

A study on compliments in the American TV
series *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*

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1. Introduction

Politeness is an important and multifaceted phenomenon in society, reflecting etiquette. Politeness can be conducive to establishing good relationships with people. It is possible to treat politeness as a positive concept, including aspects such as being generous, modest, sympathetic toward others. In other words, politeness is a good manner that is proper and that does not offend others, which shows our consideration for others. In fact there are some cases that people either consciously or sub-consciously threaten other's face in our daily conversation, the ways of using politeness are quite variable. Some people use it for being affective, while others use it for being referential. This variation that people adopt is related to social factors as well as social dimensions. As a matter of fact, people's gender and status are important to influence people's usage of politeness.

Paying compliments is one of the most common ways of doing positive politeness and it also shows a gender distinction which is relatively clear compared to other politeness devices (Holmes, 1995:116). In other words, paying compliments can show a friendly aspect. In general, it can be thought of as positive politeness, but the function of a compliment is influenced by social factors (participant, setting, topic) and social dimensions. Compliments can be interpreted to have different functions in distinctive contexts and participants, like *You are beautiful*, if a woman talks to her female colleague, it could function to soothe the conversation although it is understood to mean less than it declares; but if a woman talks to her female boss, it could be interpreted to have her purpose.

How people give compliments is interesting, the compliments women and men give are on different perspectives. To be heard as a compliment, an utterance must refer to something which is positively valued by the participants and attributed to the addressee. This would seem to permit an infinite range of possible topics for compliments, but in fact the vast majority of compliments refer to just a few broad

topics: appearance, ability, possessions (Holmes 1986). Further, people's way of responding to the compliment will be examined since compliment is a two-way interaction of giving and receiving.

1.1 Aim and Scope

The purpose of this study is to analyze the function of compliments in context in connection to the different relationships of the characters in the American TV series *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*. Besides this, how men and women use compliments will be investigated in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*.

1.2 Material

The material consists of two American TV series *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*. From each TV series is randomly selected seasons 1 and 2 respectively, the total is 4 seasons, and from each season is further randomly selected episodes 1 and 2. The total primary material of the present study is therefore eight episodes, four from *Grey's Anatomy* and four from *Doctor House*. The total time for episodes 1 and 2 from season 1 of *Grey's Anatomy* is 42.21 minutes and 41.44 minutes; the total time for episodes 1 and 2 from season 2 of *Grey's Anatomy* is 40.46 minutes and 42.19 minutes, so the total time for four episodes from *Grey's Anatomy* is 166.3 minutes. The total time for episodes 1 and 2 from season 1 of *Doctor House* is 44 minutes and 43.12 minutes; the total time for episodes 1 and episodes 2 from season 2 of *Doctor House* is 42.58 minutes and 42.46 minutes, so the total time for four episodes from *Doctor House* is 172.16 minutes. All the eight episodes together give 338.46 minutes, which is 5 hours and 38.46 seconds. Both two American TV series are about how doctors cure patients, in *Grey's Anatomy*, Burke, Shepard, Bailey are attending doctors, Meredith, Izzie, Cristina, Alex, George are interns; in *Doctor House*, Cuddy is the boss of the hospital, House is an attending doctor, Cameron, Chase and Forman are interns. The reason why these two TV-series are chosen is that, on the one hand,

women and men doctors can show compliments in their daily work, on the other hand, power and status exist between male and female doctors in hospital, which can influence the function of compliments.

1.3 Method

First, each compliment is identified and collected after a close listening to the audio visual material of the filmed TV series. No written scripts have been used in this study. Second, compliments are classified both those to others than the speaker and those to the speaker himself/herself. Based on the social factors(participant, setting, topic) and social dimensions, the compliments are analyzed and categorized as to their function. Third, compliments are divided into four groups, man-man, man-woman, woman-woman, woman-man, then how men and women use compliments will then be analyzed.

2. Theoretical background

Here will be presented the definition of compliments, social factors of compliments, social dimensions of compliments, the function of compliments, compliments as a positive politeness, compliments and gender, and responses to compliments.

