliments: females tend to give and receive compliments more than their male counterparts. Qanbar^[20] highlighted that females are complimented more often than males in English and Yemeni contexts. Although Al-Ahmad^[21] did not evaluate the frequency of compliments and compliment responses between females and males, he acknowledged that both genders use compliments to express respect and appreciation besides reinforcing social solidarity when there is variance in social status in Jordanian Arabic. According to

Sallo^[22], Iraqi men used compliments more and exaggerated their views in business contexts, while sincerity in female compliments was compared to male compliments. In this regard, women complimented freely while men were not allowed to compliment women due to social conventions and the role of an intimate or formal relationship between the complimentor and the recipient. Migdadi^[23] reported that Saudi women accept the compliment paid to them in the majority of the compliment responses where the compliment recipient negotiates or offers solidarity with the complimentor.

Giving and responding to compliments is a cultural practice that conveys the cultural values of the speakers when approving of others' endeavours. Nelson et al.^[24] argued that compliments among American and Egyptian speakers show extensive deployment of adjectives, with Americans preferring shorter forms of compliments compared to Egyptians. The frequency of compliments significantly differs across cultures, where Western speakers exhibit an elevated level of compliment usage compared to Asian cultures^[25].

Compliments and compliment responses have diverse functions across cultures. For instance, Al-Ahmad^[21] noted that they are responsible for maintaining solidarity between the complimentor and the responder while greasing the social wheels in Jordanian Arabic. Compliments are positive politeness strategies for decreasing the danger of face threatening act (FTA) within the context of positive and negative politeness by anointing the responder's face attending to the interests of the responder^[26]. Moreover, compliments and compliment responses are effective tools for softening criticisms in social communication. However, Al-Ahmad^[21] posited that compliments and compliment responses constitute FTA in some cultures by representing the complimentor's desire to take something from the responder.

Al-Ahmad^[21] noted that a Jordanian woman who meets a friend may compliment "What a beautiful watch!" who responds, "It is presented to you" without intending to give the complimentor the object. In this regard, compliment responses in Arabic are more complex than English, requiring the responder to simply state, "Thank you." In this regard, the popular compliment responses in Arabic express acceptance through appreciation of tokens, acceptance of comments, and upgrading of praise or non-acceptance through reassignment or return. Arabic speakers also exhibit non-agreement with

compliments by disagreeing, scaling, questioning, failing to acknowledge, or requesting interpretation. Nonetheless, the prevalent use of compliment in Jordanian Arabic has induced pragmatic drift. For example, *māshā 'allāh* is a compliment that can be used to indicate prayer, joy, modesty, sarcasm, and a conversational backchannel^[27].

Migdadi^[28] argued that Jordanian people who share gender, age, or level of traditionalism tend to frequently compliment than persons with variances in any of these categories. Females and young people regularly utilize compliments on appearance, exclamatory syntactic patterns, explicit compliments, and compliment plus explanation. Women prefer question and account compliments while men value blessings and disagreements, with cross-sex complimenting being rare due to cultural restrictions. However, Jordanian Arabic does not involve examples of rejecting compliments because it is considered a shameful act to reject the solidarity reflected in the compliment.

Communities have distinct approaches to the production and interpretation of linguistic behaviour. Alsallal et al.^[29] indicated that each culture develops routinized utterances for conducting different speech functions governed by sociolinguistic constraints in dictating what speakers should say to whom and under what circumstance. In Jordanian Arabic, Alsallal et al.^[29] gender influences compliment responses towards different social situations, where males practice compliment responses more than females who express non-agreement compliment responses. Alsallal et al.^[29] stressed that males are more active and responsive to different social situations while the speech act of females is enriched with abundant expressions and a strong tone. Therefore, gender and social distance determine the compliment response in social situations, where females are highly reluctant to compliment agreement responses despite giving compliment agreement responses in non-social distance situations.

Arabic compliments mainly emerge from religious expressions, which are common in all Arab countries. However, Alqarni^[30] noted that lifestyles in Arab countries differ, resulting in variances in compliments and compliment responses. For instance, he found that Saudis prevalently utilize conservative and religion-based social utterances compared to nationals of other Arab countries. In this regard, formulation of compliments entails unbound semantic formulas that give expressions that work autonomously as com-

pliments or bound semantic formulas that generate expressions requiring an unbound semantic formula to work as a compliment. Alqarni^[30] indicates that unbound semantic formulas involve references to the future, explanations, contrasts, advice, or requests rather than statements with positive semantic carriers. Subsequently, Alqarni^[30] associated compliment and compliment responses in Arabic with establishing social solidarity, strengthening social ties, making others feel comfortable and pleased, conveying affective meaning, consolidating social relations, fulfilling robust informative purposes, yielding pragmatic success, and showing respect, deference, or intimacy. Al Amro^[31] examined the compliment and compliment responses of Najdi Saudi Arabic speakers. The results found that Najdi compliment is formulaic because of the limited number of syntactic patterns and adjectives, which are accepted implicitly by speakers. Although compliments were used frequently among the same gender, age, and social relationship of interlocutors, they differed in on the compliment topics and the length of compliments. For example, male speakers focused on personality and performance whereas female speakers focused on appearance. The female speakers' compliments are lengthier than male speakers' compliments.

Arabic lexical items vary in frequencies, with adjectives being the most common parts of speech. Sallo^[22] pinpointed that the most common adjective in Iraqi Arabic includes good mood, terrific, beautiful, luxurious, fantastic, delicious, excellent, respectable, polite, lovely, and clever, which are popular among women. In this regard, compliments in Iraqi Arabic should possess positive meanings and cultural evaluation. Nonetheless, illocutionary force is based on the intonation, and the way people utter statements express whether they are positive or negative, depending on the attitude of the complimenter and the purposed intention to compliment, criticize, make an irony, or satirize a situation or an individual^[22]. In this regard, El-Dakhs and Ahmed^[32] confirmed that the use of compliments varies across Arabic cultures as they indicated in their study about Alexandrian and Najdi Arabic.

Compliment Responses are verbal acknowledgments from the recipient of a compliment to express successful hearing and reaction. Hussein^[33] reported that people from the city of Mosul in North Iraq mainly express appreciation tokens and compliment return in their compliment responses.

In this regard, the formulaic expressions in Mosul illustrate the considerable influence of Islam on the local communities. Hussein^[33] noted that most compliment responses are religious, for instance, *أَلله يَخْلِيكَ* ‘may Allah keep you safe’ and *الله بِيكَ بِيَارَك* ‘may Allah bless you’; *تسريحتك حلوة* ‘your haircut is nice’ and *أَلله بِيَارَك بِيكَ* ‘May Allah bless you’; *كيف الحال؟* ‘How are you?’ and *أَلحمد الله* ‘Allah blessing’. Meanwhile, Muslims associate evil with bringing harm to people, necessitating invocation of Allah, for instance, *ما شاء الله* ‘Allah willing’. Some people exhibit compliment acceptance with statements, such as *فعلا* ‘yes indeed’ and *صحيح* ‘right’, or praise upgrade, including *أعرف نفسي* / *أنا* ‘I know myself’ and *أنا حلوة دائما* ‘I am always beautiful’. Therefore, most compliment responses in Mosul Arabic entail religious influence.

