

## COMPLIMENT-BLAME RELATION AND RESPONSES

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### ABSTRACT

Compliment and blame are rhetorical devices that people use to evaluate other people's behaviours as well as to motivate and educate them to act according to moral norms of their society. Yet, these speech acts can be used to express someone's attitudes towards the addressee. Whereas compliment is implemented to denote admiration and approval, blame is used to denote disapproval and criticism. The main objective of this study is to study these two speech acts and to show how one of them can be expressed by means of the other because a lot of studies have been done on compliment and compliment responses without shedding light on its relation with blame.

The study consists of four sections and conclusions. The first section presents an introduction to the study. The second and third sections deal with compliment and blame from a theoretical viewpoint. The fourth section is devoted to the practical side of the study. To attain the aims of the study, the researcher has designed a questionnaire containing 20 questions and information about participants such as grade and gender. The questionnaire is distributed to 40 students of department of English at Al-Muthanna university: 20 from second year and 20

from fourth year: 10 males and 10 females in each stage to show variation in participants' uses of compliment and blame according to their stage and gender. Finally, the study ends with the most important conclusions it reaches at.

**Keywords: compliment, blame, and compliment-blame relation.**

## 1. Introduction

Compliment and blame are devices used by people to fulfill certain functions. This study aims at:

1. Presenting a theoretical viewpoint about compliment and blame including their definitions, forms and functions.
2. Explaining how students of department of English implement and respond to these speech acts in their daily life.
3. Showing whether forms of compliment can be used to convey blame or not and vice versa.

It is hypothesized that:

1. Compliment and blame can be expressed via two ways: explicit and implicit.
2. Each one of these speech acts can be conveyed by means of each other.
3. Students' uses of compliment and blame vary according to their stage and gender.

## 2. Compliment as A speech Act

Compliment can be defined as "an intricate combination of positive evaluation, displayed good feelings, implicit friendliness, and half-admitted desire to please" (Kodma, 1996: 59, cited in Al-Abodi, 2005: 21). It is also defined as the "speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some good (possessions, characteristics, skills, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and hearer" (Holmes, 1988: 446). Two basic concepts are implied in this definition. The first one is that there is an act performed through the use of compliment. Thus, it is considered as a speech act. The second one is that this speech act differs from one culture to another. Like other speech acts, compliment is used to indicate specific functions. This is in agreement with Austin's speech act in which he said that there is an action performed through saying an utterance, i.e. the addresser makes "the locutionary act" for the performed utterance in addition to its reference and sense, moreover, he makes "an illocutionary speech act". Surely, these acts affect the addressee's performance, feelings, attitudes and behaviours. Austin calls them as "perlocutionary acts". Thus, compliment could be seen as an utterance performed with certain reference and sense of approval, admiration, and evaluation (Mustapha, 2012: 223).

Austin distinguished two types of sentences, which are performative and constative. The former is a declarative sentence, which performs an action. It has effects on the addressee, i.e., perlocutionary acts whereas the latter is a declarative statement that could be judged whether it is true or false:

1. "I do take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife" (ibid).

This sentence is performative because it is performed in marriage ceremony.

2. "I like/admire/love your skirt" (Aakhus and Aldrich, 2002: 401).

In spite of its lacking of performative verbs, this sentence implies compliment. Compliment can be regarded as indirect speech act, i.e., it is performed via using other acts like assertions. Moreover, most compliments are constatives because their accuracy or inaccuracy could be judged:

3. "Your skirt is nice" (Mustapha, 2012: 223).

4. "You look nice" (ibid).

Additionally, Austin's two classes, i.e., performatives and constatives, could be mixed together into one, i.e. utterances having similar properties "truth/falsity and felicitous/infelicitous". Austin's two classes require judging their truth/falseness as well as their felicity/infelicity (Schiffrin, 1998:54). Broadly speaking, compliment lacks performative verbs though in minor cases such verbs might be used:

5. "I compliment you on your nice tie" (Mustapha, 2012: 223).

This makes compliment differ from other speech acts such as request or promise which have evident performative verbs.

Furthermore, Searle developed Austin's felicity conditions. Illocutionary force of compliment can be analyzed in relation to Searlean felicity conditions. Felicity conditions of compliment are provided by Jacob et al. (1993). These conditions include propositional condition, sincerity condition, preparatory conditions as well as essential conditions. The first condition implies that

positive evaluation of the thing being complimented must be referred to by the addresser. The second condition implies that the addresser must believe in (or validate) what he has said. The third condition implies that the attribute or the thing being complimented should be notable or prominent and the addressee can take credit from it. The fourth condition implies that the utterance must be regarded as approval or commendation and add credit to the addressee. On the whole, compliment can be considered as a speech act since these conditions can be applied through its use (ibid).

