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A Comprehensive Review of Compliment Responses among Iranian Persian Speakers

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Abstract

Given the importance of complimenting and responding to compliments in everyday interactions, several studies have investigated the strategies used to compliment and also to respond to compliments. This systematic study offers a thorough review of research on Compliment Responses (CRs) in the Persian language conducted over the past three decades. It outlines the theoretical frameworks, the categorization schemes used, and the main findings of the reviewed studies. The bibliographical search on this area yielded a database of 35 studies on Persian CRs for this systematic review. We provide a synthesis of the research conducted in this area, the theoretical frameworks, and the methodologies used in different studies, including data analysis and data collection procedures. We then scrutinize the studies conducted on compliment response patterns in Persian, addressing similarities and differences and any emerging trends. Based on the review of the existing literature, recommendations are provided with guidelines and directions for future research in this area.

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1. Introduction

The pivotal role of pragmatic competence in having a successful communication has been acknowledged by several scholars (Cohen, 2018; Derakhshan, 2014, 2019a, 2019b; Derakhshan & Eslami, 2019, 2020; Derakhshan, Malmir, & Greenier, 2021; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; LoCastro, 2013; Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020; Rose & Kwai-Fun, 2001; Taguchi, 2019). As Taguchi (2019) postulated, improving pragmatic competence is of high importance since a lack of sufficient knowledge of pragmatics will result in communication loss. She defined pragmatic competence as "the knowledge of form–function–context mappings—which forms to use for what communicative functions in what social settings" (p. 3). Pragmatic competence has some typical constructs, including speech acts, conversational implicatures, routines, prosody, and humor which illustrate its multiplicity (Taguchi, 2019). Among them, speech acts are the most widespread and thoroughly-researched aspects of pragmatic competence. Speech acts signify the sense in which "utterances are not mere meaning-bearers, but rather in a very real sense do things, that is, perform actions" (Levinson, 2017, p. 199). Among different speech acts, compliments (Cs) and compliment responses (CRs) have attracted many scholars' attention because they are loaded with cultural and socio-cultural dimensions (Cohen, 2017). According to Cheng (2011), research on the speech act of complimenting can provide valuable information about the rules of language use in a speech community, the value system of individual speakers, and the importance of different contextual features.

Compliment is a speech act that explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to complimentee for appearance, possessions, skills, achievements, or the like (Eslami, & Derakhshan, 2020; Hobbs, 2003). As stated by Holmes (1988), "To be heard as a compliment, an utterance must refer to something which is positively valued by the participants and attributed to the addressees" (p. 454). The act of complimenting is usually used as an adjacency pair in such a way that A compliments B, and B responds to what A has said (Herbert, 1990). Responding to compliments can also serve to maintain rapport and preserve solidarity between the interlocutors. Pomerantz (1978) conceptualized that CRs are the recipient's resolution of conflicting conversational constraints. As stated by Leech (1983), responding to Cs is a challenge for complimentees as they need to make a delicate balance between the two contrasting principles of modesty and agreement. Acceptance reflects adherence to the agreement maxim, while rejection indicates adhering to the modesty principle. As such, the recipient is faced with a dilemma, namely, agreement with the complimenter and evasion of self-praise. The complimentees can utilize various strategies such as "*referent shifts*," "*praise downgrades*," and "*self-praise avoidance*" to overcome the conflict (Pomerantz, 1978).

The importance of Cs and CRs in intercultural and intracultural communication has inspired scholars to investigate complimenting behavior in different varieties of English and other languages (e.g., Chinese, German, Spanish, etc.), resulting in many studies (Golato, 2002, 2003; Huth, 2006; Jin-pei, 2013; Maíz-Arévalo, 2013; Yuan, 2002) that have been accumulated in the field of pragmatics. Several studies have also investigated CRs in the Persian language, some of which have compared CRs of Persian speakers with those of other language speakers (e.g., Boroujeni, Domakani, & Sheykhi, 2016; Eslami & Derakhshan, in press; Karimnia & Afghari, 2011; Mohajernia & Solimani, 2013; Razi, 2013; Shabani & Zeinali, 2015). Some other studies have taken such factors as gender and age into consideration (e.g., Heidari, Dastjerdi & Marvi, 2011; Jalilzadeh & Sarkhosh, 2016; Morady Moghaddam, 2017; Sharifian, Chalak, & Dehkordi, 2019a; Tamimi, 2015). However, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic review of research has been conducted to synthesize the CRs studies in the Persian language. To fill this lacuna, previous studies conducted on CRs were examined based on their theoretical frameworks, classification schemes, data collection methods, and overall findings. In this review, contextual variables such as age, gender, and educational background were considered as well. Finally, based on the research synthesis, some possible directions for future studies on CRs in Persian were suggested.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Frameworks of Complimenting Behavior

To analyze complimenting behaviors, various theoretical frameworks have been impl emented, including (a) Conversational Analysis (CA); (b) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFG); (c) Politeness Theory; (d) Ethnographic Model; (e) Variational Pragmatics, and (f) Cultural Schema.

CA is a well-adapted framework through which culturally defined speech events can be analyzed based on features of natural conversations. To this end, it employs audio/video-taped samples of non-elicited face-to-face interactions. The data analyzed by employing CA taxonomy reveal what speakers are actually doing in their interactions (Golato, 2003). Many scholars applied CA to explore Cs and CRs among different speakers. For instance, Golato (2002) employed conversational analysis to examine CRs as they actually occur in conversations among German native speakers. Analyzing the gathered data, He found that Agreement was the most frequent strategy used by German speakers.

Another framework for examining complimenting behavior is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFG) which was proposed by Halliday (2003). SFG is developed based on two fundamental ideas. It is systemic since language is viewed as a set of choices (systems) from which speakers choose different interpretation options (Thompson, 2013). Furthermore, the term functional is related to Halliday's (2003) perspective that language is used to perform different functions. Language, then, depicts the multifaceted essence of human experience and interpersonal relationships (Halliday, 2003). SFG is used as one of the frameworks for analyzing compliment behaviors as it helps researchers to analyze compliments and compliment responses from a systemic viewpoint and to truly comprehend human experience and relations (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Some researchers implemented SFL to explore various compliment responses. Among them, one can refer to Maíz-Arévalo's (2013) study in which CRs employed by Spanish Facebook users were analyzed through SFG taxonomy. Analyzing the obtained data, she found that agreeing is not a common response strategy among Spanish Facebook users. She also reported that Spanish users were more likely to use nonverbal strategies (e.g., Clicking Like) to respond to compliments.