2.1 The definition of compliments

A Compliment is a ceremonial act or expression as a tribute courtesy, which is also a remark addressed to anyone, implying or involving praise (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Accordingly, it can be understood from these two aspects, first, when a remark addresses to speaker himself/herself, it calls self-compliment. Second, to some extent, the compliment is inclusive of praise, so what is the difference between a compliment and a praise? Giving praise is inherently asymmetrical, it frames the speaker as one-up, in a position to judge someone else's performance (Tannen,1990:69). Giving praise can reveal the relationship between participants, like

who is superordinate and who is subordinate, but compliment can be vice reverse.

2.2 Social factors of compliments

Holmes (2008) points out that three social factors have been relevant in accounting for compliment used. Some compliments relate to the users of language-the participants, who is talking to whom(e.g. colleague-colleague, boss-worker) is an important factor. The setting or social context(e.g. home, hospital) is generally a relevant factor too. In some cases, the topic has proved an influence on compliments, like women compliment men about their good looking, in general men will be embarrassed, because men tend to like that someone can compliment their ability. Not all the factors are relevant in any particular context but they can be grouped in ways which are helpful. In any situation a compliment will generally reflect the influence of one or more of the following components:

1. The participants:
 - a. who is speaking?
 - b. whom are they speaking to?
2. The setting or social context of the interaction: where are they speaking?
3. The topic: what is being talked about?

(Holmes, 2008: 9)

These social factors are important in describing and analyzing all kinds of interaction. They are basic components in explanations of the function of compliments in different context.

2.3 Social dimensions of compliments

It is useful to take into account three different dimensions of analysis which relate to the factors above, there are three dimensions below:

- A)A social distance scale concerned with participant relationships
- B)A status scale concerned with participant relationships
- C)A formality scale relating to the setting of interaction

A)The solidarity-social distance scale

Intimate	High solidarity
Distance	Low solidarity

(Holmes, 2008:10)

This scale is useful to analyze the function of compliments in emphasizing that how well we know someone is a relevant factor. Like *You are beautiful*, if a man says this to a woman and their relationship is intimate , the recipient of a compliment may reply: *Thank you*, this will show high solidarity. If a man says this to a strange woman, she may feel offended and shift their topic, it will show low solidarity. This is an example, it will also depend on their culture. Whether the relationship is intimate or distant, the function of a compliment will be interpreted different meaning

B)The status scale

Superior	High status
Subordinate	Low status

(Holmes, 2008:10)

This scale points to the relevance of relative status, it is conducive to analyze the function of compliment. Like *Good job*, if the employer say this to employee, it can be understood that the compliment is encouragement for employee, but if a worker say this to his boss, it can interpret to insult for boss, because like definition of praise mentions above, boss can understand this as praise, he thinks his boss-position is replaced by worker.

C)The formality scale

Formal	High formality
Informal	Low formality

(Holmes, 2008:10)

This scale is useful in assessing the influence of the setting of interaction on the function of compliment. Also like *You are beautiful*, this compliment can be

understood different meanings if this compliment happens in the church and the pub.

2.4 The function of compliments

Though compliments serve many functions in different context, the two identified functions-referential and affective-are particularly pervasive and basic (Holmes,2008: 11). Referential function refers that it can give some information, like the relationship between speakers, who is talking to and so on, while the affective function can be understood as social meaning, like just greeting each other. Compliments can convey objective information of a referential kind, and it can also express how someone is feeling. Suppose an occasion, a woman meets the other woman who seduced her husband and said: *You look gorgeous!*, here the referential information is under the ice, low information content is contained in this compliment, but after inferring, it hints they are hostile, and expresses feeling how hateful one women is. In general the more referentially oriented an interaction is, the less it tend to express the feeling of the speaker (Holmes,2008:11).

By contrast, interactions which are more concerned with expressing feelings often have little in the way of new information to communicate. Like the compliment *You are nice* between neighbors over the fence at the weekend, for instance, is more likely to be mainly affective in function, and intended to convey goodwill towards the neighbor rather than important new information. In fact the specific content of the compliment is rarely important.

