

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

A language is a communicative instrument possessed by every individual, consisting of a system of vocal symbols articulated through the mouth. Language serves as a medium for the exchange of knowledge, intellect, and experience. In the communication process, the speaker articulates utterances and transmits a message to the listener with clarity, prompting a reply or response from the listener.

Individuals exhibit a variety of responses to compliments. The answer, of course, is contingent upon the social environment, occasion, circumstances, and psychological state of the listener. One may respond directly by saying 'thank you,' while another may decide to say 'not really,' or yet another may reply with 'do you want it?' etc. Holmes (1996) asserts that compliments are ubiquitous in various cultural and social contexts and are generally perceived as a mechanism to cultivate or strengthen solidarity between the speaker and the listener.

Compliment and compliment response is one of language phenomena that occurs in social interactions. Compliments are frequently employed in human culture to greet, encourage, comment, express gratitude, and commend during conversations. While, sociolinguists have categorized the three responses to a compliment there are: acceptance, deflection, or rejection. Therefore, compliments and its response cannot be separated. Zhang (2013) states that compliments and responses to compliments are essential speech acts employed in

everyday interactions to commend and congratulate others or to acknowledge their praise. For examples when you wear a new scarf and your friend said:

"WOW! That's suits on you and you look gorgeous, I swear."

Or when fans meet their artist for the first time she said:

"OMG!! You are very handsome and tall! I couldn't take my eyes of you!"

From those examples, we can see that you are giving compliment.

The context of the provided examples can be defined as a dyadic sociolinguistic interaction where the illocutionary force of the compliment varies based on the degree of social distance and solidarity between the participants. In the first instance involving a friend, the context is one of horizontal solidarity, where the informal and emphatic praise serves as a "social lubricant" to reinforce interpersonal rapport and validate the recipient's positive face within a familiar social circle. Conversely, the encounter between a fan and an artist represents an asymmetrical social context characterized by a significant power disparity and emotional affect, shifting the function of the compliment from routine rapport-building to an intensive expressive act of admiration. Consequently, both scenarios demonstrate that the pragmatic meaning of a compliment is inherently tied to the situational environment and the specific relational dynamics existing between the addresser and the addressee.

In terms of how people communicate with others, there are numerous speech acts that occur in a conversation such as complimenting, asking, requesting, apologizing, and so forth. Austin (1975) defines a speech act as the

actions executed by uttering something. For instance, when we hear something bad from someone, we know we will directly say

"I'm sorry to hear that" or
"I don't mean to make you recall your bad memories"

Another situation that we often found when people or someone give command toward other by saying *"Stand up Please!"* or when someone we know gives advice to us like *"You must open your eyes because people pretending well"*. From those examples, people can realize that they use various speech acts in their daily life conversations.

Dirgeyasa (2015) stated that complimentary expressions are commonly utilized in communication. Offering and recognizing compliments serves as a means to cultivate relationships and enhance interpersonal connections during communication. It is seen as a politeness tactic to facilitate harmonious conversation. Typically, when an individual receives a compliment, they instinctively and mentally experience feelings of excitement and joy. Herbert (1998) identified four categories of compliments: those pertaining to appearances, performances or skills, assets, and personality. Initially, compliments regarding beauty are offered to acknowledge the aesthetic qualities of others. It generally pertains to the physical attributes of the addressee, including attire, hairstyle, physique, etc. For example, "Your dress appears exquisite!". A complement on performances, skills, or abilities acknowledges the recipient's contributions and achievements resulting from their talents or efforts. For example, "You delivered an excellent performance." The complement on possessions refers to a commendation directed towards another individual's belongings. For instance, "I

admire your new automobile!". Ultimately, a compliment on personality pertains to an individual's intrinsic qualities or emotions. For example, "O, she is a patient woman!"

Upon receiving a complement, one should reciprocate with a compliment in return. The recipient will often acknowledge the compliment. Nevertheless, praises are not invariably recognized in practice. Pomerantz (1978) posits that two principles govern the theory of complement responses, placing the addressee in a challenging position.

Herbert (1998) posits that compliments directed towards others elicit a reaction termed the complement response. The composition of a complement resembles that of an adjacency pair. Consequently, praises and answers are inherently interconnected. Herbert (1998) categorized complement replies into three types: agreement, non-agreement, and other interpretations. Each category is subdivided into multiple subcategories.

Students acknowledging compliments and comprehending their significance is crucial for their development. This presents a challenge for non-native speakers whose social values and norms diverge from those of the target language culture. It may also be unique and diverse in terms of gender perspectives.

The research examines the influence of gender differences on the use of praises by males and females. This study seeks to examine the roles of compliments utilized by male and female characters. Rustam (2017) found that revealing and female Iranian teenage EFL learners opted to avoid and reject more

than their male classmates. Yusof and Hoon (2014) examined compliments and responses to compliments on Twitter. They propose that significant disparities exist between male and female participants regarding compliments and responses to compliments. Women typically complimented attractiveness, whilst men generally praised goods. In replying to compliments, female speakers acknowledge the remark to maintain a happy face, but males typically employ comment acceptance.

A response to a compliment is regarded as a speech act worthy of examination, as such responses can have multiple roles (Herbert, 1990). The synergy of praises and corresponding reactions enhances the efficacy of a particular interaction. On the other side, incorrect complement answers result in interaction failure, which contradicts the objectives of compliments, as the primary function of compliments is to promote solidarity in interpersonal interactions.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Taking into consideration the context of the study that was presented before, the following issues can be identified:

1. What are the types of compliment responses used by male and female students at Senior High School?
2. How are the realizations of compliment responses used by male and female students at Senior High School?
3. Why are Compliment Responses realized by male and female students at senior high school as the way they are?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the background of the problem above, the objective of the study is formulated as follow:

1. To examine the types of compliment responses used by male and female students at Senior High School.
2. To explain the realizations of compliment responses used by male and female students at Senior High School.
3. To analyze compliment Responses realized by male and female students at senior high school as the way they are.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

In everyday life and in social interactions, there are many different forms of speech acts that can be found. On the other hand, the researcher is primarily concerned with the use of language in context, particularly speech acts that compliment comments obtained from male and female pupils attending senior high school. The participants in the research are the only people who can take part in the study. The researcher only focuses on grade eleventh students *Inggris Tingkat lanjut Informatika (Inglanfor Class)* namely 30 people, consisting of 15 males and 15 females.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

This study aims to elucidate the utilization of compliments and the corresponding answers employed by English teachers and learners in Senior High School. The findings of this study are anticipated to yield knowledge that will be beneficial theoretically, practically, and for the readership, as follows:

1. Theoretically

This study's findings are expected to improve the comprehension of compliment expressions and their responses, while also promoting in-depth knowledge, especially in the pragmatic analysis of compliments and their responses produced by English teachers and learners in Senior High School.

2. Practically

- a. For students, compliment responses as reference material, it facilitates successful communication and the management of our relationships with others.
- b. For Teacher, the finding of this research will also be useful for the teacher since it will give more information about compliments and compliment responses. Furthermore, this study can advance the field of pragmatics research.
- c. For the Readers, to give information as a reference, providing data and resources for those who want to research with similar issues and background. As input and comparison for other researchers planning to investigate the same issue.