Politeness theory, proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), is also applied as one of the theoretical frameworks to analyze Cs and CRs. 'Politeness' was conceptualized by Leech (1983) as a behavior that helps participants to engage in social interaction in a harmonic atmosphere. Subsequently, Brown and Levinson (1987) explicated that politeness is a complex system for softening face-threatening acts (FTAs). To them, communication is a potentially dangerous and antagonistic process. This theory is beneficial for the analysis of compliments and CRs as politeness strategies because its interest in complimenting behavior lies predominantly in their use in redressing FTAs. Many researchers employed politeness theory to analyze CRs. For instance, Motaghi-Tabari and De Beuzeville (2012) examined the compliment-responding behaviors of Persians in Australia in their interactions with Australians. Analyzing 666 CRs, they found that Persian speakers were more inclined to use agreement strategies to respond to compliments.

In addition to the taxonomies mentioned above, complimenting behavior has also been analyzed in light of other research traditions including, ethnographic model, cultural schema, and variational pragmatics. Ethnographic models are beneficial for exploring the actual use of language. These models help researchers to formulate new hypotheses about the topic and to sample as large a variety of speech situations as possible (Wolfson, 1989).

Using an ethnographic model, Mojica (2002) investigated how Philippine university students respond to compliments using the Filipino language. To this end, 270 CRs uttered by Filipino speakers have been gathered. Analyzing the obtained data, she reported that Filipino university students employed more non-agreement strategies to respond to compliments.

Another research tradition through which CRs can be analyzed is the cultural schema. Schemas are notions that function as dynamic models in people's interactions with themselves and with the external environment. These models may be taken from "an individual's idiosyncratic experience or may

appear as the group's collective knowledge and thought" (Sharifian, 2005, p. 338). The latter are called cultural schemas (e.g., Malcolm & Sharifian, 2002). According to Sharifian (2003), cultural schemas can be perceived as conceptualizations that are expressed in a heterogeneously distributed manner across the minds of a cultural community. The notion of 'heterogeneously distributed expression' encompasses the observation that cultural schemas (e.g., CRs) are not similarly inscribed in the cultural community members' minds.

Variational pragmatics is conceptualized as "the intersection of pragmatics with sociolinguistics, or, more specifically, with dialectology as the study of language variation (Barron & Schneider, 2009, p. 426). Variational pragmatics as a sub-discipline of intercultural pragmatics seeks to systematically analyze the impact of synchronic macro-social pragmatic variation, involving factors such as age, ethnicity, gender, social status, and region on language in (inter)action and on intra-lingual pragmatic conventions (Barron, 2019; Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, Naji Meidani & Derakhshan, 2020). Types of CR strategies, as put forward by Sifianou (2013), are subject to variation due to a range of social, cultural, and individual variables. As such, several researchers have examined CR studies on the basis of variational pragmatics. For instance, Sachathep (2014) has investigated the variations of CRs between Thai and Punjabi speakers of English in Thailand. Employing a variational pragmatic framework, he found that both groups took micro-sociolinguistic cues into consideration in responding to compliments, which caused some major differences between them.

2.2. Classification Schemes of Compliment Responses

Several classification schemes/models have been developed for categorizing CRs. Among them, one can refer to Pomerantz's (1978) model in which CRs are divided into three main categories of acceptance, rejection, and self-praise avoidance. The categories of acceptance and rejection deal with dis/agreement tokens and self-praise avoidance aims to minimize positive evaluation of the compliment.

Similarly, Herbert (1986) classified CR strategies into 13 categories (e.g., appreciation token, comment acceptance, comment history, praise upgrade, reassignment). Then, in 1990, he revised Pomerantz's taxonomy in the form of three macro strategies of "*agreement*", "*non-agreement*", "*other interpretations*", and a variety of micro strategies (see Table 1).

Table 1
Compliment Response Strategies (Herbert, 1986, p. 79)

Compliment Response Strategies	Definition
I. Agreement	
Appreciation Token	Complimentee agrees verbally or nonverbally with the compliment
Comment Acceptance	Complimentee accepts the compliment and comments in line with the compliment
Praise Upgrade	Complimentee accepts the compliment while he/she applies the force of the compliment
Comment History	Complimentee informs on the object of compliment on which he is complimented
Reassignment	Complimentee's agreement is expressed by reassigning his/her comment to a third person
Return	Complimentee shifts or returns the praise to the complimenter
II. Non-agreement	
Scale down	Complimentary force is not accepted by the complimentee, and some flaw in the object is noticed

Question	The appropriateness of the compliment is questioned by the Complimentee
Disagreement	Complimentees directly disagreed with assertion made by complimenter
Qualification	Complimentees may not accept the full complimentary force offered by the compliments
No Acknowledgement	Complimentees give no sign of having heard the compliments and compliment is not followed by any response
III. Other Interpretations	
Request	Complimentees perceived the compliments as requests rather than simple compliments

Holmes (1988, 1993) categorized the CR strategies into three major acts: Accept, Reject, and Deflect/Evade; each act is further grouped into some sub-strategies. The first type of response deals with appreciation token, upgrade and return. An appreciation token entails verbal/non-verbal signs that a compliment has been accepted. Upgrade applies to the situation in which the complimentee accepts the compliment and feels that the complimenter under-Cs him/her, or the complimentary force is inadequate. Return pertains to the case in which the complimentee returns the Cs to the complimenter. The second type of response includes downgrade/scale down and disagreement. The downgrade has to do with the case that the complimentee disagrees with the complimentary force by downgrading the force of the compliment. Disagreement also refers to the case in which the addressee shows his/her disagreement with the compliment. Finally, explanation, reassignment, request interpretation, topic shift, and reassurance are subsumed under evade strategies. Explanation refers to the case in which the complimentee makes a comment on how somebody does something. Through implementing a reassignment, a complimentee transfers the credit to another person. The topic shift involves changing the topic of the interaction. Finally, reassurance occurs when the complimentee asks the complimenter to confirm the directed compliment.

Chen (1993) also suggested another taxonomy for CR strategies which consists of three main categories and 16 subcategories:

I. **Accepting** (Agreeing, Expressing gladness, Encouraging, Thanking, Returning, A-explaining)
II. **Deflecting** (Offering, Using humor, Seeking confirmation, Deflecting, Doubting, D/E-explaining)
III. **Rejecting** (Disagreeing, Denigrating, Expressing embarrassment, R-explaining)

Subsequently, Yu (2004) adapted Holmes' (1988, 1993) three-way classification and added three new categories (see Table 2 below for details).