Compliment is similar to praise in the sense that both of them express commendation and approval but they differ in certain aspects. First of all compliment is not as wide as praise (Jibreen, 2008: 11). For Tannen (1993:

37), compliment is the speech act, which is interactive while praise is the speech act which is interactive or not interactive. This means that compliment can be considered as praise but not the reverse. Furthermore, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, (1989:73-5) says that compliment is restricted to occur in face to face interactions. Therefore, it requires the presence of the addressee (complimentee) while praise does not require the presence of the person being praised:

6. "We have a good teacher" (ibid).

If the teacher is not present, this example cannot be considered as compliment instead it is regarded as praise whereas the following example:

7. "You have a clever boy" (ibid).

8. "You have a beautiful daughter" (ibid).

Can be considered as compliment as well as praise in that the addresser is complimenting the parents for having a clever boy and a beautiful daughter and simultaneously praising the boy and the daughter.

9. "That girl is beautiful" (ibid).

This example can be regarded as praise rather than compliment.

Additionally, Rodriquez et al. (1998: 323, cited in Al-Abodi, 2005: 22-3) and Al-Rassam, (1999:9, cited in Jibreen, 2008: 11-2) assert that compliment can be regarded as a Face Threatening Act whereas praise cannot as explained in the examples (10, and 11):

10. "I like your pen".

Face Threatening Act is implied in this example because it may be understood that the addresser (complimenter) wants the addressee's pen, thus, the addressee might respond: "please, take it". Whereas in the following example:

11. "X has a nice pen".

Face Threatening Act is not implied because X is not present.

12. "What an unusual necklace. It's beautiful" (Holmes, 1988: 449).

In the same way, the addressee might respond: "please, take it". Since compliment involves response from the complimentee (the addressee) who finds that it is not easy to respond in such situation, at the same time it can imply the addresser's envy to the addressee; therefore, compliment can be considered as a very complicated speech act.

Furthermore, the direction of praise is "from super-ordinates to subordinates" (Herbert, 1999: 221, cited in Al-Abodi, 2005: 23) as shown in the following example:

13. "This is a very good answer, John".

This example is considered as compliment because the teacher compliments or commends the student in his presence and at the same time it can be regarded as praise since the direction is from "the upwards to the downwards" (ibid). However, there is no such direction with compliment. For Searle (1962: 431) praise is implemented to show favourable, good

judgment or appraisal for somebody or something.

## 2.1 Types of Compliment

Compliment can be achieved via two ways: direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit). Direct or explicit compliment can be realized through using forms of compliment or words denoting compliment directly:

14. "Great job!" (Yu, 2005:99).

15. "I love your shirt" (Mustapha, 2012: 227).

16. "I really like your hair that way" (Yu, 2005:98).

Whereas indirect or implicit compliment occurs when the hearer (complimentee) understands the message as compliment although it lacks forms of compliment and in this type of compliment the hearer must have inferences to get or reach at the speaker's intended meaning:

17. "Wow, I hope I'll have a coat like that" (Yu, 2005:98).

18. "Wow, what did you do to your hair?"(ibid).

19. "When did you learn to play like this?"(ibid. 99).

20. "I'd hate to lose you" (Mustapha, 2012: 227).

Types of compliment, whether direct or indirect, can be judged as compliment when they perform functions of compliment and imply felicity conditions (Mustapha, 2012: 224).

In his analysis of American and Chinese compliments, Yu (2005: 100)

explained that for Chinese speakers, direct compliment is realized through the use of single utterances whereas indirect compliment is realized by using "supportive move and /or small talk at the discourse level". Supportive move is not an obligatory element and is used to strengthen compliment force:

21. "You must have put a lot of thought into it. That's a very clever idea"(ibid).

The supportive move in this example is "You must have put a lot of thought into it" in the sense that it is optional and it is used to intensify compliment force. Moreover, the supportive move can be used as a compliment speech act when it occurs alone by itself:

22. "You smell great. What kind of perfume are you wearing?" (ibid).

The second part of this example "What kind of perfume are you wearing" is regarded as supportive move but when it occurs alone, it can be regarded as compliment. Furthermore, in this case it can be considered as indirect compliment.

As far as the small talk is concerned, it means any utterance which seems to be related to subjects other than the intended ones:

23. "I didn't expect to meet you here. You're such a big help" (ibid. 101)

The small talk in this example is "I didn't expect to meet you here".

