Compliment Responses of the Main Characters in Indonesian and American Movies

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ABSTRACT

Movies can be said as a reflection of real life. This study is aimed at finding the compliment responses by the main characters in two movies. The movies are 'Mars Met Venus' and 'Hitch'. The data were taken from the utterances of the main characters, both are male and female, that were considered as compli[1]ments' responses. The topics of the compliments in those two movies are appearance, ability, personality, and possession. The finding resulted in this research showed that there were 20 compliment responses found in those movies. There are silent, return, questioning, reassignment of praise, explaining, shifting to other topics, appreciation, and agree. In 'Mars met Venus, there are silent (3 times), returns (3 times), questioning (3 times), reassignment of praise (1), and explaining (1). While in 'Hitch', there are shifting to other topics (4 times), appreciation (1), explaining (1), questioning (2 times), and agree (1). Based on those, it can be concluded that questioning (25%) got the highest percentage, then shifting to other topics (20%), silent (15%), return (15%), explaining

(10%), agree (5%), reassignment of praise (5%) and appreciation (5%). Questioning as the highest percentage in these movies shows that the person being complimented needs more explanation about the compliment. In comparison, there are similarities and differences from those movies. Those differences are the reflections of different cultures represented by the two movies.

Keywords*: Pragmatics, movie, compliment response.*

INTRODUCTION

Different societies usually have a different style of communication. Wardhaugh (2006) said that society is an association of people with the same purposes. According to Trosborg (2010), east and west societies have a different character. For example, in western culture, one of the characters is 'individualism' or 'it's none of my business' (Wierzbicka, 2003). So, different cultures can make the way people speak in a different way also. To see the differences, it can be seen from the movies, since movies are a reflection of daily life.

Compliment as one kind of utterance happened in society. A compliment is 'a class of speech acts which can be characterized in terms of the following semantic component: I want to say something good about you.' (Wierzbicka, 2003: 136) Here in this study, the focus is compliment response. Besides that, the compliments are taken from two movies with the same theme, those are 'Mars met Venus' from Indonesia and 'Hitch' from America. The main characters of each movie are a couple, so there are compliments and also responses in those movies that can be analyzed.

There were some researches about compliments, one of them is Razi (2013). In this study, the researcher conducted a contrastive study about compliment responses among Australian English and Iranian Persian speakers. The data were taken from discourse completion tasks given to a group of Iranian university students. The result that there were some differences between English and Persian speaker in relation to compliment response. Another study was done by Sucuoglu and Bahcelerli (2015). The study aimed at assessing compliment responses of native and non-native Turkish. The participants were six native and six non-native Turkish ELT students. By doing discourse completion tasks, the results showed that there were significant differences in responding to compliments between native and non-native Turkish ELT students.

The study that was conducted here is different from those previous studies, furthermore, discourse completion tasks were not done in this study. The aim of the study is to compare the main characters of the movies 'Mars met Venus' and 'Hitch' about their responses toward their partners' compliments. In comparing, it is to find the similarity and also the difference between the way people responses to compliments. The movies were used as the reflection of our surrounding as mentioned by Mahmood (2013). According to him, " Cinema is the most complex and powerful art form … help us to better understand our own lives …" From this opinion, it can be said that we can reflect ourselves through movies.

The importance of doing the study is for people to find out that different cultures can also mean a different way of speaking. Since this study is focusing on the compliment response, so it is necessary to find out the different ways of giving responses to compliment between those two cultures reflected in the movies. By knowing the differences, hopefully, people will know how to respond to a compliment given by other people from different societies.

Pragmatics and Intercultural Pragmatics

One of the definitions about Pragmatics is 'Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding' (Levinson, 1983: 21). It can be said that Pragmaticss discuss the utterance in context, which is different from semantics, that can discuss meaning without context. Every data in Pragmaticss analysis needs to include the context.

Since Pragmaticss is very closely related to context, so different countries, different languages, and of course different utterances are common things that can be seen in our surroundings. For example, one of the causes that English is different from Polish in expressing a request is because of the 'polite pessimism' that is one of the characteristics of Anglo Saxon culture (Wierzbicka, 2003).

Compliment response

There are many kinds of compliment responses. A compliment here can be characterized into: 'I want to say something good about you' (Wierzbicka, 2013). According to Pomerantz (1978) in Wierzbicka (2003), there are some theoretical construct: 'agreement' and 'disagreement', 'upgrades' and 'downgrades', and 'referent shifts'. Below is the illustration of each category:

1. Agreement

   A: x

   B: I think the same.