Table 1 Referential and Affective (Holmes,2008:11)

Referential	
High information content	Low information content

Affective	
Low affective content	High affective content

2.5 Compliments as a positive politeness

Positive politeness can be expressed in many ways but giving a compliment is one of the most obvious. Holmes (1986:485) defines a compliment as “ a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to the person addressed for some ‘good’-possession, characteristic, skill, etc.” Accordingly compliments are positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.

Also Brown&Levison (1987:102) point out that compliments are speech acts which notice the hearer’s interests, wants, needs, goods. So when compliments are generally described as positively affective speech acts, they are conducive to establishing good relationships with people.

2.6 Compliments and gender

Holmes (1986) describes that in the vast majority of compliments refer to just a few broad topics: appearance, ability, possessions. Women and men tend to give compliments about different things. Holmes (2003) is the researcher of politeness strategy from a gender perspective and, therefore, her research is influential. According to her research, there is a clearly observable tendency for women to give their compliments on appearance and for men to give their compliments on ability.

An appearance compliment is clearly an expression of solidarity, a positively affective speech act, an ability compliment is an expression of social status (Holmes, 2003:186). Wolfson (1983:93) comments that appearance compliments are remarkably rare between American males. It seems that in America compliments on appearance may be experienced by males as very big face-threatening acts.

2.7 Responses to compliment

Pomerantz (1978:81) points out that recipients of compliments are under the influence of two conflicting constraints which are “concurrently relevant but not concurrently satisfiable”. In other words, if the speakers give compliments to the coparticipants, on

the one hand, the recipients should relevant reply to the speakers, like positive or negative reply. On the other hand, the reply can not be satisfiable, for example, a speaker says: *you are beautiful*, the recipient replies: *yes, I am*. In this case, the recipient is satisfiable and will be criticized by others. Table 2 gives the first situation of relevant reply.

Table 2: Compliment response in American English (Pomerantz 1978)

Acceptances	Rejections
1. Appreciation token A compliments B B accepts compliment	1. Disagreements A compliments B B disagrees with compl. assertion
2. Agreements A compliments B B agrees with compliment assertion	

About response of compliment, the recipients give their relevant reply, like agreement, disagreement or appreciation, for instance:

A: *You are looking good!*

B: *Thank you/ I do not think so*

B gives appreciation to A about the compliment or B gives disagreement to A about the same compliment, they are both relevant responses.

Since the speaker give compliments to coparticipants, the recipients should give relevant reply. At the same time, the recipients should not praise themselves or avoid self-praise, otherwise they will get face-threatening or they will criticized by coparticipants, so they are in dilemma that on the one hand they have to accept a compliment or agree with it, on the other hand, they have to avoid self-praise. So Table 3 gives the second situation of solving the dilemma.

Table 3: Compliment response in American English

(Pomerantz 1978)

1	Referent shift (compl. Return) A compliment B B compliments A	2	Ignoring A compliment B B ignore compliment
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There are two ways of dealing with the two conflicting constraints placed on the recipients of compliments. Pomerantz (1978) points out that recipients routinely produce compliment responses that are somewhat “in between” acceptances and rejections. That is, they contain some features of acceptances/appreciations but also features of rejections/disagreements.

One such solution type is that recipient utters a referent shift, that is, the recipient may deflect the compliment away from himself/herself. The recipient can either deflect the compliment to an object. The second type is ignoring, that is, a compliment recipient ignores the compliment entirely.

3. Analysis

The analysis will be presented from four parts, the first part will be analyzed from two aspects: compliment to others than the speaker and compliment to the speaker himself or herself according to the definition of compliments, the second part will be showed the function of compliments, the third part is how men and women use compliments in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*. The last part is the response of compliments in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*.