Using these linguistic devices, i.e., "supportive move" and "small talk", assists both participants in compliment, i.e. complimenter and complimentee, to



be aware of attitudes and moods of each other (ibid. 102).

In addition, Knapp et al (1984, cited in Mustapha, 2012: 227) mentioned other types of compliment, which are generic/specific compliments, and comparative/non-comparative compliments. Specific compliment expresses specific aspects in the addressee:

24. "You look nice in that tie" (ibid).

While general compliment does not specify aspects in the addressee:

25. "You look nice" (ibid).

Moreover, comparative compliment compares some aspects in the addressee with others:

26. "You look years younger than your little brother" (ibid).

Whereas non-comparative compliment does not:

27. "You look so younger" (ibid).

## 2.2 Forms of Compliment

As explained in 2.1 (types of compliment), direct compliment can be realized through using forms expressing compliment or approval directly and these forms include certain adjectives and verbs such as (**good, fine, nice, admire, like, love**, etc.). The use of these forms makes compliment easier to be identified (Mustapha, 2012: 222). The adjective **good** is highly implemented to express compliment, appreciation, commendation, praise, satisfaction, approval and so on (Searle, 1962: 425).

Forms or structures expressing compliment can be classified into nine patterns (Manes & Wolfson, 1981: 120-21) as follows from 1 to 9:

### 1. "NP is/looks (really) Adj":

28. "That coat is very great" (Holmes, 1988: 453).

### 2. "I (really) like/love NP":

29. "I love that skirt" (ibid).

### 3. "PRO is (really) (a) Adj NP":

30. "That's a very nice coat" (ibid).

### 4. "You V (a) (really) Adj NP":

31. "You did a good job" (Yousif, 2003, cited in Jibreen, 2008: 13)

### 5. "You V (really) (NP) Adv":

32. "You really handled that situation well" (ibid).

### 6. "You have (a) Adj NP!"

33. "You have such a beautiful hair!" (ibid).

### 7. "What (a) Adj NP!"

34. "What lovely children!" (Holmes, 1988: 453).

### 8. "Adj NP!"

35. "Really cool ear-rings!" (ibid).

### 9. "Isn't NP Adj!"

36. "Isn't this food wonderful!" (ibid).

Furthermore, direct or explicit compliment can be expressed by using three sets of utterances:

1. The addresser's utterances that express good features in the addressee:

37. "Your blouse is very beautiful".

2. The addresser's utterances that express good performance of the addressee:

38. "You sang very well".

3. The addresser's utterances in which he explains positive attitude towards certain traits in the addressee:

39. "I enjoyed your presentation" (Holmes, 1988, 455; Golato: 2005: 83; and Yu, 2005: 113-4).

### 2.3 Functions of Compliment

Like other speech acts, compliment is used to perform certain functions:

1. To start or begin a dialogue between people.
2. To make the dialogue continue smoothly.
3. To show the speaker's commendation and approval for others' appearance, performance as well as other aspects.
4. To begin, maintain and strengthen rapport and solidarity.
5. To substitute other speech acts such as apology, congratulation and greetings.
6. To make the effect of criticism and other Face Threatening Acts soft.
7. To encourage the addressee's desired performances and traits.
8. To reduce social distance between the addresser and addressee (Holmes, 1988: 447-8; Ngadiran, 2009: 11; and Duan, 2011:356).

### 2.4 Compliment and Compliment Responses

Choosing the form of compliment as well as compliment response differs from one person to another in relation to certain factors including: age, gender, social states, the relation between the addresser and addressee and so on. Compliment responses vary with the variation of functions or purposes of compliment. Compliment responses are divided into two strategies: accepting and refusing. The former could be regarded as a self-praise whereas the latter could be regarded as impolite behaviour.

Certain theories about compliment responses were proposed by linguists who dealt with compliment from pragmatic viewpoint. The first contribution was made by Pomerantz (1978) who said that for American English, the addressee uses two contradictory conditions through responding compliment: agreeing with what the addresser said as well as avoiding self-praise. Each condition breaks the other. The addressee can use different solutions for this contradiction. Thus, Pomerantz classified three types of response, which are accepting compliment, rejecting compliment as well as avoiding self-praise. The second contribution was made by Leech who found Politeness Model. Through his Politeness Model, Leech proposed certain maxims in relation to compliment responses including acceptance, returning, mitigating, as

well as rejection, through applying one or more maxims. For example, compliment acceptance could be regarded as connected with Agreement Maxim, compliment returning could be considered as connected with Agreement and Approbation Maxims, mitigating could be seen as the application of Agreement and Modesty Maxims, and compliment rejection could be considered as the application of Modesty Maxim.