Utilizing a language to communicate with people is a complex process that demands linguistic and pragmatic competence. Nonetheless, situations and the interlocutor influenced by sociocultural norms and constraints determine a speaker’s choice of language. Mahmood and Ali^[34] indicated that effective communication relies on the use of compliments to create or maintain rapport. In this regard, men and women from Baghdad use compliments in the same frequency, but women value appearance as a compliment topic while ability and skill are popular with men. Mahmood and Ali^[34] noted that people from Baghdad compliment each other to strengthen relationships, generate positive feelings, express admiration, and give the compliment back. Meanwhile, compliments in Arab societies are confined to a specific gender, meaning that a woman is less likely to accept a compliment from a man who is not a family member or a close friend^[34]. In this context, compliments occur within same-gender friends rather than with opposite-gender friends.

In Yemeni society, compliments follow a strict rule. In this regard, 65.75 percent of compliments have identifiable syntactic patterns while 55 percent contain adjectives, with fixed adjectives accounting for two-thirds of the total^[20]. Compliments’ underlying formulaic structure allows them to strengthen bonds and maintain relationships. Qanbar^[20] reported that 60% of compliments involve females who mainly compliment appearance and personal traits while noting that in a corpus of four hundred compliments, the popular adjectives include sweet, wonderful, moon-like, beauti-

ful, kind, handsome, respectable, excellent, intelligent, and amazing. The complimentors mainly utilize adjectives to express admiration through proverbs, ritual phrases, similes, and metaphors.

Accepting compliments is a noticeable trend in Algerians that distinguishes it from different colloquial Arabic varieties. Nouichi and Beghoul^[35] noted that popular compliments from the east of the country assume supplications to God, such as may God reward you or may God grant you a long life, which commands acceptance. Dendenne^[36] indicated that gender-pairing significantly affects the formulation of compliment response; for instance, Algerians tend to accept compliments from females rather than males in most circumstances. Additionally, compliment acceptance is frequent in higher/equal status interlocutors. Algerian Arabic compliments involve people of the same gender, age, and social status. Nonetheless, all genders compliment traits and ethics besides exhibiting appreciation and returning. As a result, on-command compliments and repeated compliments are common in Algerian Arabic, establishing social exchange resources, multi-turn speech activities, and discursive innovation.

Culture influences language because languages are used in their sociocultural context, while religion influences language’s actual use by shaping the communicative behaviour of interlocutors. Tobbi^[37] indicated that Algerians are Muslims without an established clerical system like Christians, resulting in frequent blessings, such as may God preserve you, for different communicative purposes. Additionally, Algerian Arabic involves prevalent religious responses to compliments, such as “These nice blessings are all I need,” in response to sneezing, and “May God grant you health” as thanking speech act. Tobbi^[37] noted that Algerians use a variety of religious expressions to achieve compliment acts and defuse the negative effect of the evil eye. Nonetheless, inappropriately conveyed compliments are tokens of bad will to the complimentees from complimentors, leading to their association with envy^[37]. Therefore, complimentors in Algeria tend to mention God’s name to ward off the evil eye by invoking the performativity of religious expressions.

Appropriate compliments are crucial communicative competence that differs across cultures. Abdel-Hameed^[38] realized that popular compliments among Egyptian Arabic teachers are inclusive of a praying component or reference to

God. In this regard, users of Egyptian Arabic tend to utilize declarative and exclamatory compliments to convey precision, exaggeration, payback, misconceptions, self-centrism, and preaching^[38]. The appropriate compliments and compliment responses in Egyptian Arabic are genuine and extended to people who deserve them, specific and unique, involve acknowledging others' efforts, and describe the effect something has on the complimenter. Abdel-Hameed^[38] posited that using descriptive or emotional language is highly essential while ensuring compliments do not make other people feel worse about themselves. Although complimentors pause after their statement to gauge the effect, they should not expect something back from recipients. In this context, compliments and compliment responses are culturally specific.

Alsager^[39] conducted a multimodal analysis to identify the kinds of evaluative expressions and the non-verbal language that accompany the evaluation in Arabs Got Talent show. The results showed that judges used different types of adjectives, such as comparative, attributive, and predictive adjectives, alongside with adverbs, verbs, and nouns. The previous evaluative expressions were employed with various iconic, metaphoric, and deictic gestures to intensify the meaning of evaluative expressions which reflect the use of compliment in a formal context.

3.2. Compliments on Social Media

Social networks are popular communication channels all over the world that allow users to communicate, interact, self-present, and share ideas or personal experiences^[40]. In this context, users of social networks interact through a medium that supports personal and mass communications. The computer-mediated communication fosters interaction beyond borders. However, social media lacks a voice, facial expressions, and non-verbal gestures, which rarely limit individuals, as illustrated by the increasing number of social networks emerging worldwide. Therefore, emojis were created to convey the absence of features in language.

Online activities are crucial components of modern lifestyles due to numerous people directly contacting the online landscape for diverse purposes, including research, gaming, and shopping. Ghosheh^[41] indicated that internet communication is a significant tool for everyday use, where individuals utilize different online landscapes to converse with each other. In this regard, interactions between people

who were previously involved in face-to-face settings or phones can occur in virtual settings. Facebook is one of the online landscapes that is popular with virtual communication. Ghosheh^[41] noted that social network sites, such as Facebook, increasingly allow people to communicate and socialize with close distance individuals like family and friends, besides people who do not share closeness in geographic location. In this context, Facebook facilitates communication, interaction, and socialization with public figures, leading to distinct compliment and compliment responses. Ghosheh^[41] in this analysis of syntactic and lexical patterns of Facebook compliments in English and Arabic and the examination of the influence of addressing a public figure on the patterns, found that they do not have a significant effect on the compliment patterns.

The emergence of social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, is revolutionizing interactions between associates and friends due to the increasing number of supportive comments and likes. Mohammed and Al-Rickaby^[42] indicated that social media enable people to stay connected with friends and associates besides communicating happenings in personal life. For instance, a friend may respond to a post of a baby's picture "How lovely!!!" or "Looks fantastic!" to a car. In this regard, pictures and diaries posted on social media generate a wide range of responses and compliments with diverse responses^[42]. Hence, social media users are highly creative in formulating compliments and compliments responses due to the inclusion or use of diverse types of online communication figures and apparatus. Nonetheless, the compliments align with the same category as those noted in face-to-face communications and are formulaic. Meanwhile, the study by Mohammed and Al-Rickaby^[42] on Iraqi Facebook users' behaviour when responding to compliments aims at expanding the latitude of pragmatic studies and speech act studies from face-to-face interaction to the cyberspace interaction. The findings illustrate that most male complimentees value appreciation strategy in their acceptance strategy while female complimentees endear returning the compliment. However, both male and female complimentees prioritize external modifiers when modifying the compliment responses.

The options available to Facebook users influence how complimentees respond to compliments. Ogiermann and Blitvich^[43] noted that Facebook communication is com-

pelled by two motivational forces, where individuals use the social media site to (i) institute and progress social relationships besides (ii) utilizing the platform for self-representation. Mohammed and Al-Rickaby^[42] posited that posting photos on Facebook sometimes function as summon for acknowledging presence or membership, where a response is interpreted as an affirmation of the relationship. Thus, offering compliments or “likes” reaffirms the relationship while enhancing it. In this regard, Facebook provides some strategies that are not available in face-to-face interactions, bringing in different responding systems. For instance, hyper-communication tools on Facebook provide novel and inventive compliment responses strategies. Subsequently, Facebook users utilize non-verbal response strategies, such as emoticons and LIKEs, as a compliment response. However, the social media platform has limited evasion and rejection strategies.