2. Disagreement

   A: x

   B: I don't think the same

3. Upgrades

   A: x is good

   B: X is very good

4. Downgrades

   A: X is very good

   B: X is good

5. Referent shifts

   A: I want to say something (Y) about X

   B: I want to say it (Y) about something other than X.

   While Wierzbicka (2003) also tries to elaborate Pomerantz category. She made 6 categories, those are:

1. Upgrades

   A: I think x is good

   B: I think the same

      I would say X is very good

2. Contrastive opposites

   A: I think X is very bad

   B: I don't think the same

      I think X is very good

3. Scaled-down agreement

   A: I think something about you is very good

   B: I think the same

      I think it is good

      I don't want to say: very good

4. Downgrades

   A: I think your X is very good

B: I don't think the same

I wouldn't say it is very good

Because something about it (Y) is not good

5. Reassignment of praise

A: A praises B

B: B praises other than self

6. Returns

A: A compliments B

B: B compliments A

Besides that Wierzbicka (2003) in her book, also mention about: 'appreciation' (A: I think that something about you (your X) is very good; B: Thank you).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a comparative study, in which the result will be the identification of what is common and what is shared across contexts (Hammond, 2013). It can be a comparison between countries, or just simply compare within the same country but across time. In this study, the researcher compared the compliment response between Indonesia and America, so it is between the two countries. By comparing those two movies from different countries, the similarity and differences can be reflected from them. The two movies that the researcher used were 'Mars versus Venus' (Indonesia) and 'The Hitch' (America). Those two movies are chosen because, in those movies, there are many compliments found and also the theme of those movies is the same, that is romance.

In the following paragraphs, the summary of those two movies is provided. The first one is 'Mars versus Venus'. There are two people who are dating for 5 years, their names are Kelvin and Mila. Then they planned to make VLOG (video blog) that is meant to be their documentation of their long journey in having the relationship. In making the video, they asked their friend to record it. In the process of making the video, the story also goes back to the time when they first met until now. What upset Mila, is for 5 years dating with her, she has never been introduced to Kelvin's family in Padang. So, Mila went to Jogjakarta with her friends to take a break. One day, she got called from her mom that Kelvin and his family were there in

Mila's house in Jakarta, and they do video calls. Mila was so happy and decided to come home to Jakarta to meet them. Finally, they got engaged.

The second one is 'The Hitch'. There is a man named Alex Hitch, and his job is like a consultant, helping guys who have difficulty in starting a relationship, by giving tips, information about the girl that they liked and create an opportunity for them to meet each other. Then there is a woman named Sara Melas, a journalist in a newspaper. Both of them met and liked each other. Then Sara found out the real job of Hitch, and she felt that it was wrong and decided to leave Hitch. Hitch tries to convince her that, his job only creates an opportunity for a man and a girl to meet and know each other. Finally, they get together again.

There are some steps in the procedure of data collection. First, the researcher looked for American and Indonesia movies with the same genre and theme. Besides, the compliments are a must to be found in those movies. After getting the movies, the next step is to watch those movies, in order to find the compliment response as the focus of the study. The responses then are classified based on the categories. And finally, the last process before analyzing the data is 'coding'. This is to make the analysis process easier.

The procedure of data analysis is the next one after the data is being coded. The similarities and differences in those two movies were to be found by comparing the compliment responses using Wierzbicka's theory. After that, the discussion of the similarities and differences were made to know deeper about them. The last one is to make a conclusion based on the analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The sources of the data are from movies. Since the movies are going to be compared, so they must be in the same genre and the same theme. Of course, one movie should be in English and the other in Indonesia. The titles of the movies are: 'Mars met Venus' in Indonesia and the other is 'Hitch' which is in English. The genre of the movies is romance and the theme is about a man and a woman who are dating each other.

The data taken from the movies are compliments from the two main characters of each movies Mila and Kelvin from 'Mars met Venus' and Sara and Hitch from 'Hitch'. Other compliments from other characters from the movies were not included in this study. There are 11 compliments from the Indonesian movie, while in 'Hitch', there are 9 compliments found.