Table 2
Compliment Response Strategies (Yu, 2004, p. 118)

Compliment Response Strategies	**Definition**
I. Acceptance Strategies	
Appreciation Token	Utterances showing gratitude and appreciation
Agreement	Utterances showing the complimentee's agreement to the complimenter's utterance
Pleasure	Utterances indicating that the complimentee is pleased with the complimenter's utterance
Association	Utterances that include more than one subcategory mentioned above
II. Amendment Strategies	

Return	Utterances that reciprocate the act of complimenting by offering or returning praise to the complimenter
Downgrade	Utterances that reduce or scale down the complimentary force of the praise
Upgrade	Utterances that increase the complimentary force of the praise
Question	Utterances that query the genuineness, appropriateness, or sincerity of the compliment
Comment	The speaker impersonalizes the force of that compliment
Transfer	Utterances that redirect or switch the force of the compliment to the complimenter
Association	Utterances that include one or more of the Amendment subcategories mentioned above
III. Non-acceptance Strategies	
Disagreement	Responses that do not agree with the statement of the compliment
Question	Utterances that call into question the quality of the compliment and do not agree with its full complimentary force
Diverge	Utterances that pose other acts and call into question the quality of the compliment this way
Association	Utterances that include one or more of the Amendment subcategories mentioned above
IV. Face Relationship-related Response Strategies	
V. Combination Strategies	
VI. No acknowledgment	

More recently, Cheng (2011) arranged CR types into three macro strategies and 11 micro strategies, as follows: (a) Acceptance (Appreciation, Qualifying, Agreeing, Downgrading, Returning, Non-idiomatic), (b) Evasion (Credit-shifting, Commenting, Reassuring, Offering, Ignoring/giggling), and (c) Combination (Evasion and acceptance in a single CR).

Regarding other languages, Boori (1994), based on a corpus of 838 compliment events, proposed that in response to Cs, Persian native speakers draw on the following 18 CRs:

- Appreciation token
- Appreciation token plus a politeness formula
- Appreciation token plus comment
- Non-verbal acceptance
- Comment acceptance
- Comment
- Offering
- Praise upgrade
- Request interpretation
- Comment history
- Reassignment
- Return
- Entreaty
- Scale down
- Question
- Disagreement
- Qualification
- No acknowledgement

Given the importance of contexts in complimenting behavior, Maíz-Arévalo (2013) adapted Holmes' (1986) taxonomy of CRs for online contexts (see Figure 1 below for detail). He designed this taxonomy to probe different types of CR strategies employed by Spanish Facebook users.

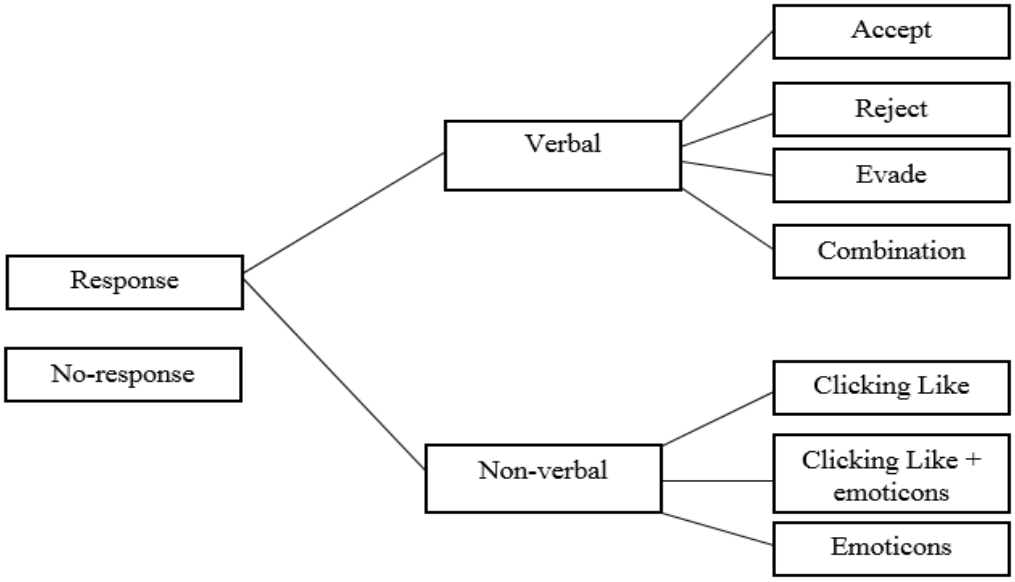

Figure 1
Compliment Response System on Facebook

2.3. Data Collection Methods in Compliment Responses

Various data collection methods are used in studying CRs. They include: (a) Oral/Written Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Hamo, 2011; Yuan, 2002), (b) recordings of naturally occurring conversation (Golato, 2005; Pomerantz, 1978); (c) role-plays (e.g., Grabowski, 2008); (d) recall protocols (e.g., Bacelar da Silva, 2003), and (e) field observations (e.g., Wolfson, 1989; Jucker, 2009). Golato (2003) explained the advantages and disadvantages of these methods, mentioning that each method allows the researchers to examine different aspects of the topic, including intuitions, frequency, distribution, sequential organization, and perception.

Among various data collection methods, DCTs are the most commonly used instruments for the investigation of CRs. In DCTs, participants are presented with a context in which a C/CR is considered to be the next relevant action. Then, they are asked to mention what they would say or how they would respond in this context. This data collection method has several advantages, such as enabling researchers to control situational variables (e.g., age, gender) and to gather vast amounts of data, thus making it possible to compare responses of participants from various groups (Golato, 2005). However, Holmes (1993) explicated that data gathered through DCTs do not necessarily correspond to natural data. Besides, DCTs and interviews do not reveal the interactional aspects of a speech event; for instance, they do not capture how multi-turn sequences evolve to accomplish a particular speech function. Despite these shortcomings, due to their ease of use and a high degree of control over variables, DCTs are frequently employed in the fields of intercultural communication, pragmatics, and second language acquisition (SLA).

Researchers employing a conversational analysis (CA) framework analyze naturally occurring conversations to illustrate how patterns of interactions unfold. CA data contain non-elicited, audio/video taped face-to-face communications and audio-taped spontaneous mobile conversations. The value of the CA relates to the fact that its methodology helps researchers to systematically analyze natural and realistic language use and the phrases in their sequential setting (Golato, 2003). Despite the advantages, within this method, mainly because of its labor-intensive analysis, it is difficult to collect a large amount of data, illustrating the phenomenon being studied (Kasper, 2001). In addition, CA has been questioned because using this approach makes it rather impossible to control some variables, including power, social status, and age differences (Yuan, 2002).