Mahzari^[44] analyzed 1721 Facebook comments of congratulations to identify the verbal and paralinguistic cues used by Saudi Facebook users. The results found that using praise was the third most frequent strategy (498: 13.02%) after the following expressions “congratulations” (1453: 37.98%) and “offer of good wishes” (1262: 32.98%). Also, he found that 42 emojis were utilized in the Facebook comments and were categorized into 7 functions. Expressing praise was one of them, and it was employed using emojis, such as thumbs up, applause, perfect, victory hand, flexed biceps, oncoming fist, and hundred points. Finally, using “like” as an emoji reaction to the posts was the most frequent one (1487: 98%), followed by “comment and like” (1031: 31.88%) and “only comment” (660: 20.41%).

Facebook is a social networking site that allows users to share their thoughts, facts, and feelings by posting or commenting on other people’s postings. Omar^[45] investigated the similarities and differences between Facebook compliments in English and Arabic on lovely expressions. Because the languages are neither culturally nor genetically similar, Arab complimentors are more likely to exaggerate than English speakers in this aspect. Omar^[45] noted that Facebook compliments in English and Arabic involve different signs, financial expressions, complimentary religious expressions, and indirect praise. However, Arabic values teknonyms, grammatical constructions with superlative degrees succeeded by honorific expressions to pinpoint a situation, endearment constructed with metaphor, metonymy, or

hyperbole, some request for self-introduction, and transliteration among individuals speaking English or influenced by English. In contrast, English compliments on Facebook feature abbreviation, flashback, left-handed compliment, and litanies and supplication to the addressee.

Omar^[45] identified three categories of compliments used in English, verbal, non-verbal, and non/verbal on Facebook. In this study, the researcher used classifications which were verbal with abbreviations, metonymy, flashback, left-handed compliment, simile, religiosity, financial term, hyperbole, litotes, diminution, or endearment. The non-verbal compliments are realized with icons or emojis of activities, such as kneeling, dancing, or shrilling^[45]. Meanwhile, the amalgamation of verbal and nonverbal created by words, which is articulated as a combination of the text of feelings expressions, and litter repetitions in comments, such as *واو* ‘wow’ and *جدل* ‘very’. Although the Arabic language uses similar categorization to English, the speakers constantly take faces consciously and unconsciously into consideration in their interactions^[45].

Mahzari^[46] analyzed 1258 Facebook comments on the occasions of happy news to identify the address terms used by Saudis on Facebook. He found ten types of address terms that were used in a frequency of 1305 and “terms of endearment” was the second most frequent one (309: 24%), which was classified into four types. Praise attributes were one of them that were used 62 (20%), such as prince, genius, handsome, hero, etc. as a compliment.

Compliment responses in English and other languages entail acceptance and outright rejection in both extremes. Placencia et al.^[47] highlighted that rejecting a compliment in a face-to-face interaction is rude while accepting it wholeheartedly seems arrogant. Nonetheless, Internet interactions entail asynchronous and polylogical communication besides allowing complete ignoring of compliments. In this regard, Placencia et al.^[47] indicated that Facebook features distinct compliments and compliment responses, such as the use of irony as a form of rejection. Also, social media users can exhibit conflicting response strategies to express modesty and avoid offending the complimentor.

Placencia et al.^[47] posited that Facebook users display a high level (30%) of non-response besides providing responses that naturally fall into at least two categories. Additionally, Facebook users exhibit several methods of accepting

compliments. Placencia et al.^[47] indicated that individuals commonly say ‘thanks’ followed by ‘Like’ or agree with compliments, downgrade compliments, return compliments, or respond to compliments with an emoticon. However, compliment and compliment responses on Facebook rely on the number of compliments received, the quality of compliments received, and where the compliment occurs.

The rapid advancement in technology is ensuring the world is increasingly globalizing. In this regard, Twitter is a popular platform utilized by numerous celebrities worldwide to establish a good rapport with fans and followers. Yusof and Hoon^[48] examined the differences in compliments and compliment response tactics across gender among Malaysian celebrities on Twitter to determine the functions, topics, and trends and strategies of compliment responses. Yusof and Hoon^[48] noted that celebrities who are on Twitter continuously interact with fans while updating them on the latest activity they were involved in. In this context, Twitter is quite common among Malaysian celebrities for interacting with fans. Yusof and Hoon^[48] reported that most celebrities receive numerous compliments on their skills, appearance, and performance. Therefore, celebrities should be tactful in accepting compliments to foster cordial rapport with fans. Additionally, celebrities should not be arrogant in presenting themselves as good role models to the public when accepting compliments. Yusof and Hoon^[48] posited that women celebrities value compliments on appearance while men prefer to compliment regarding possession. Arguably, gender influences compliments and compliment responses on Twitter, chiefly among Malaysian celebrities.

In the political realm, there is a distinction between complimenting actions and praise. Compliments between Spanish politicians and residents on Twitter, for example, show the explicit usage of compliments combined with the uncommon use of emojis. The addition of various speech acts, such as requests or advice, diminishes the beneficial functions of compliments in this regard. Meanwhile, according to Jia and An^[49], foreign leaders are less likely to provide compliments and praise on Twitter due to concerns about “safe speech.” Politicians, on the other hand, use diplomatic language to express a universal purpose at the interpersonal, national, and international levels. As a result, popular complimenting behaviour in political circumstances is very formulaic and provides political parties and states with a

face-enhancing instrument.

Specific equations are used in compliments and self-praise about health and sports. Jia and An^[49] investigated compliments and self-praise in two online peer-to-peer smoking cessation forums, finding that self-praise is acceptable and welcomed in the forums due to the groups’ understanding of the common struggle to quit smoking. However, on professional e-health websites, solidarity is unusual or non-existent in addition to the popular speech acts displayed in the forums^[49]. In this regard, in professional contexts, Western modesty norms are quite important. Polish praises, on the other hand, are common on online discussion forums and message boards, indicating the utility of applying a corpus linguistic approach to social media data. As a result, online compliments on beauty and accomplishments are common, assisting in the expression of solidarity and the formation of rapport. Even though Polish compliments are largely formulaic, they do contain a variety of syntactic structures and intensifiers^[49]. Nonetheless, the corpus linguistic technique is only effective for extracting direct, text-based praises, leaving other compliment types unaffected.

When it comes to cricket commentary, compliments are mostly fleeting, especially when they include commentator-reader dialogue rather than readers. Nonformulaic compliments, according to Jia and An^[49], primarily engage the audience by supplementing the genre with unique and captivating aspects. Other elements of congratulatory tweets addressed to Spanish sportsmen are shaped by the semiotic affordances of Twitter. Congratulatory tweets from Spanish athletes are clear, brief, and non-formulaic in this sense^[49]. Furthermore, when compared to straight brags, humblebragging messages or self-praise acts adjusted with modesty and humility with negative comments are less honest and authentic^[49]. As a result, the prevalence of phatic communication, as well as the availability of a variety of tools such as online polylogues, perceived attitudes, detailed examinations of contextual constraints, use of a large corpus, blurring of speaker and hearer, and the availability of a large corpus, show that complimenting behaviour articulates face-enhancing strategies.

