A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF COMPLIMENT TOPICS USED IN THE ROMANTIC MOVIES MANUSCRIPT

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ABSTRACT


This study focused on compliment topics found in the romantic movies. This research aimed to describe the variations of compliment topics in the romantic movies manuscript. The study used descriptive qualitative research in which research participants were the characters who produced 52 compliment topics in the romantic movies (especially in Pride and Prejudice and Shakespeare in Love movies). The data were utterances that contained compliment topics. The data were collected by documentation, then the data were classified, analyzed, and drawn the conclusion. The research findings showed the compliment topic between male to male tended to include possession (37.5%), ability (31.25%), physical appearance (0%), personality (25%), and quality (6.25%). As for compliment topic used by male to female tended to use possession (18.75%), ability (31.25%), physical appearance (37.5%), personality (0%), and quality (12.5%). As for compliment topic used by female to female tended to give a compliment about possession (11.11%), ability (44.44%), physical appearance (44.44%), personality and quality (0%). As for compliment topic used by female to male tended to use possession (21.43%), ability (14.29%), physical appearance (42.86%), personality (7.14%), and quality (14.29%).

Keywords: compliment, compliment topic, gender

1. Introduction

Compliment is a way to increase people’s confidence. Compliment is not only an utterance which contains words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, but it has a meaning between the lines. Besides that, compliments also have some functions in interpersonal communication. There are six classifications of speech act: declarative, representative, expressive, directive, commissive, and
interrogative. Compliment utterance is under the category of expressive utterance. Expressive utterances contain the speaker’s feel to the hearer. Women and men tend to give compliments about different things. Women and men can give a compliment to other about possession, ability, appearance, and personality. Women have tendency to be complimented on their appearance more often than men. Men usually appear to prefer to give a compliment to other men on possession. Compliments on appearance to men can make them be embarrassed. Holmes (in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 187) states that “an appearance compliment is clearly an expression of solidarity, a positively perfective act. Compliments on possessions are much vulnerable to interpretation as face-threatening acts”. So, men use more potentially face-threatening compliments than women.

2. Literary Review

Compliment is often used by someone to appreciate other. The appreciation contains the physical appearance, what other people to do (achievement), what other people’s personality, and what other people use (dress, skirt). Holmes (in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 177) states that “a compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credits to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, etc) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.” Compliments are usually intended to make others feel good (Wierzbicka in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 178). Wolfson (in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 178) states that “a compliment as social lubricants which create or maintain rapport.” Compliment also as devise to make other people happy and feel confidence. Compliments are clearly positive politeness devices which express goodwill and solidarity between the addressee and the addresser. The important function of a compliment is most obviously affective and social, rather than referential or informative. There some different functions of using compliments are as follows (Holmes in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 181):

a. To express solidarity;
b. To express positive evaluation, admiration, appreciation or praise;
c. To express envy or desire for hearer’s possessions;
d. As verbal harassment

There are two kinds of compliment strategies (Ming – Chung Yung Journal, 2005; 48-91):

a. Direct Compliments
   It refers to remark including linguistic forms that directly and unambiguously frame these comments as compliments; direct compliment involves the topics complimented, such as:
   1) Isn’t the food great!
   2) I’m impressed a lot!
   3) I really like your hair that way.

b. Indirect Compliments
   It refers to remark which would be seen as compliments by the addressee, although the positive semantic carrier generally associated with complimenting is missing at the level of the linguistic form. Despite the fact that the linguistic forms of these utterances are indirect and less conventionalized so as to allow the addressee to make other possible interpretations of the intended meaning, this type of comment can usually be interpreted as having complimentary force. Hence, it seems obvious that compared to direct forms, indirect compliments need more inferences on the part of the addressee to reconstruct the intended meaning conveyed in the message by the speaker. Indirect compliment involves the topic complimented. For example:
   1) Wow, I hope I’ll have a coat like this.
   2) Your boyfriend is a very lucky man.
   3) Wow, what did you do to your hair?
4) When did you learn to play this?