Classification from the data were based on the gender. Here is the classification:

Table 1. Compliment Response Classification 'Men Met Venus'

Compliments Towards (Topic)	Male	Female
Appearance	-	Silent (2)
		Return (4)
		Questioning (5)
		Reassignment of praise (11)
Ability	Explaining (1)	Questioning (9)
	Returns (6)	Returns (10)
Personality	Silent (3)	Silent (8)
	Questioning (7)	
Possession	-	-

Compliments found in this movie are about appearance, ability, and personality, whereas compliment about possession cannot be found here. In this table, it can be seen that the compliment response can be grouped into 5 categories, i.e. return, reassignment of praise, silent, questioning, and explaining. Silent here meaning that the person did not say and do anything after receiving the compliment. Questioning and Explaining are when the person received the compliment, he or she questions or explains it to the person giving the compliment. There are 3 silent, 3 return, 3 questionings, 1 reassignment of praise, and 1 explaining. It can also be seen from that table that the male often gives compliments to his partner since the female produces more compliment responses than males.

Table 2. Compliment Response Classification The Hitch

Compliments Towards (Topic)	Male	Female
Appearance	Shifting to other topics (1)	Appreciation (4)
		Shifting to other topics (2,6)
Ability	Explaining (3)	Shifting to other topics (5)
		Questioning (9)
Personality	-	-
Possession	Agree (7)	-
	Questioning (8)	

From the table above, it can be seen that most of the responses are shifting to other topics. In this movie, compliments found are about appearance, ability, and possession. No compliment is found in the category of personality. The compliment responses from the table are 4 shifting to other topics, 1 appreciation, 1 explaining, 2 questioning and 1 agree. From the table also can

be seen that the male often gives compliments to his partner since even though it slightly different. The compliment responses were produced more by a female rather than a male.

Below is the description of the data based on Theme.

1. Appearance

It can be seen that the most favorite topic for a compliment is about other's appearances. In 'Mars met Venus' there are 4 compliments from the male character to the female character. The female character (Mila) also responds differently in each compliment, those are, by being silent, returns, questioning, and the reassignment of praise.

Here is one example of the compliment by Kelvin (the male character) to Mila. The context is in the restaurant, where Kelvin was taking a picture of Mila who was eating in front of him. Then, there is a sexy woman passing by and Kelvin looks at the woman for a while.

Extract 5 (Mars met Venus)

Mila: sexy an mana sama Aku? (Which one is sexier?) my translation
Kelvin: Ya, kamulah sayang. (You, darling.)
Mila: Masak sih? (Are you sure?)

In this context, Mila is questioning Kelvin's Compliment by asking the question. Probably because there is one moment when Kelvin looks at the other girl while Mila is sitting in front of him. People will pay attention to something more attractive, so it is natural that Mila questioning the compliment. It is also probably because she is jealous.

Move to 'Hitch', there are also 4 compliments about appearance, but divided into male and female. The male character (Hitch) response toward the compliment is shifting to other topics, while the female character (Sara) response toward the compliments are appreciation and shifting to other topics. Here is one example of Sara's response, when Hitch said, that she is beautiful. The context is when both of them are ready to go to work and want to say goodbye.

Extract 4 (Hitch)

Hitch: Beautiful girl.
Sara: Thank you.

The response is 'thank you' which means that Sara appreciates Hitch's compliment by saying thank you.

2. Ability

In this topic, there are 4 compliments found, 2 each from Mila and Kelvin with different responses. Kelvin's responses toward Mila's compliment are explaining and returns, while Mila's responses toward Kelvin's compliment are questioning and returns. Below is the extract from the movie, where Mila gave a compliment to Kelvin. The situation is in the restaurant, where they have an appointment with their friend. Mila said that their appointment is at 4 p.m. so, Kelvin came at 4, but then actually the appointment was at 5 p.m. So, Kelvin had to wait for about 1 hour and while waiting, he drew something in his scratch book.

Extract 1 (Mars met Venus)

Mila: Ngganggur apa? Kamu ini melukis bagus lagi. (doing nothing? You draw beautifully) **my translation**

Kelvin: Ini, aku pakai sayap-sayap. (Here, I use wings)

In this extract, Mila gave a compliment to Kevin's drawing. In return, Kelvin explained about his drawing in response to Mila's compliment. He gave more description of his drawing.

In the other movie, there are 3 compliments found, 2 for Sara, in which she shifting to other topics and questioning, and 1 compliment for Hitch, in which he responses with explaining. Here is one example of Sara's compliment to Hitch. At that time, early in the morning, Hitch came with breakfast while Sara was still waking up.