3.3. Compliments on Instagram

Few studies investigated the use of compliment on Instagram. For instance, Indah and Rifana^[50] evaluated the patterns of compliments and their responses to skill or abil-

ity used on Instagram to identify the complimenting pattern of Instagram users and how they respond to compliment in the online context. Hybrid communication is prevalent on social sites due to the use of informal language similar to other online environments. Indah and Rifana^[50] reported that complimenting on Instagram mainly involves different syntactical forms and the prevalent use of verbs and adjectives. However, adjectives are more popular than verbs with the use of intensifiers, emoticons, and the addition of extra characters representing enhanced emphasis. Compliments resemble face-to-face compliments in US English, but abbreviated communication is common.

Placencia^[51] examined a corpus of compliment and compliment responses given by Ecuadorian teenage girls on Instagram. The results found similarities with previous studies about Spanish and English compliment behaviour and explored more creativity or less formulacity in comparison with studies on (Ecuadorian) Spanish. In addition, new formulas were used to be suited for the mode of computer mediated communication.

Placencia and Powell^[52] examined compliment responses by a group of Ecuadorian teenage girls on Instagram. Although the responses are short, they are remarkably complex due to the text and emojis they include. The responses were categorized based on^[5] taxonomy. The results showed that there is a preference for accepting compliments given that were used to express solidarity and show modesty.

The assessment of the relationship between construction grammar and genre in Danish and US department stores' Instagram strategies using multimodal analysis that illustrates the prevalent use of conventions, exemplars, and functional knowledge across experts and non-experts^[53]. Construction grammar considers linguistic knowledge as a marsh-mallow of form-meaning pairs, including linguistic building blocks, state generalizations, and schemata, which create new linguistic constructs. Meanwhile, some structures on Instagram are available as fully specified constructs and derivable that emphasize a usage-based model of a language^[53]. In this regard, Instagram posts occasionally constitute stable configurations of multimodal choices illustrating that they are discourse-grammatical constructions and, consequently, genre may be part of grammar. The considerable variation in the realization of Instagram posts supports the establishment of practices, where expert constructions encode idioms

according to the usage-based model. As a result of their discourse-grammatical formulations, Instagram posts are stable combinations of multimodal options.

The clash between modesty and agreement in face-to-face conversation is resolved through nonverbal means, such as a smile, shrug, or other explanatory gestures. In this regard, the semiotic system provides a powerful way of interpreting language behaviour as a choice, meaning that language use is a process of making meanings by choosing. Thus, what someone writes or says gets meaning by being seen rather than the background of what could have been meant^[54]. In this regard, Instagram users have limited choices on compliments, including accepting using the formula "thanks" or employing redundant and reduplicating oralization marks. Nonetheless, users utilize a combination of strategies to express the distinctiveness of social media communication from a face-to-face conversation.

Construction of Arabic compliment use with emojis in the artistic context as a reflection of the growing usage levels by society members received less attention on Instagram. Therefore, the present research tackles the syntactic patterns of compliments, compliment strategies, compliment topic, emoji use, and gender differences on the artists' works which are posted on Instagram. More critically, the prevalence of such social media websites in the Arab countries underscore the need for exploring the use of language in these platforms.

4. Methodology

4.1. Data Collection

The present study sought to explore how compliments directed to the artists' works as posted in Instagram comments considering the different features of such comments, using qualitative and quantitative analysis to gain deep understanding of the construction of Arabic compliment. The researchers collected 600 compliments from six well-known artist accounts for 5 male artists and 1 female artist. The compliments were posted by 600 followers: 390 females and 210 males. The researchers relied on the name of the complimenting person to identify his/her gender and to classify the comments as such. The number of words in the compliments include 1924 words with an average 3.20 words per user posted. The artists posted four videos of their pictures, paintings, or drawings besides 16 pictures of their drawings.

These accounts were chosen because they had a significant number of followers ranging from 2460 to 211,000 followers. The posts received a number of likes between 116 and 1578 at the time of data collection that was in January and February 2022. Also, the posts were chosen because they received more compliments than other posts that either received less or none responses from the followers. In addition, the selected accounts belong to individuals with unique hand drawing and painting styles or having a studio art that received interactions and reactions among their followers. Moreover, the account holders who are artists are from different Arabic countries; therefore, the compliments are not specific to an Arabic country. The comments of compliments were copied and pasted into an excel sheet for analysis. The names of Instagram users either the names of complimentors or the complimentees were anonymized for privacy purposes. The examples of compliments were used without changing in the spellings and grammar to reflect the naturalistic data used in the context of Instagram.

4.2. Data Analysis

The researchers adapted Wolfson's^[19] categorization of syntactic patterns. Some modifications were added to accommodate the nature of Arabic syntactic patterns in terms of Arabic word order until we identified 11 syntactic patterns. Some compliments could not be analysed in terms of syntactic patterns because they were compliment strategies, such as religious expression of interjection, using prayers, encouragement, etc. several rounds were conducted to code the strategies until we agreed upon 15 compliment strategies and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Also, Holmes' [5, 18] classification was adapted in categorizing the compliment topics. The names of emojis, which were used in the compliments, were retrieved from the website of Emojipedia to resemble the data until we identified 73 types of emojis. Finally, the Microsoft Excel was used for coding the data and extracting the frequency.

5. Results

This section shows the results of analysis for the construction of Arabic compliments on the artists' works on Instagram in four subsections. The first one displays the

syntactic patterns used by the Instagram users in their compliments. The second one illustrates the compliment strategies or expressions that accompany the previous parts of compliment speech. The third one explains the topics that are complimented by the Instagram users. The fourth one shows the types of emojis used in the compliments. Finally, gender differences are discussed in each sub-section.

5.1. The Syntactic Patterns of Compliment

The Instagram users employed 11 syntactic patterns that were used 568 times in the compliments (see **Figure 1**). All of them were used by male and female users; however, they differed in frequency across the users. Overall, the female users utilized more syntactic patterns (377) than the male users (191 times) in the compliments. All the syntactic patterns were used by the female users more than the male users, except the pattern of ADJ ADV that was used by males (14 times) than females (10 times). Also, both genders used two syntactic patterns equally, such as ADJ NP (13 times) and (PRO)/NP ADJ ADV (3 times).

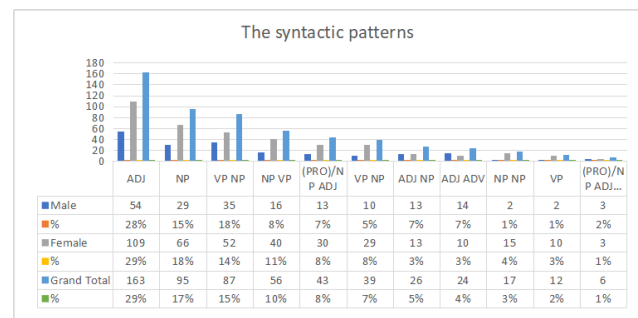


Figure 1. The frequency of syntactic patterns in the compliment of Instagram Users in Arabic.

According to **Figure 1**, the use of ADJ was the most frequent syntactic pattern among the 11 patterns that was used 163 (29%) in the comments (see **Tables A1 and A2**). The second most frequent syntactic pattern was NP (95 times: 17%), followed by VP NP (87 times: 15%), NP VP (56 times: 10%), and (PRO)/NP ADJ (43 times: 8%). The syntactic pattern of VP NP was used 39 times (7%), followed by ADJ NP (26 times: 5%) and ADJ ADV (24 times: 4%). Other patterns were used less frequently, such as NP NP (17 times: 3%), VP (12 times: 2%), and (PRO)/NP ADJ ADV (6 times: 1%).