The third contribution was made by Brown and Levinson (1987) who said

that compliment acceptance expresses the complimentee's interests in the complimenter's "positive face wants" (Ngadiran, 2009: 13-4). Yet, other responses to compliment including deflecting and returning cannot be implemented by the preceding models.

Herbert (1986, cited in Herbert and Straight, 1989: 39; Golato, 2005: 171 and Ngadiran, 2009: 15) made an important modification for Pomerantz's classification concerning compliment responses and this modification is explained in the table below:

Type of response	Its description	Example
Appreciation token	The addressee accepts the addresser's compliment.	"Thank you"
Comment acceptance	The addressee accepts the compliment and agrees with the addresser.	"Yeah, it's my favorite too".
Praise upgrade	The hearer accepts complement but affirms that its force is inadequate.	"Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?"
Comment history	The addressee gives comments on the complimented object.	"I love that suit". "I got it at Boscov's".
Reassignment	The addressee accepts compliment but transfers its force to another person or thing.	"My brother gave it to me". Or "It really knitted itself".
Return	The addressee accepts compliment but transfers its force to the addresser.	"So is yours".
Scale down	The addressee disagrees with the addresser's assertion specifying certain demerits in the complimented object.	"It's quite really old".



Question	The addressee disagrees with the addresser's assertion specifying certain demerits in the complimented object. Therefore, he asks the addresser.	"Do you really think so?"
Disagreement	The addressee affirms that the addresser's assertion is not true.	"I hate it".
Qualification	The addressee qualifies the addresser's assertion, usually by using well, but, though, and so on	"It's all right but Jen's nicer".
No acknowledgement	The addressee gives either no comment or an irrelevant one.	"You're the nicest person". "Have you finished your essay yet?"
Request interpretation	The addressee interprets the addresser's assertion as a request.	"You want to borrow this too?"

**Table 2.4.1 Compliment responses according to Herbert's classification**

### 3. Blame as a Speech Act

Blame is the suitable reaction for the wrong deed that expresses the blamee's failure to follow moral standards in his society and this may be an evident rejection to these standards and values (Talbert, 2008: 530). Blame is the speech act, which expresses criticism, disapproval, negative evaluation and judgments about attributes related to the addressee (Williams, 2006: 12). Negative feeling, which is associated with blame, includes anger, hostile behavior, reproach as well as apology. Through apology, the blamer blames himself not others. Thus, it is considered as a "self-blame" (Sher, 2006: 94-5). Blame is originally an evaluation made about someone's attitudes or actions. It does not imply only grading someone's personality, attributes, actions, etc. but

also it implies that he is responsible for that. Blaming someone means judging his/her failure in something according to certain standards of excellence (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014: blame).

Blame and dispraise are similar in the sense that both of them are the opposite of compliment and praise. However, Smart (1961: 302-5) distinguishes between them saying that the former implies grading someone as being bad or wrong in addition to his being responsible for his wrong or bad deed whereas the latter implies grading someone according to certain satisfactory standards:

40. "He was lazy" (ibid. 302).

41. "A girl is ugly" (ibid. 303).

42. "A footballer is incompetent" (ibid).

Smart regards the first sentence as blame because in addition to evaluating and grading that person negatively, he considers him responsible for that bad or negative evaluation while the second and third sentences are dispraise because he grades a girl or footballer for her/his bad appearance or traits according to satisfactory reasons. Robinson (2002: 50) claims that "no one is blameworthy for physical deformities or features others find ugly".

### 3.1 Types of Blame

This speech act can be expressed directly as well as indirectly. This implies that there are two types of blame, which are direct and indirect, i.e. explicit and implicit, as follows respectively:

43. "I blame the man for his impatience" (Al-Ameedi, et al. nd: 4).

44. "I reprimand you for your negligence" (Oishi, 2006: 8).

45. "Can't you be more patient" (Al-Ameedi, et al. nd: 4).

This means that direct blame is expressed through using forms denoting blame directly as in examples (43) and (44) whereas indirect blame is expressed through other forms as in example (45) in which there is no syntactic indicator for blame.

### 3.2 Forms of Blame

This speech act can be conveyed through the use of certain terms denoting criticism, annoyance or disapproval including: admonish, accuse, blame, censure, charge, condemn, chide, criticize, denounce, curse, deplore, find fault with, disapprove, rebuke, reprimand, reprehend, reproach, upbraid as well as reprove (ibid).