Among different forms of elicited data, role-plays generate more naturalistic data: "They represent oral production, full operation of the turn-taking mechanism, spontaneous decision making, and negotiation of both global and local aims" (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 228). However, as Kasper (2001) noted, role-plays (open-ended or fixed) are primarily guided by the researcher's aims rather than those of the participants. Role-plays and naturally occurring conversations cannot be viewed as the same if it is thought that the aim of the dialogue is its structuring force (Kasper, 2001). Moreover, while speakers can communicate with each other, the context of their interactions within role-plays is generally assumed and thus not authentic (Golato, 2005). Despite the weaknesses, role-plays are frequently implemented in the field of interlanguage pragmatics, mainly because the variables can be regulated for comparability purposes (Kasper, 2001). A seminal study in this area was conducted by Eslami and Mirzaei (2014), in which they probed using different kinds of DCTs (written and oral) in Persian. They also compared the responses from ODCTs vs. WDCTs in terms of the response length, range and content of the expressions, and degree of formality. The findings represented that ODCTs induced longer and more comprehensive responses than WDCTs did. In WDCTs, students merged different modes (spoken and written) and used both formal and informal linguistic resources in one situation. Based on the findings of their study, Eslami and Mirzaei (2014) asserted that WDCTs may not be suitable for gathering data in the Persian language, which has marked differences between spoken and written variety and extremely complicated stylistic variations.

Several studies have employed field observation to collect data (e.g., Jucker, 2009; Wolfson, 1989). Field workers are commonly involved in the data collection process in which they are required to write down the Cs they experience in their lives and to note the exact exchange as well as other contextual details (e.g., location, gender, and age) after the interaction has happened. The most outstanding advantage of this method is that it allows the researchers to collect the required database from a large sample of speakers and across different situations (Kasper, 2001). However, there are some drawbacks to this method of data collection. Since the majority of field workers do not use videotapes/audiotapes of the conversations, they need to use their memory and observational abilities. Attempting to retrieve linguistic data after some hours would lead to data that could be constrained in both quantity and quality (Labov, 1984).

Finally, in recall protocols, subjects are instructed to recall the last compliment they received or were given and to explain the context in which it took place. While this task relies on natural data, researchers who employ it must deal with human memory limitations. For example, it has been explicated that bilingual speakers cannot precisely recall the language they used in a specific situation (Gumperz, 1989). The psycholinguistic study has exhibited that remembering utterances is deficient, even in the most desirable conditions (Zangoei, Nourmohammadi, & Derakhshan, 2014a). Many research studies have explicated that while listeners can genuinely retrieve the meaning of a sentence, they will not precisely remember its syntactic form unless they are explicitly instructed to do so (Hanson & Bellugi, 1982; Zangoei, Nourmohammadi, & Derakhshan, 2014b). Besides memory-related problems, researchers employing recall protocol also have to deal with the challenge facing researchers working with DCTs: recall protocols fail to generate the interactional elements associated with a particular speech event and therefore do not generate natural and realistic data (Yuan, 2002).

This review study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What classification schemes and theoretical frameworks have been employed to explore Iranian Persian speakers' CRs?
2. What are the most frequently used data collection methods?
3. How do situational variables (i.e., age, gender, and educational background) affect CRs uttered by Iranian Persian speakers?

3. Methodology

3.1. Databases and Search Keywords

The procedures for this review were directed by those of a systematic review (e.g., Risko et al., 2008). A systematic review involves four stages: (a) a general search for the related studies, (b) a review of titles and abstracts to determine whether the studies meet inclusion

criteria, (c) a content analysis of included studies, and (d) a qualitative and quantitative synthesis of all studies included.

To answer the research questions of the present study, electronic bibliographic searches were conducted to find all the Persian CR studies published from 1994 to 2020. Different databases, including Google Scholar, CIVILICA, LLBA, ERIC, Magiran, ProQuest, and Web of Science, were searched with key terms such as 'compliment response' 'commpliment', 'praise', and Persian to find the target studies.

3.2 Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

Manuscripts were included in this systematic review if they met the following criteria:

1. Studies investigated Persian CRs;
2. Studies were reported or published from 1994 to 2020;
3. Studies were published in local/ international journals;
4. Studies were written in English/ Persian;

Studies were excluded if they were:

1. Studies on compliment responses in other languages;
2. Studies that mainly examined Cs.

The primary search resulted in 44 studies, among which nine were excluded from further analyses since they mainly examined Cs and not CRs. Hence, 35 articles remained for conducting a systematic review and for further analysis. Table 3 provides a comprehensive list of the articles and their details.

Table 3
Description of Persian Studies on Compliment Responses

Study	Theoretical Framework	Classification Schemes	Sample Size	Educational Background	Age	Gender	L1
Boori (1994)	Conversational Analysis (CA)	Pomerantz (1978), Herbert (1986)	838 Persian CRs	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Persian
Sharifian (2005)	Cultural schema	Not stated	60 speakers	Not stated	Persian: 16-36	Male and female	Persian, Australian English
Sharifian (2008)	Cultural schema	Not stated	30 speakers	Not stated	16-36	Male and female	Persian
Estaji and Akhlaghi (2010)	Not stated	Pomerantz (1978)	120 speakers	Not stated	6-8, and above 20	90 females, 30 males	Persian
Yousefvand (2010)	Not stated	Herbert 1986)	30 students	Undergraduate	20-28	Male and female	Persian
Karimnia and Afghari (2010)	Not stated	Pomerantz (1978)	32 speakers	University degree	20-75	Not stated	Persian, English
Karimnia and Afghari (2011)	Politeness Theory	Pomerantz (1978)	32 speakers	University degree	20-75	Not stated	Persian, English
Behnam and Amizadeh (2011)	Conversational Analysis (CA)	Not stated	16 interviews	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Persian, English
Heidari et al., (2011)	Not stated	Holmes (1988, 1993)	60 students	Elementary Iranian teenage EFL learners	Average: 15	30 males 30 females	Persian
Allami and Montazeri (2012a)	Politeness Theory	Boori (1994)	200 speakers	76 diploma, 55 university Student, and 69 post graduates	36 under 20, 75 between 21-30, 49 between 31-40, and 40 above 40	100 males, 100 females	Persian
Allami and Montazeri (2012b)	Not stated	Boori (1994)	40 students	Diploma, University student, Graduated student	Under 20, 21-30, 31-40	20 males, 20 females	Persian
Motaghi-Tabari and De Beuzeville (2012)	Politeness Theory	Herbert (1986)	30 students	High school diploma	Not stated	5 males and 5 females in each group	Persian, Anglo-Australian