5.2. The Strategies of Compliment

The Instagram users utilized 15 compliment strategies that were used 257 times in the comments (see **Figure 2**). It is obvious that there was a preference in using more syntactic patterns as shown in **Figure 1** than using compliment strategies in the comments on the artists' works. Also, it was found that the female users employed more compliment strategies (157 times) than the male users (100 times). All the compliment strategies were used by the male and female users, except 'expressing pride', 'denying', 'giving suggestions', and 'thanking' that were only used by females. In contrast, 'future comment' was only used by males that is 2 times. Other compliment strategies were used equally between males and females, such as 'expressing feelings' (2 times) and 'using proverbs' (2 times).

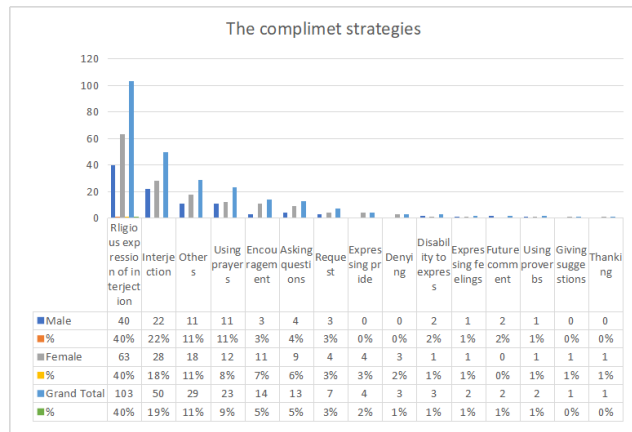


Figure 2. The frequency of compliment strategies in the compliment of Instagram Users in Arabic.

According to **Figure 2**, the use of religious expression of interjection was the most frequent strategy (103 times: 40%). The second most frequent strategy was interjection (50 times: 19%), followed by others (29 times: 11%), and using prayers (23 times: 9%). Encouragement was used 14 times (50%), followed by asking questions (13 times: 5%), request (7 times: 3%), and expressing pride (4 times: 2%). Two strategies were used equally, such as 'denying' and 'disability to express' (3 times: 1%). Also, three strategies were used with the same frequency, such as 'expressing feelings', 'future comment', and 'using proverbs' (2 times: 1%). Finally, two strategies were used only once, such as 'giving suggestions' and 'expressing thanks'.

5.3. The Compliment Topics

The Instagram users complimented three topics: possessions, personality/friendship, and ability/performance. They received 584 compliments in the comments from the Instagram users (see **Figure 3**).

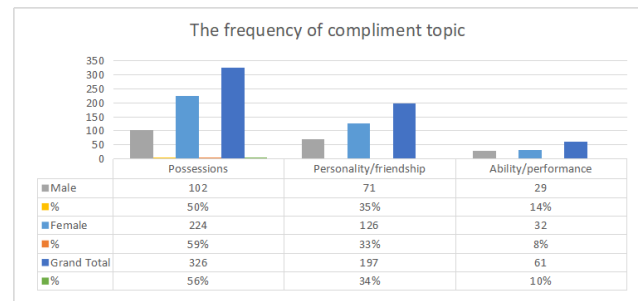


Figure 3. The frequency of compliment topics in the compliment of Instagram Users in Arabic.

However, possessions were the most frequent compliment topic (326 times: 56%), followed by personality/friendship (197 times: 34%) and ability/performance (61 times: 10%). The female users used more compliment topics (382) than the male users (202) in all the topics, with a small difference in ability/performance that is 32 times for females and 29 times from males.

5.4. The Use of Emojis in Compliment

The Instagram users employed 73 types of emojis in their comments of compliments which were used 685 times. The female users employed more emojis (475 times) than male users (210 times). However, **Figure 4** shows the emojis that were used 10 times and more by the users. It is obvious that all emojis were used more frequently by females than males, except the emoji of Sparkles that was only used by females. The emoji of a Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes (😍) was the most frequent one (120: 18%), followed by Red Heart (❤️) (101: 15%), Clapping Hands (👏) (94: 14%), and Fire (🔥) (92: 13%). The rest of emojis were used but less than 10%.

The emojis were used for different meanings and functions, but the best interpretation can be as following. The emoji of a Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes was used to convey enthusiastic feelings of admiration towards the artist's work (see Example 1).

Example 1

For the emoji of a Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes 😍
 ماشاء الله جميله حبيبتها 🌟🌟🌟

masha'Allah jamīlah ḥabbaytaha 🌟🌟🌟 😍
 Allah willing, it is beautiful, and I love it 🌟🌟🌟 😍

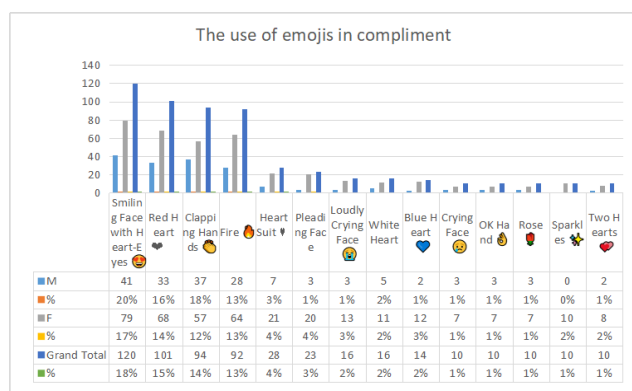


Figure 4. The frequency of emojis in the compliment of Instagram Users in Arabic.

The Red Heart emoji, the other types of heart emoji,

and Rose were used to express admiration in a non-romantic positive sentiment (see Examples 2–7).

The emoji of Clapping Hands, Ok Hand, and Sparkles were used to express approval and encouraging the artist about his/her work (see Examples 8–10).

The emoji of a Fire was used as a metaphorical expression to signify that the artist's work is wonderful and perfect (see Example 11).

The emoji of a Pleading Face, Loudly Crying Face, and Crying Face, were employed by the users to express their sad feelings that could be triggered by the meaning that the artists wants to deliver in drawings and paintings (Examples 12–14).

Example 2

For the emoji of a Red Heart

بسم الله ماشاء الله ربنا يباركك فيها فنانة ❤️❤️❤️
 bismillāh masha'Allah rabbanā yibāriklak fihā fannānah ❤️❤️❤️
 In the name of Allah, may Allah bless you with it. You are an artist,
 Allah willing ❤️❤️❤️

Example 3

For the emoji of a Heart Suit

جميلة جدا ♥♥
 jamīlah jiddan ♥♥
 It is very beautiful ♥♥

Example 4

For the emoji of a White Heart

مشاء الله، إبداع
 masha'Allah 'ibdā' (White Heart emoji (not appeared in the word file))
 Allah willing, it is an innovation (White Heart emoji (not appeared in the word file))

Example 5

For the emoji of a Blue Heart

حبيبت ♥️
 ḥabbayt ♥️
 I love it ♥️

Example 6

For the emoji of Two Hearts

مشاء الله ابداع
 masha'Allah 'ibdā' (Two Hearts emoji (not appeared in the word file))
 Allah willing, it is an innovation (Two Hearts emoji (not appeared in the word file))

Example 7

For the emoji of a Rose

حلوة
 ḥilwah
 Nice

The emojis were used in different positions, such as the beginning, middle, and end of compliment; however, they were used mostly at the end of compliment. According to **Figure 5**, the Instagram users used some of the emojis more repetitively than others as intensification, as shown in most of the previous examples, in their comments of compliments.

