LEXICAL AND SYNTACTICAL SPECIFICITY OF COMPLIMENTS IN THE PLAYS OF OSCAR WILDE, NAMELY "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" AND "IMPORTANCE OF BEING THE EARNEST

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Annotation: *This article studies syntactical, and lexical structure of compliments in English language. It also highlights complimentary statements and analyses their grammatical and lexical specificity based on the works of Oscar Wilde's "Importance of being Earnest" and "An Ideal Husband". Additionally, there are given analysis of complimentary statements in these two works in terms of to whom and what they are used for.*

Key words: *linguoculture, compliment, lexical markers, speech genre, syntactic means,*

ЛЕКСИЧЕСКАЯ И СИНТАКСИЧЕСКАЯ СПЕЦИФИКА КОМПЛИМЕНТОВ В ПЬЕСАХ ОСКАРА УАЙЛЬДА «ИДЕАЛЬНЫЙ МУЖ» И «КАК ВАЖНО БЫТЬ СЕРЬЕЗНЫМ».

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Аннотация: В данной статье исследуется синтаксическая и лексическая структура комплиментов в английском языке. Также выделяются комплементарные высказывания и анализируется их грамматическая и лексическая специфика на основе произведений Оскара Уайльда «Как важно быть серьезным» и «Идеальный муж». Дополнительно дается анализ комплементарных высказываний в этих двух произведениях с точки зрения того, кому и для чего они используются.

Ключевые слова: *лингвокультура, комплимент, лексические маркеры, речевой жанр, синтаксические средства,*

Introduction

Speech is frequently recognized as a kind of social behaviour, and as such, it is governed by precise, unambiguous laws that are an essential part of a society's universal standards of behavior. The prominent American speech ethnographer and sociolinguist Dell Hymes stated as follows: "Action is a connection between grammar and all other

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components of a speech event or scenario in the sense that this level entails both linguistic forms and social norms."[1]

The theory's creator, M.M. Bakhtin, asserts, "We communicate exclusively in specific speech genres, that is, all our assertions have definite and generally stable typical ways of creating the whole." Our library is filled with many oral (and written) speech genres; these speech genres are provided to us in a similar manner to how our native language, which we speak well, is provided to us.[2]

The addresser (speaker), who builds his speech based on his own communication strategy, is free to select one speech genre over another in a particular situation. The notion that the addresser carries out his speech intent, which is somewhat similar to personal goals familiar from previous social experience, in accordance with a fairly stable pattern of cognitive and communicative actions, words living in a certain area of spiritual culture, is given a lot of weight in contemporary genre studies.[3]

The "speech-formulation" of compliments is described by their etiquette characteristics as well as their functions in casual conversation between known and unknown parties. As widely noted in linguistic research, the primary extralinguistic function of compliments is to foster or strengthen intercommunicant solidarity. Because of their function and the way they "reflect cultural values," we believe compliments are "ready-to-use speech formulations."[4]

Methods

In English linguoculture, the syntax of compliments makes the etiquette and formulaic nature of them quite clear: most addressees of this speech genre use elliptical sentences in addition to entire declarative and exclamatory words. A collection of the complimenting syntactic constructions used by famous English speakers is shown below.

"Syntactic means used by addressers of the speech act "Compliment" in English linguoculture":
1) the structure "you + be + adj. (noun)"
2) elliptical sentence
3) exclamatory sentence
4) structure "you + V + adverb (noun)"
5) structure "you + look + adj. (noun)"

[1] Hymes D. On communicative competence // Socioloinguistics. Harmondsworth, 1972. P. 57.
[2] Bakhtin M.M. The problem of speech genres // Bakhtin M.M. Aesthetics of verbal creativity. M., 1979. S. 257.
[3] Salimovsky V.A. Genres of speech in functional and stylistic coverage. Perm, 2002, p. 42.
[4] Manes J. Op. cit. P. 97; Wolfson N. Perspectives: Sociolinguistics and TESOL. Cambridge, 1989. P. 113; Wierzbicka A. English Speech Act Verbs: A Semantic Dictionary. Sydney, 1987. P. 202.;

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6) emphatic constructions

7) repetitions

8) comparative turnovers

9) structure "you + have + adj. + noun"

10) parallelism

11) structure "I love/like + your + (adj.) + noun"

Let's look at the syntactic means that have been mentioned. Let us state up front that we will not regard exclamatory sentences to be a different syntactic category.

English compliments are a clear example of T. van Dijk's theory that a statement's semantic interpretation can start with a syntactic interpretation based on insufficient knowledge about surface syntactic structures: the addressee's interpretation of the meaning encoded in lexemes as an etiquette praise begins with the interpretation of peculiar two-part linguistic formulas.

According to the analysis, half of all compliments in the English language based on the two works of Oscar Wilde's "Importance of being Earnest" and "An Ideal Husband" employ the formula *"you + to be + adjective (noun")*:

ALGERNON.

[To Gwendolen.] Dear me, you are smart!

(Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

ALGERNON.

Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [Cecily puts the rose in his buttonhole.] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

(Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

JACK.

You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

(Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

CHASUBLE.

Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

(Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

LORD CAVERSHAM. [Looking at her with a kindly twinkle in his eyes.] You are a very charming young lady!

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

LADY MARKBY. [Reflecting.] You are remarkably modern, Mabel.

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

The adjective portion of this grammatical form is made up of a variety of emotives and the universal evaluative predicate excellent. These lexemes convey the admiration, excitement, and delight that the addressers have in response to the addressees' actions,

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appearance, and mental prowess. It's important to note that these statements usually utilize exclamatory intonation.

Syntactic means often used in the Compliment speech act also include the structures *"you + look + adjective (noun), you + verb + adverb (noun), you + have + adjective + noun, I love (like) + your + (adjective) + noun":*

MABEL CHILTERN. How sweet of you to say that, Lord Caversham! Do come to us more often. You know we are always at home on Wednesdays, and you look so well with your star!

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

LADY BASILDON. You look quite English, Vicomte, quite English.

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

ALGERNON.

I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

(Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

The adjective (nominative) element of English compliments formed using these structures might be represented by emotives such as *gorgeous, lovely, swell*, idioms like *stand alone = have no equal*, the general evaluative predicate *good*, or descriptive constructs, as in the final scenario.

Emphatic constructions and exclamatory sentence

We single out four emphatic constructions in English compliments: what a+ A+N, how + A, such a+ N, what + A:

ALGERNON. What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

(Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

CECILY. What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary. (Oscar Wilde "Importance of being Earnest")

LADY BASILDON. What a horrid combination! So very unnatural!

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

MABEL CHILTERN. What sort of a woman is she?

LORD GORING. Oh! a genius in the daytime and a beauty at night!

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN. How beautiful you look to-night, Gertrude!

LADY CHILTERN. Robert, it is not true, is it? You are not going to lend your support to this Argentine speculation? You couldn't! (Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

MABEL CHILTERN. I don't want you to have any. They would not be good for you.

LORD GORING. That is the first unkind thing you have ever said to me. How charmingly you said it! Ten to-morrow.

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

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LORD GORING. How sweet of you to say so! . . . And it is only fair to tell you frankly that I am fearfully extravagant.

(Oscar Wilde "An Ideal Husband")

Addressers might utilize interjections (most commonly "oh") in the beginning of sentences to express their honest respect for the personal traits of the addressees using emphatic constructions. An examination of our data reveals that such a combination of lexical and syntactic expressive techniques is uncommon in either praise or flattery situations in English linguoculture.

Results

The "addressee zone's" emotional representation of emotions boosts the emotiveness of utterances while also ensuring that the addressees achieve their illocutionary purpose.

Regarding the patterns of compliments, i.e. the sentence structure, Wolfson and Manes established the following nine patterns in 97% of the interactions:

1. NP {is, looks} (really) ADJ PP: "Your raincoat is really nice."
2. I (really) {like, love} NP: "I really like your hair."
3. PRO is (really) (a) (ADJ) NP: "That's a neat jacket."
4. You V (a) (really) ADJ NP: "You did a (really) good job."
5. You V (NP) (really) ADV PP: "You really handled that situation well."
6. You have (a) (really) ADJ NP: "You have such beautiful hair!"
7. What (a) (ADJ) NP!:"What a lovely baby you have!"
8. ADJ (NP)!:"Nice game!"
9. Isn't NP ADJ!:"Isn't your ring beautiful!"

whereby

NP = noun phrase

ADJ = adjective

PRO = pronoun

V = verb

ADV = adverb

Most speakers make use of a semantic formula: I like / love NP. Compliments are seen as formulaic speech acts or formulae. Compliments may be employed in a number of settings due to their organized syntactic and semantic development.

Regardless of whether or not the explicit lexical verb 'compliment' is used, the speech act of 'compliment' is maintained via a variety of semantic structures. According to Manes and Wolfson[5], each complement must include at least one phrase with positive semantic weight. They discovered that the bulk of praises are limited to a small number of adjectives and verbs.

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[5] Wolfson, N. (1981). Compliments in cross-cultural perspective. TESOL Quarterly, 15,117-124.

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They also discovered that (80%) of their data is adjectival, meaning it relies on an adjective for positive semantic value. Five of these words are used frequently (pleasant, good, beautiful, attractive, and fantastic), whereas the majority only appear once or twice in the data. The two most often used adjectives are 'pleasant' and 'good,' which account for 22.9 percent and 19.6 percent of the data, respectively. The findings of this study reveal that "these adjectives are semantically imprecise, allowing speakers to employ them with an almost infinite variety of nouns," for example.

„Your home is nice.“

„You are such a good cook.“

Other adjectives are 'beautiful, pretty, and great' appear in, and of all adjectival compliments in the data, 'pretty' on the other hand, is more specific than the others. All of these adjectives occur with different topics.