Women and men can give a compliment to other including some compliment topics. Manes and Holmes (in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 187) describe four variations of compliment topics:

a. Appearance compliment
   I like your outfit Beth. I think I could wear that

b. Ability/ performance compliment
   Wow you played well today Davy

c. Possessions compliment
   Is that your flash red sports car?

d. Personality/ friendliness
   I’m very lucky to have such a good friend.

This study is not only one study that done by the writer. There are some references those become inspiration to this study. Tang and Zhang (2008) studied Compliment Responses among Australian English and Mandarin Chinese Speakers. This research had goal to investigate compliment responses (CR) among Australian English and Mandarin Chinese speakers. The data were collected through the use of written discourse completion tasks (DCT), with four situational settings (appearance, character, ability and possession). The results of this study demonstrated a consistent tendency across the macro, micro and combination levels for the Chinese participants to use fewer Accept strategies, and more Evade and Reject strategies, than their Australian counterparts; that were the Chinese expressed appreciation for a compliment less and denigrated themselves more. For the Chinese participants, an implicit and ‘detouring’ approach was at least as desirable as an explicit CR. This was in line with modesty and collectivism—pillars of Chinese culture. Australians on the other hand prefer using explicit CRs. Other results showed that the Chinese participants used far fewer
combination strategies than the Australians, indicating that the Australians made more effort when responding to compliments.

Other research was conducted by Ngoc (2011), entitled *Gender Based Differences in Compliment and Compliment Responses in the American Comedy TV – Series “Ugly Betty”*. The aim of this research was to differentiate the compliment behavior and compliment response strategies in American English between males and females. The data were collected from the ten episodes in the first season of the American Comedy TV series “Ugly Betty”. The results showed that there were significant differences between males and females in giving compliments and using the response strategies. Females tended to compliment other females more whereas males complimented females far more than they complimented other males. In terms of functions, females used compliments most often to establish, confirm or maintain solidarity while male compliments more often offered admiration. The findings of the differences in response type frequencies from the two groups revealed that there was more likelihood of a non-agreement than agreement.

3. **Research Method**

This study uses of descriptive qualitative method which conducted by collecting data, classifying data, analyzing data and drawing conclusion. The data are the utterances that contained compliment topics in *The Romantic Movies* manuscript. Technique of collecting data is documentation. The object of the study is compliment topics uses Holmes’s theory (in Paulson and Tucker, 2003) conducted on pragmatic analysis found in *The Romantic* movies manuscript.

4. **Research Findings and Discussion**

There are five types of compliment topics that will be investigated and discussed in this part. They are possession, ability, physical appearance, personality, and quality.
a. **Research Findings of Compliment Topic Types**

Addresser gives a compliment is not only to the second person, but also it can be given to the speaker itself and the third person. There are five kinds of topics that can be complimented by the characters in these romantic movies.

1) Possession

The compliment is attributed to the things of the addressee. The things are real. The examples of possession compliment topics used by the characters are as follows:

a) 027/DATA/PAP

Lizzie : **What a beautiful pianoforte.**  
Georgiana : My brother gave it to me.

The addresser gives a compliment about the pianoforte of the addressee. The addresser gives a compliment to the second person. So, the addresser gives a compliment about the addressee’s possession.

b) 010/DATA/SIL

Shakespeare : Master Henslowe, you have your actors...  
except Thomas Kent.  
Mr. hugh fennyman : **I, uh, I saw his Tamburlaine, you know.**  
**It was wonderful.**  
Shakespeare : Yes, I saw it.

The addresser gives a compliment about the Tamburlaine of the third person. So, he praises the third person’s possession.

2) Ability

The compliment also can be attributed to the ability of the addressee or the performance of the addressee. The examples of ability compliment topics used by the characters are as follows:

a) 003/ DATA/PAP  
Mr. Bingley : I enjoyed that so much, Miss Lucas.  
Mrs. Bennet : **How well you dance, Mr Bingley.**
Mr. Bingley : I've never enjoyed a dance so much

The compliment *how well you dance, Mr. Bingley* shows that the addresser gives a compliment about the addressee’s dancing ability directly.

b) 018/DATA/SIL

Viola : I wanted to be an actor. I'm so sorry, Will.

Mr. Wabash : You were... w-w-w- wonderful.