The emojis were used repetitively 1230 times. The female users used some emojis more repetitively (859 times) than male users (371 times). A number of 38 types of emojis out of 73 emojis were used more than one time. However, **Figure 5** shows only the emojis that was repetitively used 10 times and more by the users.

Example 8

For the emoji of Clapping Hands

ماشاء الله 🙌
masha'Allah 🙌
Allah willing 🙌

Example 9

For the emoji of an OK Hand

فنان 🤲
fannān 🤲
An artist 🤲

Example 10

For the emoji of Sparkles

رائعة ماشاء الله ✨
rā'i'ah masha'Allah ✨
Wonderful Allah willing ✨

Example 11

For the emoji of a Fire

ماشاء الله 🔥
masha'Allah 🔥
Allah willing 🔥

Example 12

For the emoji of a Pleading Face

احنا فخورين فيك 😊❤️ استمري قلبي..
'ihnā fakhūrīn fīk (pleading face emoji (not appeared in the word file))
😊❤️'istamirrī qalbī..
We are proud of you (Pleading Face emoji (not appeared in the word file))
😊❤️continue my sweet heart.

Example 13

For the emoji of a Loudly Crying Face

ابداع ي قلبي 🤩❤️
'ibdā' yā qalbī 🤩❤️
It is an innovation 🤩❤️

Example 14

For the emoji of a Crying Face

حبكي من الجمال 😭
habki min aljamāl 😭
I will cry from the beauty 😭

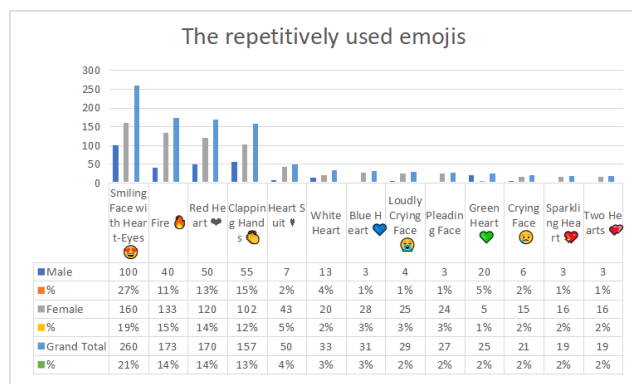


Figure 5. The frequency of emojis used repetitively in the compliment of Instagram Users in Arabic.

It was observed that all emojis were used by females more than males, except the emoji of a Green Heart (💚). It was used 20 times (5%) by males whereas it was used only 5 times (1%) by females. The emoji of a Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes (😊) was the most frequent one (260:21%) in terms of repetition. The emoji of a Fire (🔥) was the second most frequent one (173:14%) although it was the fourth one

in terms of frequency as shown in **Figure 4**. The third most frequent emoji was Red Heart (❤️) (170: 14%), followed by Clapping Hands (🙌) (157:13%). The rest of emojis were repetitively used, but less than 10%.

6. Discussion

Instagram users have distinct syntactic patterns when complimenting the works of artists. In this study, the compliments entailed ADJ, NP, VP NP, NP VP, (PRO)/NP ADJ, VP NP, ADJ NP, ADJ ADV, NP NP, VP, and (PRO)/NP ADJ ADV, respectively. Instagram is also a photo and video initiated interaction platform and encourages users to comment, share, and engage with content. Because of this, posts and comments on Instagram tend to facilitate the use of informal language and a mix of both spoken and written language^[50]. Comments are also repetitive, and commenters will often agree or disagree with other commenters to express their views and opinions about the content^[50]. As such, ADJ was

the most common syntactic pattern in the comments, such as جميل *jamīl* ‘beautiful’. The simple compliment was used to show admiration of the possessions, and in this case, to show appreciation of the artists’ drawings and paintings. Adjectives showing positive evaluation of their works were the most frequently used compliments found in the data, which supports Wolfson’s^[19] findings that appreciative adjectives such as beautiful, nice, good, and pretty are the most-used adjectives during face-to-face complimenting and Indah and Rifana’s^[50] results about Instagram. Several studies also show that complimentors are more likely to use adjectives to show appreciation, but also may vary based on the language used. Since Instagram is a photo and video based social platform, users tend to make similar compliments as they would when physically interacting with or looking at possessions. The main reason is because the comments target possessions, which were mainly paintings and drawings. Meanwhile, females posted more compliments with ADJ than males due to distinctive style of communication between men and women. In their research, Nelson et al.^[24] concurred with the finding by indicating that compliments among American and Egyptian speakers show extensive deployment of adjectives. Noun/verbs are used to create admiration when used alongside adverbs/adjectives.

Another common pattern found in the comments was NP either to compliment the person ‘artist’ or the drawing/painting ‘beauty’. The pattern VP NP was also popular in the comments because it entailed common expressions in Arabic, such as حبيت الرسمة *habbayt arrasmah* ‘I like the drawing/painting’ and تسلم يديك *tislam yadayk* ‘bless your hands’. The complimentary in this comment is expressing admiration and appreciation for the possession, the creator of the possession, and the creative process in which the possession was made. In this regard, VP NP is common in Arabic because sentences with this pattern in Arabic provide meaning from a cultural perspective. Again, the pattern is common in the Arab communities for complimenting others, and it emphasizes uniqueness due to the lack of equivalent translation, expressions like *tāl* طال *عمرک* *تسلم يمينك* *‘cumrak/tislam yimnāk* ‘bless your right hand/may you live long’. NP VP was present in the comments, including the example below: ماكو كلمه تعبر عن جمال اللوحة *maku kilmah tcabbir can jamāl allawḥah* ‘there is no word to express the beauty of this painting’: In this example, the complimentor

wants to highlight how extraordinary the painting/drawing is by stating that there is no word to express the beauty of this painting. In this comment, the verb “express” requires an NP to complete the compliment.

Additionally, the (PRO)/NP ADJ pattern is prevalent in the comments. In these comments, the complimentors used pronoun ‘you’ to express their appreciation of the drawing/painting and the artist: انت فنان متألق دائما ونحبوك *‘ant fannān muta’līq dā’iman wa nḥubbūk* ‘You are a brilliant artist, and we love you’. ‘You are a brilliant artist’ is a compliment on the artist. ‘You’ refers to the ‘artist’, and the commenter exclaims that ‘we’ love ‘you’. Some examples found in the Instagram comments tend to exaggerate and call attention to the quality and uniqueness of the artist, their talent, and the painting/drawing itself, such as ماشاء الله انتا مو مبدع انتا قمة الابداع والفن *‘inta mu mubdic ‘inta qim-mat al’ibdāc wa alfan mā shā’ Allāh* ‘You are not creative, you are the top of creativeness and art, Allah willing’. In the comment above, the complimentor is highlighting the talent as ‘top of creativeness and art’ of the artist and ends with the phrase ‘masha’Allah’.