Yousefvand (2012)	Not stated	Herbert (1986)	30 students	Undergraduate	20-28	Male and female	Persian
Mohajernia and Solimani (2013)	Ethnographic Model	Holmes (1988)	60 students	M.A. students	Iranian: 23-51	Male and female	Persian, Australian English
Razi (2013)	Not stated	Holmes (1988, 1993)	56 speakers	Not stated	18-35	28 males, 28 females	Persian, Australian English
Razmjoo, Barabadi, and Arfa (2013)	Not stated	Herbert (1986)	756 CRs	Not stated	Half below 30, half above 30	Male and female	Persian
Sadeghi and Zarei (2013)	Not stated	Holmes (1988, 1993)	50 students	Undergraduate	18-30	30 females, 20 males	Persian
Sorahi and Nazemi (2013)	Not stated	Holmes (1988, 1993)	56 speakers	Not stated	18-35	28 males, 28 females	Persian, Australian English
Shahsavari, Alimohammadi, and Eslami (2014)	Not stated	Cheng (2011)	30 speakers	BA holders	Persian (average): 20.42	16 males, 14 females	Persian, English
Shabani and Zeinali (2015)	Politeness Theory	Holmes (1988, 1993)	56 speakers	Below B.A., B.A., and M.A.	17-30	Male, female	Persian, English
Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo (2015)	ConversationalAnalysis (CA)	Online: Maíz-Arévalo (2013) Face-to-face: Holmes (1988)	45 speakers	Not stated	Male: 24-34 Female: 23-39	27 males, 18 females	Persian
Dehkordi and Chalak (2015)	Not stated	Herbert (1986)	30 students	Graduate and undergraduate	23-43	Not stated	Persian
Tamimi (2015)	Politeness Theory	Yu (2004)	26 students	BA holders	19-22	13 males, 13 females	Persian
Boroujeni et al. (2016)	Not stated	Herbert (1986)	Two TV series	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Persian, English
Jalilzadeh-Mohammadi and Sarkhosh (2016)	Not stated	Holmes (1988)	100 teachers	Not stated	20-30	Male, female	Persian
Yazdani Khaneshan, and Bonyadi (2016)	Not stated	Holmes (1988, 1993)	100 students	Not stated	16-40	50 males, 50 females	Persian
Morady Moghaddam (2017)	Politeness Theory	Not stated	220 students	Not stated	21-50	Female	Persian
Shahidipour (2017)	Not stated	Holmes (1988)	200 speakers	Not stated	10-18, 19-30, 31-40, and above 40 years old	100 males, 100 females	Persian
Shahidipour and Zarei (2017)	Not stated	Holmes (1988)	200 speakers	40 under high school diploma, 40 high school diploma, 40 BA or BS, 40 MA or MS, and 40 PhD or MD holders	Not stated	100 males, 100 females	Persian
Sarkhosh and Alizadeh (2017)	Politeness Theory	Chen (1993)	272 students and teachers	Not stated	Under 20-year-olds (n = 171), over 40-year-olds (n = 101)	Male, female	Persian
Motamedi (2018)	Not stated	Pomerantz (1978)	30 Facebook users	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Persian, English
Sharifian et al. (2019a)	Not stated	Herbert (1986)	30 students	Graduate and undergraduate	23-43	9 males, 21 female	Persian
Sharifian et al. (2019b)	Cultural schema	Herbert (1986)	30 students	Graduate and undergraduate	23-30	Male, female	Persian

Eslami and Derakhshan (2020)	Cultural schema	Holmes (1993)	123 students	Not stated	18-31	35 males, 88 females	Persian
Chalak and Derakhshan (2021)	ConversationalAnalysis (CA)	Maíz-Arévalo (2013)	60 students	MA students	25-40	30 males, 30 females	Persian

4. Trends and Issues in the Use of CRs

4.1. Theoretical Frameworks of CRs

As shown in Figure 2, out of the 35 studies conducted on Persian CRs, seven studies employed politeness theory to analyze CRs. Out of the remaining 28 studies, nine studies analyzed CRs in light of the cultural schema (*f*= 4), conversational analysis (*f*= 4), and ethnographic frameworks (*f*= 1). The remaining studies (*f*= 19) did not mention any theoretical framework.

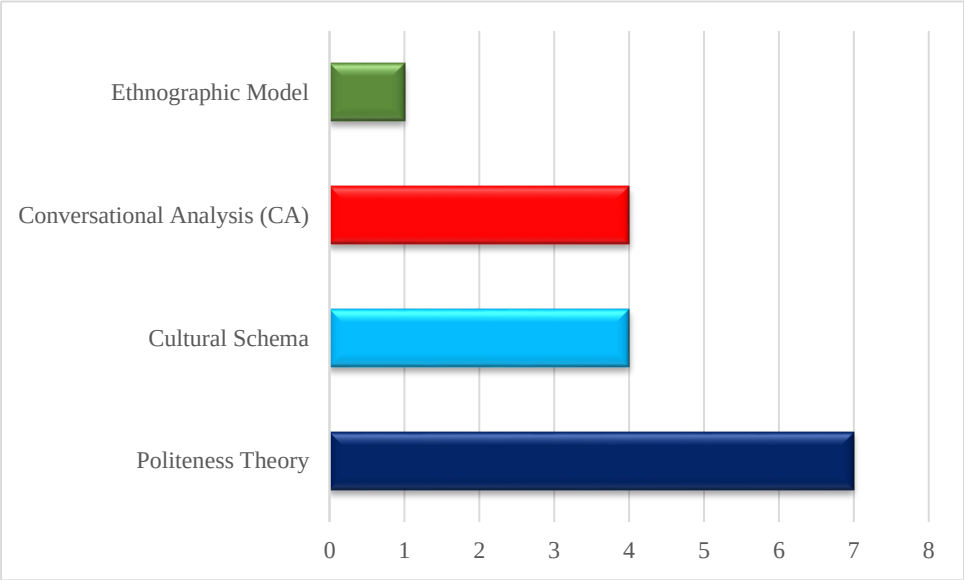

Figure 2
Theoretical Frameworks Employed

4.2. Classification Schemes of CRs

As shown in Figure 3, the three most frequently used classification frameworks used by the reviewed studies with some modifications included those of Holmes (1988, 1993), Herbert (1986), and Pomerantz (1978). The rest classified CRs through other categorization schemes, including those of Boori (1994), Chen (1993), Cheng (2011), Maíz-Arévalo (2013), and Yu (2004).