Viola : thank you

The compliment *you were wonderful* shows that the addresser gives a compliment about the addressee’s performance. The compliment is given by the addresser because the addressee can play an actor as prince very well.

3) Physical appearance

Addresser gives an admiring comment to the addressee about his/her physical appearance. Physical appearance is about his/her face, her beauty, his/her lips and etc. The examples of physical appearance compliment topics used by the characters are as follows:

a) 006/DATA/PAP

Mrs. Bannet : Of course, it's my Jane who's considered the beauty of the county.

Lizzie : Mama, please!

The addresser delivers that Jane (the third person) is the most beauty of the country. A compliment about a beauty of someone is a kind of physical appearance compliment topics. The purpose of the compliment above is to exaggerate of Jane’s physical appearance.

b) 012/DATA/SIL

Kent : Is your lady beautiful? Since I came here from the country, I have not seen her close. Tell me, is- is she beautiful?

Shakespeare : Thomas, if I could write with the beauty of her
eyes, I was born to look in them and know myself.

Kent: A- And her lips?

A compliment on someone’s appearance is not only about the addressee’s beauty, but it also involves the addressee’s eyes, lips, hair, face, and etc. The addresser above gives an admiring comment about the addressee’s eyes. So, he praises the addressee’s physical appearance.

4) Personality

Personality of the addressee also can be praised by the addresser. Commonly, it is about non-physical appearance of the addressee (characteristic or friendliness). The examples of personality compliment topics used by the characters are as follows:

a) 007/DATA/PAP

Jane: Mr Bingley is just what a young man ought to be. Sensible, good-humoured...

Lizzie: Handsome, conveniently rich...

Jane: Marriage should not be driven by thoughts of money.

The addresser above gives a compliment about the characteristic of the third person. Consequently, the addresser above praises the third person about his personality.

b) 015/DATA/SIL

Ned: Romeo and Juliet. Just a suggestion.

Shakespeare: Thank you, Ned. You are a gentleman.

Ned: And you are a Warwickshire shit-house.

The addresser gives a compliment you are a gentleman to the addressee. It shows that the addresser pays tribute to the addressee about his personality.
5) Quality

The addresser can give a compliment to the addressee due to his quality. It is about his/her non-physical appearance. The examples of quality compliment topics used by the characters are as follows:

a) 014/DATA/PAP

Mrs. Bennet : Does she have any family?
Tn. Collins : One daughter, the heiress of Rosings and very extensive property. *I've often observed to Lady Catherine that her daughter seemed born to be a duchess, for she has all the superior graces of elevated rank.* These kinds of compliments are always acceptable to the ladies, and which I conceive myself particularly bound to pay.

Mr. Bennet : How happy for you, Mr Collins, to possess the talent for flattering with such delicacy.

The compliment *I've often observed to Lady Catherine that her daughter seemed born to be a duchess, for she has all the superior graces of elevated rank* shows that the addresser gives a compliment about the quality of Lady Catherine’s daughter (the third person). The addresser admires her high quality as a duchess.

b) 009/DATA/SIL

Shakespeare : a lowly player.
Viola : *alas, indeed. For I thought you the highest poet of my esteem...* and a writer of plays that capture my heart.
Shakespeare : Oh, I am him too.

The compliment *you the highest poet of my esteem* shows that the addresser compliments the addressee’s quality as poet. The addresser thinks that the addressee has a high quality as a poet. It is proven by the addresser’s compliment.
b. Discussion of the Findings