”You did a beautiful job of explaining that.“

„That was a really great job.“

„That shirt is very pretty.“[7]

Lexical markers of the emotional concept "Compliment" are the *admirable, capital, charming, clever, creditable, gentle, judicious, perfect, pleasant, pure, reasonable, sensible, sharp, smashing, superficial, sweet-natured, worthy* adjectives, as well as adverbs in the adjectival function *beautifully, nicely*.

In the works of Oscar Wilde's "Importance of being Earnest" and " An Ideal Husband" we can see different lexical markers such as adjectives: *smart, short-sighted, perfect, generous, forgiving, charming, modern, morbid, best, pretty, marvelous, nice, sweet, refined, extraordinary, perfect, impetuous, sweet, great, delightful, clever, secretive, noble, highest, kind, trivial, romantic, horrid, unnatural, genius, beautiful, thoughtful, extravagant, sensible, ideal, younger, right, willful, simple, suitable,* adverbs: *quite, very, remarkably, perfectly, wonderfully, comparatively, extremely, charmingly, immensely*.

In these two works there are some exclamatory words such as *"How", "What",* and also some nouns are used for giving compliments with adverbs in order to give high emotiveness.

In the analysis of these works, I can admit that some adjectives are used quite often as a positive compliment such as *pretty* 17 times, *sweet* 11 times, *perfect* 10 times, *charming* 9 times, *genius* 8 times, *young* 7 times, *best* 6 times, *nice* 5 times and *kind* 4 times, *romantic* 3 times, and other adjectives are utilized in small numbers. As for

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[6] Wolfson, N. (1981). Compliments in cross-cultural perspective. TESOL Quarterly, 15,117-124.

[7] Peng Xiamei, Z. Y. (2014). Compliment: A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Awareness: A Pilot Project Report. Canadian Social Science, 10(5), 93-98

adverbs such as *quite* and *perfectly* are used 11 times, *wonderfully* 5 times and other adverbs amount to small identities.

Now, we will look into some complimentary statements and lexical markers what type of compliments they are used for. For example:

"It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations." (Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

In this example, the addresser is complimenting to the possessions of what the addressee has. There are also some examples of complimenting to the things or family members of the addressee:

"And now may I walk through your beautiful house? I hear your pictures are charming." (Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

Here the speaker is complimenting two things that the listener owns namely "the house" and "the pictures". The lexical markers "beautiful" and "charming" are used as complimentary words.

"What a charming house you have, Lady Chiltern!" (Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

"Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew." (Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

"I thought your frock so charming last night, Miss Chiltern. So simple and . . . suitable." (Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

"I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen."
(Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

"She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them." (Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

"She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability."
(Oscar Wilde, "Importance of being Earnest")

"Oh! I must shake hands with Lady Markby. She is delightful. I love being scolded by her." (Oscar Wilde, "An Ideal Husband")

"Wonderful woman, Lady Markby, isn't she? Talks more and says less than anybody I ever met. She is made to be a public speaker." (Oscar Wilde, "An Ideal Husband")

Discussions

In the examples above where the compliments addressed to a third person who wasn't there when other two or three people talking, the lexical markers such as "wonderful", "genius", "delightful" are mostly used this means that these adjectives are common for making compliments to strangers in order to keep positive face of an addressee.

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Examining gender differences in lexical choice, I found that women intensified compliments by using "pretty " more than men, but I realized that in these two works men used mostly the word "*charming*" for complimenting the appearance of the women ,however, there are no salient differences in the use of intensifiers. This result intensified my conclusion that compliments from females will most likely not be accepted whereas compliments from males will, especially by female recipients since most complimentary statements are given by men in these works.

Conclusion

The general lexical means of expressing the emotional concept "Compliment" include the emotives *beautiful, divine, delightful, excellent, marvellous, nice, remarkable, sweet, tremendous, wonderful*, lexical intensifiers *highly, perfectly, pretty, quite, so, such, wonderfully, very, oh, ah* interjections. The lexical markers of the concept "Compliment" include the emotives *smart, short-sighted, perfect, generous, forgiving, charming, modern, morbid, best, pretty, marvelous, nice, sweet, refined, extraordinary, perfect, impetuous, sweet, great, delightful, clever, secretive, noble, highest, kind, trivial, romantic, horrid, unnatural, genius, beautiful, thoughtful, extravagant, sensible, ideal, younger, right, willful, simple, suitable*. The general syntactic means of expressing these emotional concepts include elliptical and exclamatory sentences, simple repetition, the emphatic construction *how/what (a) ...* and the comparative turnover like.

A number of units can be considered syntactic means such as synonymous repetitions, parallel constructions, comparative turnover *as ... as*, emphatic construction *such (a)* refer to the means of expressing the concept "Compliment". The syntactic structure of the concept "Compliment" are the followings: *the structure "you + be + adj. (noun)"; exclamatory sentence; structure "you + V + adverb (noun)"; structure "you + look + adj. (noun)"; emphatic constructions; repetitions; comparative turnovers; structure "you + have + adj. + noun"; structure "I love/like + your + (adj.) + noun"*.

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