Fillmore (1969: 100-6) classifies verbs like blame, accuse, criticize, and scold as verbs of judgment. He adds that the adjective **bad** is used to evaluate blameworthy actions. Simultaneously, the blamee is responsible for his blameworthy deed.

Whereas people use the verb accuse to talk about wrong actions when they want to put responsibility of theses blameworthy actions on somebody, they use the verb criticize to say that an action is blameworthy without putting responsibility on the doer of that deed:

46. "John accused Harry of writing the letter" (ibid. 102).

47. "John criticized Harry for writing the letter" (ibid).

Moreover, the verb criticize implies that the situation is factual while the verb accuse implies factuality of the action or not. Another difference between these two verbs is that the verb accuse as explained by Austin could be used as a performative verb. Through its use, the addresser expresses accusing act:

48. "I accused Harry of writing the letter" (ibid. 106).

While the verb criticize cannot be used as a performative verb in the sense that performances of the following sentence cannot constitute criticism":

49. "I criticized Harry for writing the letter" (ibid).

Another verb used to express blame is scold which is similar to the verb criticize in most aspects but it differs from it in that in linguistic act, the addressee is identical with the blamee, i.e., the defendant". Somebody can criticize another one in his presence or absence while he cannot scold him in his absence.

Additionally, these verbs, i.e., criticize and scold differ from the verbs blame and accuse in the sense that they form complete sentences semantically and syntactically whether the situation is mentioned directly or not:

50. "She criticized him for something" (ibid. 102).

51. "She criticized him" (ibid).

52. "She scold him" (ibid).

Whereas blame and accuse can form complete sentences semantically and syntactically when the situation is mentioned directly or understood from the context:

53. "She blamed him for it" (ibid).

54. "\*She blamed him" (ibid).

55. "\*She accused him" (ibid).

The first sentence is complete because the situation (for it) is mentioned while the second and third sentences are incomplete because the situation is not explicitly mentioned.

To sum, these verbs are understood only when three entities are evident. These entities are situation, defendant, and judge:

56. "John criticized/scold/blame Harry for writing the letter" (ibid. 103).

In this sentence, John, Harry, and writing the letter are the judge, defendant, and situation respectively.

### 3.3 Functions of Blame

In addition to its negative associations as well as its use as a means of criticism, blame is used to fulfill other positive functions. It is used as a rhetorical device that initiates and reinforces social values and moral ideals of the society (Robinson, 2002: 28). Blaming someone explains his failure to follow moral standards and values of his society and through this; the blamer wants to publicize such values and standards (Talbert, 2008: 532). The blamer blames the blamee for having bad character, traits ...etc. or acting badly and because he expects him to repeat those undesired actions or behaviours in the future; he wants to prevent repeating that. Furthermore, blame can be used to motivate the blamed person to work better or reach at the desirable behaviours and goals. Additionally, through using blame, people can know their negative aspects and this influences them to do their best to avoid being blamed (Sher, 2006: 110-3). Moreover, it is employed to make the guilty person recognize and reform

what he has done according to moral standards. Simultaneously, the blamer uses it to make others aware of the punishment if they make the same deed. This means that he prevents the wrong from entering the world (Robinson, 2002: 45; and Williams, 2003: 430).

### 3.4 Blame and Blame Responses

People's response to blame varies from one person to another according to so many factors including their emotions, moral ethics, as well as their relations with each other. The blamee's reaction is either accepting or resisting blame and this is what determine if that person is blameworthy or not. It is hypothesized that the blamee is not a blameworthy person if he resists blame whereas he is considered blameworthy if he acquiesces after being blamed (Sher, 2006: 34). Moreover, if somebody is accused of doing a wrong or an inept action, he will defend himself by two ways. He either admits the wrongness of his action but does not accept its responsibility or takes the responsibility but negates wrongness of that action (Austin, 1957: 2).

Talbert (2008: 519) divides people according to their relation to blame into blamable as well as non-blamable. The former can make decision depending on suitable judgments of reason because they are rational and commit the wrong deed by their will whereas the latter are not rational. Thus, they cannot make decisions depending on judgments of

reason. They cannot behave according to the moral standards of the society.

The term blame implies two concepts: the first one is that the blamer expresses his rejection for a bad deed while the second is that the blamee is responsible for that action. Thus, if somebody says:

57. "He blames me for something"  
(Austin, 1957: 7n).