3.1 A definition of compliments

Compliments in the *Oxford English Dictionary* are defined: compliments can be addressed to anyone. When they are addressed to the speaker himself or herself, they are called self-compliments, so compliments included are both those to the speaker

himself or herself and to others than the speaker. When compliments are addressed to others than the speaker, from the meaning of compliments, they can be divided two kinds: direct and indirect; from the function of compliments, they can also be divided two categories: affective and referential.

3.1.1 Compliment to others than the speaker

In this situation, compliments can be expressed in two ways: direct and indirect. Holmes points out a compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to the person addressed for some 'good'-possession, characteristic, skill, etc.(Holmes,1986:485). Accordingly, when a compliment is explicitly expressed to the person addressed, it is a direct one; when it is implicitly expressed, it is a indirect one.

Example 1

(Addison walks up to the door holding a cup of coffee)

Addison: *I though I saw **a fabulous looking woman** walk by.*

Adele: *Addison! Yes see(she walks up and they hug) I told Richard I knew you and Derek would get back together.*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, season 1, episode 2)

Politeness can be expressed in many ways but giving a compliment is one of the most obvious. In general, it is a positive politeness, a favorable comment on the addressee's appearance, as illustrated in example 1, is a common way of giving a compliment. compliments are prime examples of speech acts which notice the hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods (Brown&Levison,1987:102). Obviously, the compliment Addison gives to Adele, *a fabulous looking woman*, is a direct one, because she focuses on something (appearance) directly attributable to the person addressed(Adele).

Compliments can be expressed indirectly, which are needed to infer from the context.

Example 2

Izzie: *She was **one of the first big chick surgeons** and she practically invented the abdominal laparotomy.*

Cristina: *she is **a living legend**, she won the Harper Avery, twice.*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, season 1, episode 1)

Izzie, Cristina and Meredith work in the same hospital SGH, they are all interns. For every intern, she dreams having a chance to observe an operation together with attending doctor. Izzie and Cristina are talking about Meredith's mother who was a famous doctor in SGH, they give high evaluation to Meredith's mother, *one of the first big chick surgeons, a living legend*. It can be inferred from context, the compliments indirectly attribute credit to Meredith for having excellent education condition to be a good doctor, because her mother is a excellent doctor, they guess Meredith will get the observation chance first.

3.1.2 Compliment to the speaker himself or herself.

Except complimenting to others, men or women can also compliment to himself or herself, men tend to compliment himself about their appearance and personality, but women tend to compliment themselves about their ability.

Example 3

Dr. Shepard: *Maybe not today. Last night? Last night I was very good looking. I had my red shirt on. My good looking shirt. You took advantage.*

Meredith: *I did not take advantage.* (*Grey's Anatomy*, Season 1, episode 1)

Example 4

(Gallery of Joe's OR)

Alex: *You know, I'm very sweet once you get to know me.*

Izzie: *No, you're not.* (*Grey's Anatomy*, Season 2, episode 1)

In example 3, Dr. Shepard gives compliments to his appearance, like *very good looking, good looking shirt*. Example 4, Alex gives a compliment to his personality, like *very sweet*. Woman can also make compliment to herself.

Example 5

(cut to Meredith still wheeling Katie down a hall)

Katie: *I twisted my ankle on taunt rehearsal, I do rhythmic gymnastics which is like really cool, nobody else does it.*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, Season 1, episode 1)

Example 6

Cristina: *Look, you know what happens to pregnant interns. I'm not switching to the vagina squad or spending my life popping zits. I'm too talented. Surgery's my life.*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, Season 2, episode 1)

Katie make compliments to herself about ability of gymnastics, like *really cool*, Cristina gives compliments herself about ability of surgery, like *too talented*.

3.2 Functions of compliments

The compliment is one part of politeness, it can show friendly aspect and make others feel good, in this aspect, the function of a compliment is affective or social rather than referential or informative. Compliments are social lubricants which 'create or maintain rapport' (Wolfson,1983:86). Since compliments can serve as social lubricants, they are conducive to establish good relationship and increase or consolidate the solidarity between the speaker and addressee.