Referring to the theory from some linguistics theorists and the previous chapter, the writer would discuss the finding of research. Addresser gives a compliment is not only to the second person, but also it can be given to the speaker itself or the third person. Paulston and Tucker (2003) explain that there are four basics of compliment topics that are appearance compliment, ability/performance compliment, possessions compliment, and personality/friendliness compliment. Based on Holmes (in Paulston and Tucker, 2003: 177) states that a compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credits to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, ect) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer. In this study, the writer does not only find a compliment in an utterance, but an utterance can contain two or more compliments to the addressee. For example: What a superbly featured room and what excellent potatoes. It's many years since I've had such an exemplary vegetable. To which fair cousin should I compliment the excellence of the cooking? (013/DATA/PAP). That compliment contains two topics complimented. They are possession (Mrs. Bennet’s house) and ability (the excellence to cooking the potatoes). Other example is the compliment What about Mr. Wickham? He's a pleasant fellow and he'd do the job credibly (020/DATA/PAP). This compliment is given by Mr. Bennet to Mr. Wickham. This compliment contains two topics that are personality (Mr. Wickham is a pleasant fellow) and quality (he has a good job). The last example is the compliment alas, indeed. For I thought you the highest poet of my esteem... and a writer of plays that capture my heart (009/DATA/SIL). This compliment is spoken by Viola to Shakespeare. This compliment also contains two topics that are quality (Shakespeare is a highest poet/ a best poet) and physical appearance (he is handsome, so Viola falls in love with him).
The compliment is often used by someone to appreciate others, but this study finds a compliment that attributed to the addresser itself. For example, I flatter myself that any young lady would be happy to be the mistress of such a house. That compliment attributed to the first speaker or addresser. Wierzbicka (in Paulston, 2003: 178) states that the compliments are usually intended to make others feel good. This study found a compliment that makes other be disgusted with the speaker. The condition is when the speaker gives a compliment to the third person about her high level. For example, I’ve often observed to Lady Catherine that her daughter seemed born to be a duchess, for she has all superior graces of elevated rank (014/DATA/PAP). The addressee feels disgusted to the addresser’s compliment because the addressee dislikes the addresser’s personality.

The compliment also can be sarcastic. It occurs when the content of a compliment is perceived as too distant from reality, be sarcastic. The data provides an example of sarcastic compliment: you play so well (028/DATA/PAP). This sarcastic compliment is given by Georgiana to Lizzie. Georgiana just gives a compliment to her without seeing the reality. Lizzie feels that she disables to play a piano. So, Georgiana’s compliment is sarcastic because her compliment is not appropriate to the truth.

There is a difference of topic complimented both male to male and male to female. Male tends to give a compliment to male (addressee) about his possession (37.5%), such as his house, costume, plays, title, and Tamburlaine. Normally, male does not give a compliment about physical appearance to other. He will be proud if there is someone who gives a compliment about his possession. On the contrary, male tends to give an admiring comment to female about her physical appearance (37.5%). Female likes to be praised by other, especially by male. Besides that, male will compliment female if he loves her. The following chart will explain
the percentage of the variations of topic complimented by male to male and male to female.

Chart 1.1: Compliment topics and the gender of participants

Furthermore, there is also a difference of the topic complimented both female to female and female to male. First, female usually gives a compliment to female about her ability and physical appearance (44.44%). Besides female likes to be praised, she also likes to give a compliment to other. She makes a solidarity by uttering a compliment to other. Second, female tends to give an admiring comment to male about his physical appearance (42.86%). She will give a compliment to his physical appearance if she falls in love with him. Besides that, female usually likes male because his physical appearance first. The following chart will explain the percentage of the variations of topics complimented by female to female and female to male.
5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings and discussion of findings about compliment topics, there are some compliment topics uttered by characters: possession, ability, physical appearance, personality, and quality. Based on the findings and discussion of the findings, the most compliment topic used by male to male is possession (37.5%), ability (31.25%), physical appearance (0%), personality (25%), and quality (6.25%). For male to female, the most compliment topic is physical appearance (37.5%), possession (18.75%), ability (31.25%), personality (0%), and quality (12.5%). In contrast, the most compliment topic used by female to female is ability and physical appearance (44.44%), possession (11.11%), personality (0%), and quality (0%). The most compliment topic used by female to male is the physical appearance (42.86%), possession (21.43%), ability (14.29%), personality (7.14%), and quality (14.29%). So, the gender differences of the addresser and addressee have an effect on delivering of compliment topics in expressing compliment utterance.

According to the result of the research, there are some suggestions for the readers and another researcher who are doing the similar research. This research can be inference to other researchers. This research found some impolite utterances in data. Another researcher can do an analysis about the impolite of compliment utterance in these romantic movies or other movies. These romantic movies also can be a good example of compliment analysis.