Blamee's response may be either to give justification for his action; therefore, the blamer will stop his rejection or to give an excuse for that action, so the blamer will stop considering him responsible for it.

### 3.5 Compliment and Blame

Austin initiated a procedure for describing sentences in relation to speech situation. The addresser performs an action to the addressee and expects a response from the addressee. Additionally, other theorists explain the concept of illocutionary act in relation to intention. Meaning of utterances is expressed in relation to "linguistic conventions, i.e. conventions existing within the language, "actual performance", i.e. the use of language, as well as associated intention, i.e. the addresser's intention. The intention of speech is shown semantically through the relationship between the sentence and the intentions associated with it. Moreover, it is shown pragmatically in terms of "actual performances" through which the addresser shows intentions of his speech.

Therefore, to explain the meaning is not to explain what a sentence means in communication nor what the speaker means in uttering a sentence. It explains the language by positing another abstract level of the language (Oishi, 2006: 2, 11, 12).

As explained in (2.1) compliment can be expressed indirectly not through the forms that are used to express compliment directly. This means that it can be expressed via using forms that are used for expressing other speech acts such as blame. Simultaneously, the speech act of blame can be expressed indirectly by using forms of compliment depending on certain factors such as the context, the relation between the addresser and the addressee and so on.

58. "Nice bruise! How did you get it!" (Grossi, 2009: 58).

59. "Your bruise is coming along nicely!" (ibid).

These sentences have forms of compliment but they do not reflect the addresser's approval and admiration to the object. Instead, they reflect disapproval and negative judgments.

#### 4. Data Analysis

This section is devoted to applying what has been explained earlier. The researcher makes a study on groups of students from different grades: second and fourth years at university of Al-Muthanna. Those students are chosen randomly. The number of each group is 20: 10 males and 10 females.

The researcher designs a questionnaire depending on Holmes (1988) and Al Ameedi et al. (nd) models in their studies on compliment and blame respectively to know how students of English deal with these two speech acts and how to use one of them by means of the other. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions as well as information about participants including gender and grade. The researcher directs the students to answer these questions by choosing the answer they see appropriate. Then, the researcher analyses responses of students to the questionnaire. They use different forms and types of compliment and blame. Some of participants use forms of compliment and blame directly when expressing compliment and blame acts while others try to use forms of compliment through expressing blame, this means that they avoid using blame explicitly because they see that it makes a distance between the addresser and addressee. Therefore, it cannot keep rapport and makes both of them embarrassed. This is shown in the following tables:



Stage	Gender	Participant number	Types of the speech act	Their number	Forms expressing speech acts	Their number	Percentage
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Female	10	Compliment	10	Direct compliment	82	82%
					Indirect compliment	16	16%
					Compliment by blame	2	2%
			Blame	10	Direct blame	47	47%
					Indirect blame	30	30%
					Blame by compliment	23	23%
	Male	10	Compliment	10	Direct compliment	83	83%
					Indirect compliment	17	17%
					Compliment by blame	0	0%
			Blame	10	Direct blame	59	59%
					Indirect blame	29	29%
					Blame by compliment	12	12%

**Table 3.1 Numbers and percentage of types of compliment and blame used by students of 2<sup>nd</sup> year according to gender**

Concerning complementing speech act, most participants from female and male groups of second year use direct compliment and the percentage of their answer is 82% and 83% respectively whereas some of them implement indirect compliment and their percentage is 16% and 17% respectively. Moreover, only two

participants from the female group use forms of blame to reflect compliment and their percentage is 2%.

As far as blaming speech act is concerned, the number of participants from the female group that use direct or explicit blame is less than the number of participants from the male group and the percentage of their answer is 47% and 59% respectively while in the case of indirect blame 30 female participants

or 30% and 29 male participants or 29% use such forms. Additionally 23 participants or 23% from female group use forms of compliment when expressing blame and 12 participants or 12% from male group use these forms.

It must be worth mentioned that females avoid using direct blame. However, they prefer to use either forms of compliment or indirect blame because of their soft and polite character.

