

AUE Students' Practice of the Speech Act of Compliment

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Abstract

This paper investigated AUE students' practice of the speech act of compliment while they were communicating in English; it also investigated the most common positive adjectives adopted by them and the effect of the topic of the situation on the compliments. The participants of this study were 15 female and 15 male students at AUE. To gather the required data for the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire in the format of a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which had eight situations, provoking the speech act of compliment. The results of the study revealed that the factor of gender among AUE students had almost no effect on their compliment forms, on the adopted positive adjectives, nor on their interest in the topic of the compliment. The participants did not compliment properly: They ignored some of the most common forms of compliment in English, they used a lot of compliments that are not common in English, and they used jokes and Arabic words transcribed in English to convey compliments. The most two frequent positive adjectives adopted by the participants were 'nice' and 'good'. Finally, the results revealed that the topic of the setting was not a crucial factor to enhance the participants to convey the compliments. In conclusion, the researcher recommended that the speech act of compliment must be taken into consideration while teaching English language courses to enable students to use them more properly.

Key words: AUE (American University in the Emirates), sociolinguistic competence, speech acts, the speech act of compliment