Example 7

(cut to house, walking out of the hospital elevator with Clarence tied to a gurney, paramedics, and a lot of guards)

House: *You work fast.*

Stacy: *So do you.*

(*Doctor House*, season 2,episode1)

House is Stacy's colleague, here a compliment *you work fast*, and Stacy's response can express their solidarity to save the patient Clarence. This is an example illustrating that when the compliments present the affective function, they express solidarity between speaker and addressee.

Compliments can also have function of referential meaning. Holmes points out that compliments can simultaneously convey both affective meaning and referential meaning, when a compliment has low affective content, it can have high information content (2008:11). Very clearly, social factors and social dimensions are crucial in accurately interpreting the potential functions of a compliment.

3.2.1 Praise and encouragement

In some contexts, compliments may function as praise and encouragement. Giving praise is inherently asymmetrical, it frames the speaker as one-up, in a position to judge someone else's performance (Tannen, 1990:69). This seems likely to reflect the relationship between the participants. Praise is often directed downwards from superordinate to subordinate. Bailey is an attending doctor, the compliment *Excellent* is addressed to her student.

Example 8

Dr.Bailey: **Excellent.** *Do it.*(she gestures to Meredith)*Meredith, you're down here. I've got a bowel obstruction for you.*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, season 2, episode 2)

It is possible that in some relationships compliments will be unwelcome because they are experienced as ways in which the speaker is asserting superiority. Compliments directed upwards from subordinate to superordinate, on the other hand, are often labeled flattery. It is important to consider that who is talking to whom, and their status.

3.2.2 Changing the topic

In the context below, compliments may function as changing the topic. The patient make compliments to Meredith to change the topic about his ingested things.

Example 9

Meredith: *You know Mr. Hubble you might make things easier on yourself if you just tell us what you are ingested. We all know anyway once we see your films.*

Mr. Hubble: ***You have the most beautiful features. They are delicate, almost porcelain.*** (Grey's anatomy, season 2, episode 2)

Meredith is a intern, Mr. Hubble is her patient, Mr. Hubble does not let Meredith know what he ingests and he wants to stop her asking, so he gives compliments, like *beautiful features, delicate*, to Meredith. In fact, the compliments are analyzed from the context that Mr. Hubble wants to changed the topic.

3.2.3 Face-threatening acts

Compliments may have a darker side, for some recipients, in some contexts, an apparent compliments may be experienced negatively, or a face-threatening. On one hand, formality and intimacy will influence the function of compliments, compliments make embarrassment for others and result in face-threatening. On the other hand, being sarcastic, of course, make others face-threaten.

3.2.3.1 Transferring one's attention

In the context below, transferring one's attention is a form of face-threatening acts, Chase wants to transfer Dan's pain, but finally he makes Cameron face-threatening.

Example 10

(Dan is obviously in pain)

Chase: *Hey Dan, isn't Dr. Cameron's necklace a beauty? something south American, I think.*

Cameron: *Yeah, Guatemalan.*

Dan: *It is a cool necklace.*

(She looks down and sees that it is a very revealing spot)

Cameron: *Thank you so much*

Chase: *The kid's in pain.* (*Doctor House*, season1, episode 2)

Chase is Cameron's colleague, Dan is their patient, initially, Chase uses a tag question: *isn't Dr. Cameron's necklace a beauty?* to make a compliment to Cameron, but here Chase (male) and Cameron (female) perceive the function of this compliment differently. Chase considers a formal occasion: Dan is obviously in pain, the purpose of his giving compliment is to transfer Dan's attention of his pain, while Cameron ignores the occasion, she regards this compliment as affective speech act, and at last she is embarrassed.

The degree of intimacy also can bring embarrassment, even if intended as an expression of solidarity, a compliment might be experienced as face-threatening if it is interpreted as assuming unwarranted intimacy. Compliments between people who do not know each other well cause embarrassment.

Example 11

Patient: *You are hot*

Izzie: *You're Drunk* (*Meredith's anatomy*, season 1, episode 2)

The patient intends to express his solidarity, but Izzie does not know the male patient, she sees the compliment her patient gives as it is presumptuous. At last the patient gets face-threatened.