Stage	Gender	Participant number	Type of the speech act	Its number	Forms expressing speech acts	Their number	Percentage
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Female	10	Compliment	10	Direct compliment	78	78%
					Indirect compliment	22	22%
					Compliment by blame	0	0%
			Blame	10	Direct blame	10	10%
					Indirect blame	39	39%
					Blame by compliment	51	51%
	Male	10	Compliment	10	Direct compliment	73	73%
					Indirect compliment	19	19%
					Compliment by blame	8	8%
			Blame	10	Direct blame	27	27%
					Indirect blame	34	34%
					Blame by compliment	39	39%

**Table 3.2 Numbers and percentage of types of compliment and blame used by students of 4<sup>th</sup> year according to gender.**

Through expressing compliment, participants from 4<sup>th</sup> year show noticeable variations in relation to their gender. While 78% of female participants use direct compliment, 73% of male participants use this type of compliment. Concerning indirect or implicit compliment, 22 participants or 22% from the female group implement this type while 19 participants or 19% use it. Meanwhile, 8 males or 8% use forms

of blame to express compliment. This means that females use compliment more than males.

As far as blame is concerned, both groups avoid using direct blame, however, they use indirect blame or forms of compliment when refer to blame. The percentage of direct blame used by participants of female group

is 10% while its counterpart used by participants of male group is 27%.

Concerning indirect blame, 39% of female group or 51% use forms of compliment through blaming other people while 34% of male participants use them. In addition, 51 participants of female group or 39% use such forms.

Stage	Participant number	Type of the speech act	Its number	Forms expressing speech acts	Their number	Percentage
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	20	Compliment	10	Direct compliment	165	82.5%
				Indirect compliment	33	16.5%
				Compliment by blame	2	1%
		Blame	10	Direct blame	106	53%
				Indirect blame	59	29.5%
				Blame by compliment	35	17.5%
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	20	Compliment	10	Direct compliment	151	75.5%
				Indirect compliment	41	20.5%
				Compliment by blame	8	4%
		Blame	10	Direct blame	37	18.5%
				Indirect blame	73	36.5%
				Blame by compliment	90	45%

**Table 3.3 Numbers and percentage of types of compliment and blame used by students in relation to stage.**

Students of English department differ in dealing with these two speech acts according to their stage. As for compliment, participants of 2<sup>nd</sup> year use

forms expressing direct compliment more than the forms used by participants of 4<sup>th</sup> year and the percentage show this difference which is 82.5% and 75.5%. Moreover, 16.5% of participants of 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 20.5% of participants of 4<sup>th</sup> year use indirect compliment while 1% and 4% of participants of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> stages respectively use forms of blame to denote compliment.

Concerning blame, most participants of 2<sup>nd</sup> year implement the explicit or direct blame while others use indirect blame and few of them use forms of compliment when they want to blame others. This is evident from the percentage of their answers which is 53%, 29.5%, and 17.5% respectively. This is in contrast with participants of 4<sup>th</sup> year. Most of them whose percentage is 45% use forms of compliment through blaming others, then 36.5% of them use indirect blame and finally 18.5% use direct blame. On the whole, this means that they have experienced language more than students of 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

## Conclusions

Compliment and blame are very crucial rhetorical devices used by people in their daily life. Compliment is used to express approval while blame is

used to reflect disapproval. The most important conclusions the study arrives at are:

1. Both compliment and blame can be expressed explicitly and implicitly. The explicit or direct compliment and blame are shown through using forms expressing compliment and blame respectively whereas the implicit or indirect compliment and blame are reflected through using forms other than forms of compliment and blame. However, they can convey illocutionary forces of compliment and blame. This validates the first hypothesis.
2. It is shown from the practical part of the study that the speech act of blame can be reflected through using forms of compliment while there are minor cases in which compliment is conveyed through using forms of blame and this verifies the second hypothesis.
3. Concerning the stage, participants of 4<sup>th</sup> stage tend to use indirect forms of these two speech acts more than participants of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage. Moreover, their use of compliment through blaming others is more than participants of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage. This is due to their experience in English which exceeds the experience of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage participants.
4. As for gender, females tend to avoid using direct blame. They use indirect

blame as well as blame by compliment. The reason behind that is females have cute and polite characters. These conclusions (3,4) validate the third hypothesis.

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## Appendix

A questionnaire in the speech acts of compliment and blame, their responses and relations

Gender:

Stage:

Male	Female

**Respond to the following situations by choosing the option you see appropriate:**

- How would you compliment your friend for his/her good performance in the class?
  - None of the students have made such performance.
  - Your performance is really good.
  - I blame you for your performance.
- Blame your cousin for breaking traffic rules.
  - Great! You follow traffic rules.
  - I hate such bad actions.
  - I see that following traffic rules is a sign of a good driver.
- Compliment your sister because she plays tennis well?
  - I admire your way of playing.
  - You are blameworthy.
  - Who taught you to play like that?