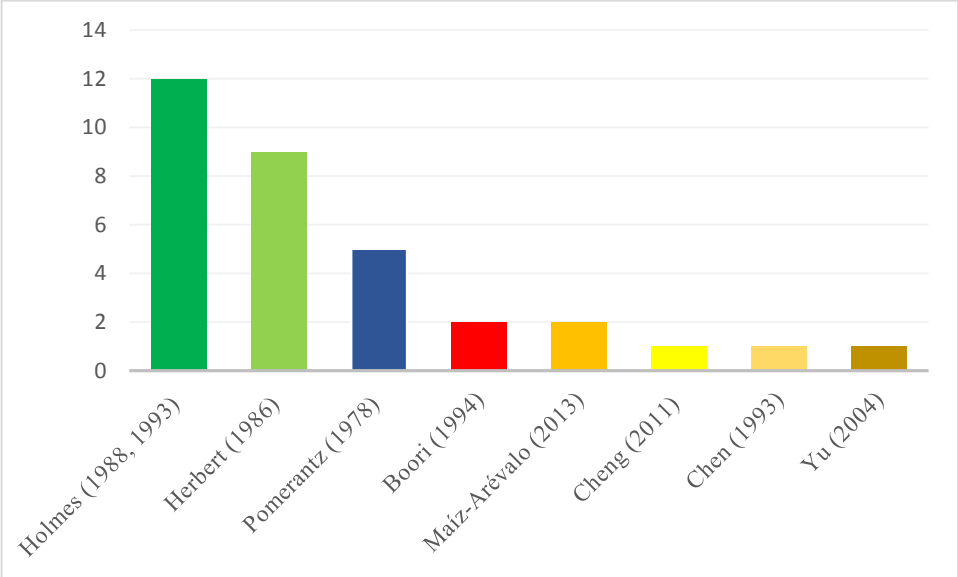

Figure 3
Classification Schemes of CRs Used by Persian Studies

4.3. Data Collection Methods

Figure 4 indicates that the majority of studies drew on DCTs (53%) and naturally occurring data (38%) to investigate different CRs strategies. The remaining CR studies (9%) implemented other instruments to collect data, including role-play, interview, and questionnaire.

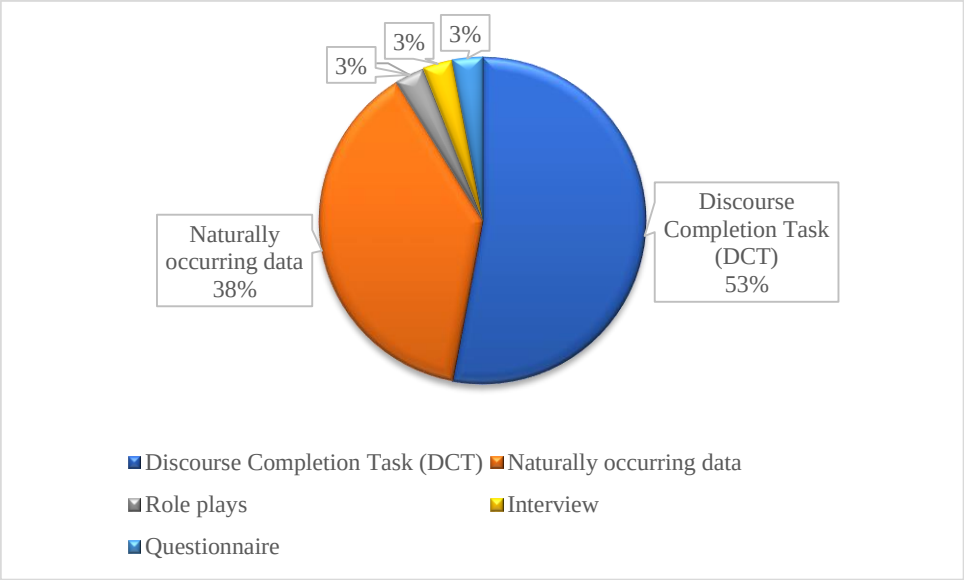

Figure 4
Data Collection Methods Used

As can be seen in Table 4, CR studies represented variability in different micro and macro strategies used by Persian speakers. However, the majority of these studies (74.2%) showed that Persian speakers are more inclined to use *Accept* and *Agreement* macro strategies and *Appreciation Token* and *Return Compliment* micro strategies to respond to compliments. Regarding nonverbal CR strategies, the findings represented that *Clicking Like* is a much more frequently used strategy among Persian speakers.

Table 4
Compliment Response Strategies Used

Study	Data Collection Methods	Compliment Response Strategies
Boori (1994)	Naturally occurring data	Accept: 48%, Evade: 27.5%, Reject: 22.5%
Sharifian (2005)	DCTs	*Shekasteh-nafsi* schema
Sharifian (2008)	DCTs	*Shekasteh-nafsi* schema
Yousefvand (2010)	DCTs	Agreement: 43.49%, Non-agreement: 24.82% Other interpretations: 31.7% Male vs. Female: Agreement (34.49% vs. 52.70%) Non-agreement (27.39% vs. 21.90%) Other interpretations (38.14% vs. 25.24%)
Karimnia and Afghari (2011)	Naturally occurring data	Upgrade and Downgrade (frequency): 11 Contrastive Opposites: 6 Returns: 7 Scaled-Down Agreement: 5 Reassignment of Praise: 7
Behnam and Amizadeh (2011)	Naturally occurring data	Rejection>Acceptance
Heidari et al. (2011)	DCTs	Male vs. Female: Accept (71% vs. 65%) Evade (22% vs. 21%) Reject (5% vs. 13%)
Allami and Montazeri (2012a)	DCTs	Comment: 24.9%, Reassignment: 17.5% Appreciation token: 12.1%, Offering: 7.4% No acknowledgement: 6.3%, Comment acceptance: 5% Disagreement: 4.9%, Return: 3.8%, Comment history: 3.3%, Question: 3.3%, Scale down: 2.9% Praise upgrade: 2.6%, Request interpretation: 1.9% Politeness formula: 1.2%, Entreaty: 1.2%, Qualification: 1%, Smiling: 0.7% Male vs. Female: Comment (27% vs. 22.9%) Reassignment (18% vs. 17%) Offer (8.1% vs. 6.7%) Appreciation token (9.8% vs. 14.2%) Question (2.1% vs. 4.4%) Comment acceptance (4.5% vs. 5.6%) All age groups: A similar order of frequency in CR category (positive elaboration, neutral elaboration, acceptance, no response, negative elaboration, denial, and smiling) The diploma and university student: A similar order of frequency in CR category (positive elaboration, neutral elaboration, acceptance, no response, denial, negative elaboration, and smiling Graduated student: Positive elaboration, neutral elaboration, acceptance, no response, denial, negative elaboration and smiling.
Allami and Montazeri (2012b)	DCTs	Appreciation token: 31.4%, Comment acceptance: 18.3% Return: 10.7%, Comment 6.7%, Question: 6% Offer: 4.5%, Reassignment: 4.4%, Smiling: 3.6% No acknowledgement: 3.6%, Disagreement: 3.1% Comment history: 2.7%, Request interpretation: 2.1% Scale down: 1.9%, Praise upgrade: 0.4% Qualification: 0.4%, Entreaty: 0.1% Male vs. Female: Appreciation token (Male>Female) Comment acceptance (Male>Female) Comment (Male>Female) Offer (Female>Male) Reassignment (Male>Female) Return (Female>Male) Question (Female>Male) Under 20 vs. 21-30 vs. 31-40: Appreciation token (Under 20>21-30>31-40) Comment acceptance (31-40>21-30>Under 20) Comment (31-40> Under 20>21-30) Offer (21-30> Under 20>31-40) Reassignment (31-40> Under 20>21-30)