Extract 3 (Hitch)

Sara: Oh God, you are a morning person, aren't you?

Hitch: Well you know, like what I always tell my clients, begin each day, as if it was on purpose.

To Sara, the morning starts at 10 a.m., so she seemed to surprise and give a compliment to Hitch, that he is a morning person. The response from Hitch is by giving an explanation of what he always tells his clients about waking up in the morning. So, Hitch needs to explain to Sara, that this is his habit of waking up early as it is always mentioned to his clients.

3. Personality

No compliment about personality in 'Hitch' the movie but, there are 3 compliments found from the Indonesian movie. The compliments are divided into 2 compliments from Mila to Kelvin, and 1 compliment from Kelvin to Mila. The responses are the same, that has remained silent, but in one compliment, Kelvin questioning Mila's compliment. This is the extract. The context at that time was when they were being asked by their friend, who is the most romantic between the two of them.

Extract 7 (Mars met Venus)

Mila: Ya, Kelvin lah. Ya nggak, ya nggak? *(Kelvin, of course. Are you?)* (sambil senyum-senyum melihat Kelvin) *looking at Kelvin with smiling.* **My translation.**
Kelvin: Kok jawabnya sambil gitu sih. *(Why did you answer that way?)*

In that extract, Mila answered their friend's question with a smile on her face. Kelvin thought that by answering the question with smiling, it means that the answer is not really sincere. That is why he is questioning Mila's compliment. Even though, Mila said that Kelvin is more romantic than her.

4. Belonging

In this topic, the compliments were only found in the movie 'Hitch' and only done by Sara. The compliment responses from Hitch are agreed upon and questioning. Below is one example from Hitch's response toward Sara's compliment about Hitch's house. The context of the conversation is at that time, Sara came to Hitch's apartment for the first time.

Extract 7 (Hitch)

Sara: Wow, so this is it.
Hitch: Yeah, this is it.

Sara gave compliments while looking around at the house and Hitch agree with the compliment by saying 'yeah' and repeating Sara's comment.

Based on Table 1, Table 2 and data description in the previous part, there are similarity and differences in the compliments' responses. The explanation will be in the following points.

1. Similarity

Without looking at the topics, in those two movies, there is 'questioning' in the compliment's response. In the Indonesian movie, there are 3 questionings (extract 5, 7, 9) and in the other movie, there are 2 questionings (extract 9, 10) as the complement response.

Another interesting thing from those movies is, when talking about ability, males tend to explain more, when their partners giving compliments about their ability. It can be seen from extract 1 (Mars met Venus) and extract 3 (Hitch).

Extract 1 (Mars Met Venus)

Context: In a restaurant, while waiting for Mila, Kelvin draws a picture. Then Mila gave a compliment for the drawing.

Mila: … kamu ini melukis bagus lagi. (you draw beautifully)
Kelvin: Ini aku pakai sayap-sayap.(Here, I use wings)

Extract 3 (Hitch)

Context: When Sara wakes up in the morning, Hitch came with breakfast.

Sara: … you are a morning person.
Hitch: well, you know. like I always tell my clients, begin each day …

From both extracts, it can be seen that both male characters from the movies, gave the response to the compliments by explaining. In the Indonesian movie, Kelvin explains more about the detail of his drawing, while Hitch telling Sara, about what he always tells his clients about waking up in the morning.

Another similarity that can be found, is questioning from female characters from both movies as the response of their partner's compliments about their ability. Here is the sample:

Extract 9 (Mars Met Venus)

Context: When Kelvin was asked by his friend, what is his favorite food that is made by Mila.

Kelvin: …mi goreng jumbo kornet, telur, keju, susu. Aduh meninggal. Kamu udah jarang masakin. (…fried noodle with canned corned beef, egg, cheese, milk. Wow, death (fantastic). You rarely cooked that.) My translation

Mila: gitu doang (only that?)

Kelvin: Kamu tuh kayak Erwin Gutawa yang bikin mi goreng enak gitu. (You are Erwin Gutawa (music composer) who made a delicious fried noodle)

In the extract above, Mila was questioning Kelvin's compliment. The questioning makes Kelvin needs to explain or clarify the compliment. Furthermore, the explanation can be another compliment for Mila.

Extract 10 (Hitch)

Context: Hitch tried to convince Sara to believe and listen to him. Sara was on the way to go somewhere to meet her sister.