4. How would you blame your neighbour for his spoiled son?
  - a. I blame you for spoiling your son.
  - b. That is really a lovely boy.
  - c. I find fault with his greedy and selfish character.
5. How would you compliment your niece who has a nice handwriting?
  - a. You have a pretty handwriting.
  - b. I scold you for having a nice handwriting.
  - c. When did you learn to write in such way?
6. How would you blame your youngest brother for his laziness?
  - a. You are lazy.
  - b. I am so proud of having such a clever brother.
  - c. You ought to study hard.
7. How would you compliment your classmate for his/her winning the prize?
  - a. What an encouraging prize you have won!
  - b. I can't imagine that you have won the prize.
  - c. I rebuke you for winning such prize.
8. Blame your cousin for his bad haircut.
  - a. I hate your haircut.
  - b. What a stylish haircut?
  - c. Did you choose such style or the barber did.
9. Your nephew is naughty. Blame him.
  - a. Aren't you so quiet?
  - b. Why don't you behave quietly?
  - c. You behave naughtily.
10. Compliment your aunt for helping the poor.
  - a. You are extremely generous with the poor.
  - b. I blame you for helping the poor.
  - c. I'm so proud of my generous aunt.
11. Your friend always interprets others' speech while they are speaking. How would you blame him?
  - a. You listen to others' speech carefully without interrupting them.
  - b. I like people who are not rude.
  - c. I criticize you for interrupting other's speech.
12. Your neighbour has bought a new expensive car. Compliment him for having such car.
  - a. What a high-class car?
  - b. I hope I will buy a car like yours.
  - c. I reproach you for spending too much money for such a new car.
13. Blame your relative's children for their impoliteness.
  - a. You are so polite. Aren't you?
  - b. Can't you behave politely?
  - c. I reprove your behaviour.
14. Your roommate made an important contribution in his field of study. Compliment him.
  - a. I glorify you for such successful contribution.
  - b. I scold you.

- c. Few people are interested in their scientific career and making such contributions.
15. Your mom always makes delicious food. Compliment her.
- I hope I can cook like you.
  - I reprimand you for making delicious food.
  - You make a tasty food.
16. Mr. John is an arrogant person. Blame him.
- Why don't you be modest?
  - You are so humble.
  - You are an arrogant person.
17. Your nephew is wise although he is young. Compliment him.
- I criticize you for your wisdom.
  - You are too young to be as wise as such!
  - I admire your wisdom.
18. Blame your uncle for his impatience.
- What a patient man! Aren't you?
  - I reprimand you for your impatience.
  - Can't you be more patient?
19. How would you compliment your teacher for mastering different specializations?
- Only you out of our teachers can deal with subjects from different specializations.
  - I deplore you for mastering different specializations.
  - You have a great experience in different specializations.
20. How would you blame your brother for driving so fast?
- You do not drive in a good way.
  - Where did you learn to drive in such a riskless way?
  - Can't you drive slowly?

### الخلاصة

يعد الاطراء و اللوم من الوسائل البلاغية التي يستعملها الناس لتقييم سلوك الآخرين و تصرفاتهم، لتحفيزهم و تعليمهم اذ يتصرفوا بحسب القواعد الاخلاقية لمجتمعهم ، يُستعمل فعلي الكلام هذين للتعبير عن موقف شخص ما تجاه المخاطب، اذ يُوظف الاطراء للتعبير عن الاعجاب و الاستحسان بينما يُستعمل اللوم للتعبير عن الاستنكار او الرفض و الانتقاد.

ان الهدف الرئيس للبحث هو دراسة فعلي الكلام هذين و كيفية استعمال احدهما بدلالة الآخر، هناك العديد من الدراسات التي تناولت الاطراء و اجابته، لكن من غير الاشارة الى علاقته باللوم، تشتمل الدراسة على اربعة مباحث واستنتاجات. تضمن المبحث الاول مقدمة عن الدراسة. و يتناول المبحثان الثاني و الثالث الاطراء و اللوم نظرياً. و كرس المبحث الرابع للجانب العملي للدراسة. و للوصول الى أهداف الدراسة، فقد اعدَّ الباحث استبياناً يحتوي على ٢٠ سؤالاً و معلومات عن المشتركين في هذا الاستبيان كالصف و العمر. وُزِعَ الاستبيان على ٤٠ طالباً من قسم اللغة الانكليزية في جامعة المثنى: ٢٠ طالباً من الصف الثاني و ٢٠ طالباً من الصف الرابع: ١٠ من الاناث، و ١٠ من الذكور لكل صف. و أُخْتُمَ البحث بأهم الاستنتاجات التي توصلت اليها الدراسة.