ADJ NP patterns found in the comments were expressed as جميلة الرسمة *jamīlah (adj) arrasmah* (N) ‘the painting is beautiful’. The pattern of NP NP was found as in جمال الرسمة *Jamāl (NP) arrasmah (NP)* ‘The beauty of the painting’. The ‘beauty’ was used to describe the object. NP NP pattern tended to be longer compliments in which the complimentor comments on the talent of the artist and the object itself. ADJ ADV pattern was often used to intensify a compliment, such as جميله جدا *Jamīlah (ADJ) jiddan (ADV)* ‘very beautiful’. ‘very beautiful’ was common in the compliments because it adds intensification to the compliment.

Al-Mansoob et al.^[55] found that Yemeni Arabs invoked the name of God for protection against evil, showing significant religious influence in the communication. Al-Hilu^[56] indicated that that complimentors regularly summoned *Allah* severally in their phrases to alleviate any ill-will resulting from envy on the part of the speaker. In this regard, Algharabali and Taqi^[57] established that the phrase, *masha’Allah* ‘God’s will’ was the most used in social media. The extensive use is attributed to the fact that it invokes the presence of God to protect the receiver of the compliment from any harm that may be caused by the evil eye just as in physical communication^[20]. In contrast, Ghosheh^[41] found that Palestinian

Arab speakers use proverbs as compliments to perceive a person as permanently pretty, which they were very rare in the current study because of the context. Shbietah^[58] added that users of compliments sought to set individuals apart from others, thereby gaining them the attention of a public figure. For example, *الله يبارك ع الابداع* *Allāh yibārik cala al'ibdāc* 'Allah blessings on this creativity'. This is a prayer which specifies that the complimenter is commenting on the creativity of the object. 'Allah blessings' is a common phrase in Arabic to infer that the drawing/painting is a gift from God that brings happiness to viewers. Encouraging the artist to continue making the art was used to support the artists and asking them questions to show more interests in their drawings/paintings, such as *استمري يا فنانة* *'istamirri ya fannānah* 'keep going you are an artist'.

The Instagram comments of compliments feature unique strategies, which have similarities and differences with face to face communication. For example, Qanbar^[20] noted that females are complimented more often than males in English and Yemeni contexts, which are similar to the current results. Al-Ahmad^[21] acknowledged that both genders use compliments to express respect and appreciation besides reinforcing social solidarity when there is variance in social status. Unlike the current results, Sallo^[22] argued that Iraqi men compliment more and exaggerate their views in business contexts.

In this study, Instagram users complimented possessions, personality/friendship, and ability/performance with religious expression of interjection, interjection, prayers, encouragement, questions, request, expression of pride, denial, disability to express, expression of feelings, future comment, proverbs, suggestions, and thanks. Additionally, religious expression of interjection indicate prayer, joy, modesty, etc. a conversational backchannel^[27]. In this regard, the prevalent religious interjection, such as *ما شاء الله تبارك الله* *mā shā' Allāh tabāarak Allāh* 'Allah willing and blessed be Allah' and *الرحمان تبارك* *tabārk arrahmān* 'blessed be Allah' were used to express admiration and to prevent the compliment from the evil eye. The interjection, such as wow, is common in the comments because they express the feelings of the complimenter about the admiration.

Males and females' use of compliments in Arabic on Instagram have similarities and differences. Migdadi^[28] stated that women prefer question and account compliments

while men value blessings and disagreements, with cross-sex complimenting being rare due to cultural restrictions, which is less restricted on social media. Alsallal et al.^[29] noted that males are more active and responsive to different social situations while the speech act of females is enriched with abundant expressions and a strong tone. On Instagram, it was found very few responses on the compliment and giving 'like' was used as a response to the compliment. According to Mahzari^[46], women celebrities value compliments on appearance, which is not exist in the current study due to the nature of data and context, while men prefer to compliment regarding possession.

In this study with 210 males and 390 females, gender significantly influenced compliment content. The findings concur with Dendenne^[36] that gender-pairing significantly affects the formulation of compliment. Gender expresses a unique preference in utilization of the fifteen types of compliment strategies. For instance, males did not give suggestions, express thanks, express pride, or show denial compared to females who did not use future comments. Additionally, women valued complimenting possessions and personality/friendship compared to men who showed no significant difference in complimenting ability/performance. Finally, emojis were used variously with different functions and different positions in the compliment.

7. Conclusions

This study was conducted to explore the construction of Arabic compliment with paralinguistic cues such as emojis on artists' works on Instagram. While the users used various syntactic patterns, the use of ADJ was the most frequent one which emphasizes the preference of users for short compliment form on social media. Also different compliment strategies were employed, but there was a tendency to use religious expression of interjection to protect the object from the evil eye and to express admiration and joy. The compliment topic such as possessions or objects received more compliments than the other topics because the focus of compliments were on the artists' works. Regarding using emojis, while different types of emojis were employed in the compliments, the emoji of a Smiling Face with Heart Eyes was used mostly across the other emojis to convey enthusiastic feelings of admiration on the artists' works and used

repetitively for intensification. Compliments were given by female users more than male users in the data. In addition, almost all the compliment features in terms of syntactic patterns, compliment strategies, compliment topic, and using emojis were used by the female users more than male users. One of the limitations is that there were no responses to the current compliments to be investigated to understand how artists respond to the given compliments or some compliments received only like reaction. Therefore, future studies should explore the artists' compliment responses on Instagram. Also, various compliment adjectives were employed from different Arabic dialects which need to be explored in terms of regional variable by sociolinguists. The implications can help the cultural studies in communication in terms of increasing the awareness of language users from different backgrounds to avoid misunderstanding in using Arabic compliment. In addition, the results can benefit non-native speakers of Arabic about how to use compliments on social media. Also, Artists can enhance their skills and objects through the positive adjectives and nouns that were given by their followers. Moreover, content creators, social media influencers, and marketers can better understand the preferences of Arabic social media users for artists' works, and how they were described by using evaluative expressions and emojis to be taken into consideration for their different purposes.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, R.A. and M.M.; methodology, R.A. and M.M.; validation, R.A. and M.M.; formal analysis, R.A.; investigation, M.M.; resources, R.A.; data curation, M.M.; writing—original draft preparation, R.A.; writing—review

and editing, M.M.; visualization, M.M.; supervision, M.M.; project administration, R.A.; funding acquisition, M.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study approved by the scientific research ethics committee at PRINCE SATTAM BIN ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY (protocol code 202051 and 13/02/2022).

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

It is available upon request from the authors.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. The parts of speech for Arabic words that for used for compliment.

Parts of Speech	Transliteration	Arabic Words	Translation
Adj	wāḍih	واضح	Clear
Adj	mātinwiṣf	ماتنوصف	Indescribable
Adj	mitʿaddī	متعدي	Overrun
Adj	kibīr/kibīrah	كبير/كبيرة	Big/large
Adj	mush mumkin	مش ممكن	Not possible
Adj	khālīṣ	خالص	Pure
Adj	mukhtalifah	مختلفه	Different

Table A1. Cont.