Hitch: … and there's only one person that makes me feel I can fly. That's you.

Sara: so, you kindda like me?

Both female characters in the movies are questioning their partners' compliments. Mila questioning Kelvin's compliment about the fried noodle, on the other hand, Sara questioning Hitch's compliment by giving questions. Here, Sara also needs an explanation or clarification from Hitch concerning his compliment.

So those are the similarities that can be drawn from the data collected.

2. Differences

Many differences can be seen from those two movies. Here 2 differences are going to be discussed in the following sections.

a. Topic

In this part, based on Table 1, it can be seen that both appearance and ability are discussed in both movies. In 'Hitch' the main characters don't talk and give a compliment about personality, which is different from the Indonesian movies. Mila and Kelvin gave compliments about their partner's personality, and give responses with silent (3, 8) and questioning (7). Interestingly, Mila and Kelvin didn't give a compliment about 'belonging', but Sara gave a

compliment about Hitch's apartment. The response from the compliments is agreed (7) and questioning (9).

b. Kind of compliment response

In 'Mars met Venus' there are 'silent' (extract 2, 3, 8), 'returns' (extract 4, 6, 10), and 'reassignment of praise' (extract 11) as the response of their partner's compliments, while we cannot find those responses in 'Hitch' the movie.

For example, in extract 11, where Mila puts on makeup on her face and Kelvin gave compliment for that.

Extract 11 (Mars met Venus)

Kelvin: Kamu dandan? (Did you put makeup on your face?) my translation

Mila: Iya (yes)

Kelvin: Mubazir amat, cewek cantik dandan. (It's useless, a beautiful girl puts on makeup on her face)

Mila: Ah, kamu bisa saja. Cantik, namanya juga cewek. (Well, you. Beautiful is for a girl.)

Kelvin said that it is useless when the girl is already beautiful and then put on make-up on her face. Here, Mila responds to the compliment by saying that as girls, they are beautiful.

On the other hand, we cannot find 'shifting to other topics' (1, 2, 5, 6), 'appreciation' (4), and 'agree' (7) in 'Mars met Venus' because those responses only can be found in 'Hitch'.

For example, in extract 6 (Hitch), Sara came to Hitch's apartment after Hitch recover from his allergic to seafood.

Extract 6 (Hitch)

Hitch: Well, aren't you a sight for sore eyes?

Sara: I believe this belongs to you. (Handed Hitch's shirt to him)

Hitch said that Sara is a sight for him, as we know that his eyes were sore at that time. Here, Sara shifts the topic and ignores the compliment. She talks and gives back Hitch's shirt that she brought from home.

CONCLUSION

This paper aims to find out and compare the compliment response of two movies 'Mars met Venus' and 'Hitch'. In 'Mars met Venus, there are silent (3 times), returns (3 times), questioning (3 times), reassignment of praise (1), and explaining (1). While in 'Hitch', there are shifting to other topics (4 times), appreciation (1), explaining (1), questioning (2 times), and agree (1). From the data found in this research, it can be concluded that questioning with 25% got the highest percentage. After that, the others can be described as follow: shifting to other topics (20%), silent (15%), return (15%), explaining (10%), agree (5%), reassignment of praise (5%) and appreciation (5%).

The topics that are mostly discussed in giving compliments are appearance and ability. This is in line with what Chen said in Trosborg (2010), that the topic of the compliments falls into two broad categories: appearance and/ or possession and ability and/or accomplishment. While Manes and Wolfson (1983) study in Trosborg (2010), mention that woman receive more compliments than men and women's response toward compliments are more geared toward social harmony than men. In these movies, the male receives 8 compliments while the female receives 12 compliments. In responding to the compliments in these two movies, females tend to shift to another topic, questioning or silent. On the other hand, males tend to question the compliment, apart from other responses.

In this paper, the compliment response of characters in those two movies is varied. It can probably base on the character's personality and also based on the culture. Take for example, 'appreciation' as the compliment response. Here, Sara (a female character from 'Hitch') responds the compliment from Hitch, by appreciating. Pomerantz in Wierzbicka (2003) mentions that 'appreciation' is the preferred Anglo-Saxon strategy. So, it can be concluded that complement response is different in every country as reflected in those two movies, and one of the reasons is because of a different culture. This research has its limitation, so for the next research the number of movies can be added and the kind of speech act can be others than compliments.

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