3.2.3.2 Sarcasm

The compliment one gives must be balanced by the compliment one receives, one must be careful never to exceed the delicate balance (Popkin,2010:7). The content of a compliment must be kept with the fact, when it is perceived as too distant from reality, it will be heard as a sarcastic or ironic put-down.

Example 12

House: *You idiots! You lied to me!*

Dad: *we didn't lie about anything. You, on the other hand, accused us of molesting our son.*

Cuddy: ***Perfect.*** (Doctor House, Season 1, episode 2)

Example 13

Dr. Burke: *You'll scrub in for an appendectomy this afternoon. Congratulations. Enjoy.*

(the others turn back to their lunch. Cristina looks annoyed. George is dumbfounded) (Grey's anatomy, Season1, episode1)

In example 12, Cuddy is House's boss, House suspects that the cause of the disease of the patient Dan results from molesting of his father, so House accuses Dan's father of molesting, while his boss Cuddy gives the compliment *perfect* after hearing what Dad says. It is distant from the reality, clearly, *perfect* is sarcastic for House. In example 13, George is an intern, Dr. Burke is an attending, it is lucky thing for every intern to have a chance to get into operation room. Dr. Burke gives the compliment *congratulations* to George for having this chance, but George is not the best intern among the all of interns, it is a sarcastic for George, actually Dr. Burke insulted him because George offended him before.

Above it is presented a number of different functions of compliments in different contexts:

- 1 to express solidarity
- 2 to express praise or encouragement
- 3 to change the topic
- 4 to express face-threatening acts

These functions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but the relationship between participants is crucial in interpreting the primary function of a compliment: analysis in context is essential.

3.3 How men and women use compliments in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*

Women and men tend to give compliments about different things. To be heard as a compliment an utterance refers to something which is valued by the participants and attributed to the addressee. This would seem to permit an infinite range of possible topics for compliments, but in fact the majority of compliments refers to just few broad topics, here will be presented two topics: appearance and ability in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*.

Table 5 Comparison of the topics-appearance and ability in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*

Gender	<i>Grey's Anatomy</i>		<i>Doctor House</i>		Total	
	Appearance	Ability	Appearance	Ability	Appearance	Ability
Men-Men	/	6	/	6	/	12
Men-Women	4	/	5	1	9	1
Women-Men	/	/	/	4	/	4
Women-Women	5	1	/	/	5	1

Compliments on some aspect of the addressee's appearance or ability accounted for 32 of total 48 compliments. In table 5, there is a clearly observable tendency for women to be complimented on their appearance more than men. About 14

compliments of all receive from men and women in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House* related to aspects of their appearance, but there are no compliments on appearance women or men give to men. To compliment another man on his hair, his clothes, or his body is an extremely face threatening thing to do, both for the speaker and the hearer, it has to be very carefully done in order not to send the wrong signals (Holmes, 2003:189). While men and women give more compliments on ability to men, about 16 compliments of all are given to men, 2 compliments are given to women.

In *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*, provided it is not sarcastic, women see that an appearance compliment is the expression of solidarity, a positive speech act, and this is why women and men give more compliments on appearance to women. Men see that an ability compliment is expression of social status, it can get reason why women and men give more compliments on ability to men.

There are two special phenomena, first, in *Grey's Anatomy*, example 3 and 4 show that men tend to use self-compliments on appearance, they try to get attraction from women because women see appearance as an affective way; example 5 and 6 show women tend to have self-compliments on ability, because they want to have social status. Second, not only women see that an appearance compliment is expression of solidarity, but also insults can express their solidarity both in *Meredith's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*:

Example 14

(Christian stops jogging to catch her breath, while Meredith jogs around her in Circles)

Meredith: *I am stupid.*

Christina: ***Slutty mistess***

Meredith: ***Pregnant whore***

Christina: *Sleeping with our bossed was a great idea*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, season 2, episode 2)