Parts of Speech	Transliteration	Arabic Words	Translation
Adj	mu ṭabīʿi/ mu ṭabīʿiiah	مو طبيعي/مو طبيعية	Not normal
Adj	mustahīl	مستحيل	Impossible
Adj	ʿālamī	عالمي	Universal
Adj	jadīd	جديد	New
Adj	faḍīʿ	فضيع	Terrific
Adj	shai thāni	شي ثاني	Something different
Adj	min ṣiddik (correct spelling min ṣiddqak)	من صدك	Are you serious?
Adj	dhawwāq	ذواق	Gourmet
Adj	mnawwir	منور	Bright
Adj	hilu /hilwah	حلو-حلوه	Nice
Adj	rāqi	راقي	Elegant
Adj	rahīb/ rahībah	رهيب-رهيبه	Awesome
Adj	rawʿah	روعة	Splendour
Adj	fakhūrīn/ fakhūr	فخورين-فخور	Proud
Adj	mubdiʿ/ mubdiʿah	مبدع-مبدعة	Creative
Adj	mudhhil	مذهل	Amazing
Adj	ma ajmalah	ما أجمله	How beautiful!
Adj	Jamīl/Jamīlah	جميل-جميلة	Beautiful
Adj	ʾaḥla/ ʾaḥlaha/ ʾaḥlahum/	احلى احلاها- احلاهم	Nicer The nicest
Adj	bayrfikt (code switching)	بيرفكت	Perfect
Adj	rāʾiʿ/rāʾiʿah	رائع-رائعة	Wonderful
Adj	jabbār/jabbārah	جبار-جباره	Stupendous
Adj	mubhirah	مبهرة	Impressive
Adj	samḥ	سمح	Tolerant
Adj	ʿajīb/ʿajībah	عجيب-عجيبة	Amazing
Adj	fakhm	فخم	Luxurious
Adj	fidshī	فدشي	Wonderful
Adj	mutaʾlliq	متألق	Brilliant
Adj	fantastic (code switching)	فنتاستيك	Fantastic
Adj	qinaynah	قنيئة	Beautiful
Adj	qawi	قوي	Strong
Adj	kafu:	كفو	Adequate
Adj	nāis (code switching)	نايس	Nice
Adj	mujrimah	مجرمة	Mind-blowing
Adj	majnūnah	مجنون	Crazy
Adj	Mudhishah/ mudhish	مدهشه/مدهش	Amazing
Adj	mumayyaz	مميز	Distinguished
Adj	mawhūb	موهوب	Talented
Adj	wāqiʿi	واقعي	Realistic
Adj	mutanāsiq	متناسق	Harmonic
Adj	ʾaḥsan	أحسن	Better
Adj	daqīqah	دقيقة	Accurate
Adj	ʿazīm	عظيم	Great
V	ʾabdaʿti/baddaʿti	ابدعتي-بدعتي	You innovated
V	tjannin/yijannin	تجنن - بجنن	It makes me crazy
V	bitkhabbil (correct spelling 'bithabbil')	بتخبل	It makes me insane
V	tmawwit	تموت	It is killing.
V	nḥubbūk	نحبوك	We love you
V	lafatni	لقتني	It caught me
V	himtu	همت	I fell in love

Table A1. Cont.

Parts of Speech	Transliteration	Arabic Words	Translation
V	'ashhad	اشهد	I witness
V	t'abbir	تعبر	It expresses
V	'āshat yaduk	عاشت يدك	May your hand live long
V	'ahibbaha	احبها	I love her/it
V	fidayt	فديت	I sacrifice
V	'ahannīk	اهنيك	I congratulate you
V	tuthbit	تثبت	It proves
V	tarsim/yarsim	ترسم/يرسم	She draws/paints
V	tqattir	تقطر	It drips
V	ḥabbayt	حبيت	I love
V	ḥabbaynāhā	حبيناها	We love her/it
V	dumt	دمت	Long live you
V	'āsh	عاش	Long live he
V	'āshū	عاشو	Long live they
V	'isht	عشت	Long live you
V	mā tuaqqif	ما توقف	Don't stop
V	shkūl	شكول	What Should I say
N	taqaddum	تقدم	Progress
N	khayāl	خيال	Imagination
N	qimmah	قمة	Top
N	fan	فن	Art
N	fannān/fannānah	فنان-فنانة	Artist
N	iḥtirāf	احتراف	Professionalism
N	alfakhr	الفخر	Pride
N	baṭal	بطل	Hero
N	jamāl	جمال	Beauty
N	tuḥfah	تحفة	Masterpiece
N	nār/ḥarīqah	نار - حريقه	Fire
N	fakhāmah	فخامة	Luxury
N	'ibda'	ابداع	Innovation
N	tafāṣīl	تفاصيل	Details
N	alfannan	الفنان	The artist
N	brāfu	برافو	Bravo
	(code switching)		
N	ḥubbak	حبك	Your love
N	ḥub	حب	Love
N	jmālaha	جمالها	Its beauty
N	diqqah	دقه	Accuracy
N	fannak	فنك	Your art
N	fawq attaqqyim	فوق التقييم	Above rating
N	malyūn min 10	مليون من ١٠	A million out of 10
N	najāḥ	نجاح	Prosperity
N	wāqi'iyyatuk	واقعيّتك	Your reality
N	wala ghalṭah	ولا غلطه	Flawless
N	nu'ūmah	نعومه	Its softness
N	majhūd	مجهود	Effort
N	fidwah	فدوه	Redemption
ADV	sidk	صدك	Really
	(correct spelling sidq)		
ADV	ṭab'an	طبعاً	Of course
ADV	fī'lan	فعلاً	Indeed
ADV	bima'nā alkalimah	بمعنى الكلمه	Literally
ADV	biṣarāḥah	بصراحه	Frankly
ADV	kithīr	كثير	Many
ADV	kul	كل	Every
ADV	mil mrrah	مل مره	Every time
	(correct spelling kul marrah)		
ADV	killish	كلش	Everything
ADV	walaw	ولو	Even if

Table A1. Cont.

Parts of Speech	Transliteration	Arabic Words	Translation
ADV	marrah	مره	Very
ADV	bisidq	بصدق	Honestly
ADV	'akthar	أكثر	More
ADV	bijid	بجد	Seriously
ADV	bḥaq	بحق	Truly
ADV	jiddan	جدا	Very
ADV	ḥarfīyyan	حرفياً	Literally
ADV	dā'imān	دائماً	Always

Appendix B

Table A2. Transliteration symbols for Arabic vowels and consonants.

Arabic Letter	English Symbol	Arabic Example	English Equivalent
أ	a	amal	hope
ب	b	bāb	door
ت	t	tibn	chaff
ث	th	tha'lab	fox
ج	j	jamal	camel
ح	h	ḥubb	love
خ	kh	khubz	bread
د	d	dubb	bear
ذ	dh	dhahab	gold
ر	r	rabb	Lord
ز	z	zayt	oil
س	s	sabt	Saturday
ش	sh	shams	sun
ص	s	sayf	summer
ض	d	dayf	guest
ط	t	tīn	mud
ظ	z	zuhr	noon
ع	c	'abd	slave
غ	gh	gharb	west
ف	f	famm	mouth
ق	q	qalam	pen
ك	k	kitāb	book
ل	l	layl	night
م	m	makr	guile
ن	n	nawm	sleep
هـ	h	hudhud	hoopoe
و	w	ward	rose
ي	y	yawm	day
ء	'	dā'	disease
َ (فتحة)	a	kataba	he wrote
ُ (ضمة)	u	kutub	books
ِ (كسرة)	i	sinn	tooth
مد طويل / ا	ā	kātib	writer
ضمة طويلة و	ū	fūl	beans
كسرة طويلة ي	ī	fīl	elephant
أصوات مدغمة	aw	mawt	death
أصوات علة م كة	a	bayt	house

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