		Return (21-30>Under 20>31-40) Question (31-40>21-30>Under 20) Diploma vs. University student vs. Graduated student: Appreciation token (Student>Graduated>Diploma) Comment acceptance (Student>Graduated>Diploma) Comment (Graduated>Diploma>Student) Offer (Diploma>Graduated>Student) Reassignment (Diploma>Student>Graduated) Return (Diploma>Graduated>Student) Question (Diploma>Graduated>Student)
Motaghi-Tabari and De Beuzeville (2012)	DCTs	Agreement>Non-agreement>Other interpretations
Yousefvand (2012)	DCTs	Agreement 44.6%, Non-agreement 24.82% Other Interpretations 31.70%
Mohajernia and Solimani (2013)	Questionnaire	Mitigate>Accept>Request Interpretation>Reject>No acknowledgement
Razi (2013)	DCTs	Accept>Evade>Reject Accept: 50% Evade: 30% Reject: 20%
Razmjoo et al. (2013)	Naturally occurring data	Agreement: 67.6%, Non-agreement: 24.2% Other Interpretations: 7.9% Male vs. Female: Agreement (66.5% vs. 68.48%) Non-agreement (24.9% vs. 23.3%) Other Interpretations (8.2% vs. 7.6%)
Sadeghi and Zarei (2013)	DCTs	Accept: 75.6%, Evade: 16.4%, Reject: 1%
Sorahi and Nazemi (2013)	DCTs	Accept>Evade>Reject
Shahsavari et al. (2014)	Role plays and Interviews	Persian: Combination> Acceptance>Evasion
Shabani and Zeinali (2015)	DCTs	Persian (Male vs. Female): Accept (78% vs. 75.33%) Evade (15.66% vs. 19.66%) Reject (6.33% vs. 5%)
Eslami et al. (2015)	Naturally occurring data	Verbal strategies: Accept: 95%, Evade: 3%, Reject: 1%, Combination 1% Male vs. Female: Accept (92% vs. 98%) Evade (5% vs. 1%) Reject (2% vs. 0.5%) Combination (1% vs. 0.5%) Nonverbal strategies: Clicking “like”: 93%, Clicking “like” + eEmoticons: 4% Emoticons: 3% Male vs. Female: Clicking “like” (92% vs. 94%) Clicking “like” + eEmoticons (6% vs. 3%) Emoticons (3% vs. 3%)
Dehkordi and Chalak (2015)	Naturally occurring data	Acceptance>Non-acceptance
Tamimi (2015)	DCTs	Acceptance: 54.8% Combination: 22.9% Amendment: 10.5%, No Acknowledgment: 4.8% Non-acceptance: 1.4%, Face Relationship: 1.4% Male vs. Female (Frequency): Acceptance (62 vs. 52) Combination (33 vs. 23) Amendment (16 vs. 6) No Acknowledgment (2 vs. 8) Non-acceptance (1 vs. 2) Face Relationship (1 vs. 3)
Boroujeni et al. (2016)	Naturally occurring data	Agreement>Non-agreement >Other Interpretations
Jalilzadeh et al. (2016)	DCTs	Accept>Evade>Reject
Yazdani Khaneshan, and Bonyadi (2016)	DCTs	Accept>Evade>Reject Male vs. Female: Accept (72.8% vs. 74.8%) Evade (19.3% vs. 19.9%) Reject (8% vs. 5.2%) Teenagers vs. Adults: Accept (77.9% vs. 69.8%) Evade (17.6% vs. 20.1) Reject (4.5% vs. 10%)
Morady Moghaddam (2017)	Naturally occurring data	Tarof, Shekasteh-nafsi, H-reciprocation, Sha'n, DPR
Shahidipour (2017)	DCTs	Accept>Reject>Evade

		Under 18: Appreciation Tokens (Most frequent) Other age-groups: Downgrade (Most frequent)
Shahidipour and Zarei (2017)	DCTs	Accept 48.45% (Appreciation Token 19.11%, Return 23.54%, and Upgrade 5.80%) Evade 23.1% (Explanation 9.55%, Reassignment 0%, Request Interpretation 11.09%, Topic shift 0%, Reassurance 1.36%, Other 1.10%) Reject 28.4 (Downgrade 25.76%, Disagreement 2.64%) Under Dip vs. Dip. vs. BA/BS vs. MA/MS vs. PhD/MD: Accept (43.61% vs. 45.29% vs. 48.06% vs. 52.85% vs. 54.54%) Evade (25.9% vs. 25.7% vs. 24.59% vs. 19.51% vs. 19.17%) Reject (31.26% vs. 28.97% vs. 27.3% vs. 27.61% vs. 26.25%)
Sarkhosh and Alizadeh (2017)	DCTs	Young vs. Old: Accept (81.70% vs. 52.08%) Evade/Deflect (Young 13.11% vs. 36.64%) Reject (5.09% vs. 10.51% Young vs. Old (Male): Accept (81.25% vs. 55.2%) Evade/Deflect (15.13% vs. 35.50%) Reject (3.6% vs. 9.64%) Young vs. Old (Female): Accept (82.26% vs. 50.1%) Evade/Deflect (11.33% vs. 37.7%) Reject (6.39% vs. 11.47%)
Motamedi (2018)	Naturally occurring data	Self-praise avoidance>Acceptance>Combination> Rejection
Sharifian et al. (2019a)	Naturally occurring data	Non-acceptance> Acceptance Male vs. Female: Acceptance (19.5% vs. 80.5%) Non-acceptance (26.1% vs. 73.9%)
Sharifian et al. (2019b)	Naturally occurring data	Non-acceptance> Acceptance
Eslami and Derakhshan (2020)	Naturally occurring data	Accepting: 75.53%, Deflecting/Evading: 17.73% Rejecting: 6.74%
Chalak and Derakhshan (2021)	Naturally occurring data	Verbal strategies (Male vs. Female): Accept (84.6% vs. 95.5%) Evade (7.7% vs. 4.5%) Reject (5.1% vs. 0%) Combination (2.6% vs. 0%) Nonverbal strategies (Male vs. Female): Clicking "like" (18.9% vs. 41.4%) Clicking "like" + eEmoticons (51% vs. 48.6%) Emoticons (30.1% vs. 10%)

The differences in results might be partially related to the variation of methodology, as Golato (2003) has illustrated how different data collection methods can affect the use of compliment response strategies. In addition, as noted by Yuan (2002), different classification models can also affect the findings. Moreover, the modality of the context used (Online vs. Face-to-face) seems to be another variable that contributes to variations in CR strategies used.

4.4. Gender Differences in Using CR Strategies

Reviewing Persian studies that examined gender differences in employing CR strategies showed that both male and female Persian speakers are most likely to use 'Agreement' strategy to respond to Cs. Besides, they opted more to 'Accept' strategy than 'Reject' and 'Evade'. Regarding the differences in employing CR strategies, the findings indicated that there is no uniform pattern to compare males and females. However, of 12 Persian studies investigated gender differences, eight studies (Chalak & Derakhshan, 2021; Eslami et al., 2015; Heidari et al., 2011; Razmjoo et al., 2013; Sarkhosh & Alizadeh, 2017; Sharifian et al., 2019a; Yazdani Khaneshan & Bonyadi, 2016; Yousefvand, 2010) illustrated that female Persian speakers use more accept and agreement strategies, but less reject, evade, and non-agreement strategies than males do (See Table 4).

4.5. Age Differences in Using CR Strategies

Among 35 Persian studies conducted on CRs, only five studies (14.2%) investigated age differences in employing CR strategies. The results of these studies showed that both young and old Persian speakers tend to use '*Accept*' strategy to respond to compliments. These

findings also indicated that young Persian speakers tend to use more accept strategy but less reject and evade than their older counterparts do (See Table 4).

4.6. Educational Background Differences in Using CR Strategies

Of 35 Persian studies conducted on CRs, three studies (8.5%) considered educational background differences. Allami and Montazeri (2012b) have found that university students and graduate students tended to use appreciation tokens and comment acceptance, while lower educated ones (Diploma) were most likely to use the return strategy. Regarding macro strategies, Shahidipour and Zarei (2017) have reported that participants with higher education (i.e., BA/BS, MA/MS, Ph.D./MD holders) were inclined to use accept strategy more than participants with lower education (i.e., under Diploma & Diploma).

5. Concluding Remarks

This review article was a state-of-the-art review of related research on the speech act of CRs in Persian. The review included a detailed discussion of research frameworks and methods used to study CRs in Persian. CRs, various micro and macro strategies used for their realizations, and the impact of contextual variables, including age, gender, and educational background, were explored in this synthesis. The results of the current study represented some major trends in using CR strategies. First, Persian speakers are more likely to use *'Accept'* and *'Agreement'* macro strategies and *'Appreciation Tokens'* and '*return'* micro strategies to respond to compliments. In other words, other CR strategies such as using 'Evade, Reject, and Non-agreement' are not leading strategies among Persian speakers. Second, regarding the role of situational factors in using CR strategies, the findings demonstrated that the role of age, gender, and educational background is prominent in the Iranian culture.

Review articles, as put forward by Swales (2004), often have a look back into the recent past rather than a look forward into the immediate future. However, such review articles might be read not only for an up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of what is occurring but also for gaining information about where advancements, better research methodologies, and so on might help to develop the field. Hence, in the following section, this study offers some directions in which this line of research can further increase our knowledge of language use and the area of pragmatics, notably speech acts.

The review of the previous studies conducted on CRs in Persian, offers insights for areas of inquiry that can improve our knowledge on this topic. Some avenues for further research are presented hereunder.

Reviewing Persian studies conducted on CRs illustrated that the impact of ethnic variations (e.g., Arabs, Baluchs, Turkmans, Mazanis, Azeris, Lors, Kurds, and Gilaks) on employing CR strategies has not been examined. Ethnicity, as one of the macro-social dimensions of variational pragmatics, can cause variations in language use patterns (Barron & Schneider, 2009). Accordingly, Sifianou (2013) stated that types of strategies employed to respond to compliments are subject to variation mainly because of individual, social, and cultural variables. Given the importance of ethnicity in language patterns, it is suggested that future research studies could focus on the effects of ethnicity on choosing CR strategies.

Due to the importance of situational variables (i.e., age, gender, educational background, and culture) in language use variations, extensive Persian studies have been carried out to investigate CR strategies across gender and culture. However, few studies (*f*=8) examined the effect of age (*f*= 5) and educational background (*f*= 3) variations, as other situational variables, on employing CR strategies. As such, further studies should fill this lacuna by examining CR strategies across age and educational background.

Among 35 Persian studies conducted on CRs, only six studies (17.1%) investigated compliment patterns in online interactions (Chalak & Derakhshan, 2021; Dehkordi, & Chalak, 2015; Eslami et al., 2015; Motamedi, 2018; Sharifian et al., 2019a, 2019b). Considering the increasing popularity of online communication, it is worth exploring how CR patterns change when Persian native speakers communicate in online settings (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook). Therefore, future studies need to be conducted

to examine the extent to which the context can affect the compliment strategies employed by Persian speakers.

More than half of Persian studies (53%) used DCTs (oral/written) to collect data. However, DCT is not a reliable means for measuring pragmatic actions since it indirectly represents participants' accumulated responses (Golato, 2005). As such, the participants' CRs collected by DCTs may not reveal real-time language use patterns. It is recommended that future CR studies employ natural data collection methods, including field observations, recordings of naturally-occurring interactions, and role-plays to obtain more accurate data. Using natural methods, researchers are able to collect a large database through which the findings of the study will be strengthened (Golato, 2003).

Inspired by the ideas of Sapir and Whorf (1956), Vygotsky (1986), and Halliday (1994), which imply the relation among language, thought, and culture, Pishghadam (2013) proposed the concept of "*Cultuling*", that is, culture in language. He explicated that studying the cultulings of each society can accelerate the detection of right and wrong cultural behaviors that contribute to linguistic excellence. Therefore, analyzing Cs and CRs as the prime instances of cultuling would be beneficial. Several models have been developed for analyzing cultulings, among which, one can refer to Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, and Derakhshan's (2020) conceptual model of CLA in which emo-sensory, cultural, and linguistic differences are considered. Employing the CLA model, researchers can explore different cultulings (e.g., Cs and CRs) and supply the essential information for policymakers and planners to improve the quality of life.

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