Example 15

Cuddy: *I'm your doctor, you're been good to me and good to his hospital, of course I care, but I don't see how this conversation can end well for me. Either your wife is having an affair, or she's not having an affair and you have come here because you rightly think I should fire him, but I can't even if it cost me your money, **the son of bitch is the best doctor we have.***
(*Doctor House*, season 1, episode 1)

In example 14, Christina and Meredith are friends, they both slept with their boss, they insult each other, like slutty mistress for Meredith, pregnant whore for Christina, but their friendship is good. Sexual humiliation is used as a means of creating solidarity (Cheshire, 1991: 200). In example 15, Cuddy is House's boss, although she insults him by such a remark *the son of bitch* in front of patient, she, in other words, expresses solidarity with House to work for her hospital, after all, he is the best doctor.

3.4 The Response of compliments in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*

Four parts will be presented here: first, no response is the response of compliment, the reason why the phenomena of no response happens in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House* will be given in this part. Second, acceptable response form of compliments showing in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House* will be presented. The third part is rejectable response form. The fourth part is solutions for the dilemma.

3.4.1 No response is the response of compliment

About the response of compliment, no response is often seen in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*, like the examples below:

Example 16

(cut back to Dr. Burke and George in patient's room)

Dr. Burke: *You and I are going to have so much fun together*

(*Grey's Anatomy*, season1, episode 1)

Burke is a attending doctor, his student, George, is a intern, George said something to offended him before, when Burke gives this compliment, George has to stare at him and got nothing to say. It can be presumed that no response reflects power, the superordinate generally gives sarcastic compliments to the subordinate, while the subordinate has to obey the superordinate wordlessly.

Being sarcastic can reflect the relationship between speaker and addressee. It is found from the material collected that only superordinate ironies to subordinate, the subordinate has no response to the sarcastic compliments from the superordinate, like chief-attending, attending-intern, doctor-patient. Table 4 below shows that 2 compliments are from relationship chief-attending, 2 from attending-intern, 3 from doctor-patient in *Doctor House*, while only 4 from attending intern in *Grey's Anatomy*. *Doctor House* has more sarcastic compliments than *Grey's Anatomy*, because House is arrogant, and special man to do with things, on one hand, his boss will not be content with him, on other hand, he does not satisfied with his subordinate. While in *Grey's Anatomy*, only the subordinate offends the superordinate, the superordinate will be sarcastic for the subordinate.

Table 4 Comparison of number of sarcastic compliments

<i>Doctor House</i>		<i>Grey's Anatomy</i>	
Relationship	Number of sarcastic compliments	Relationship	Number of sarcastic compliments
Chief-attending	2	Chief-attending	/
Attending-intern	2	Attending-intern	4
Doctor-patient	3	Doctor-patient	/

3.4.2 Acceptances

Recipients of compliments are under the influence of two conflicting constraints

which are concurrently relevant but not concurrently satisfiable (Pomerantz,1978:81). About the response of compliment, the recipients give their relevant reply, for example acceptances or rejections, the response forms are often seen, like Table 2.

Acceptances can be understood as two forms, one is appreciation token, the other is agreement, but acceptances of compliments are frequently realized as appreciations. As in the following example, one often finds appreciation tokens (e.g. *thank you*) in the compliment return:

Example 17

Dr. Burke: *Not bad*

George: *Thank you* (Grey's Anatomy, season 1, episode 1)

Acceptances can also be uttered in the form of agreements, example 2 shows that Izzie thinks Meredith's mother is a great doctor, Cristina agrees with her assertion, she also thinks Meredith's mother is a legend.

3.4.3 Rejections

When other supportive actions such as offers are rejected, speakers frequently use negated appreciations, such as, *no thank you* (Pomerantz, 1978:86). This is not the case when compliments are rejected. Compliments are rejected by disagreeing with the compliment assertion. This can be seen in the following example:

Example 18

House: *It fits, it's perfect, it explains everything*

Wilson: *But it proves nothing.* (Doctor House, season 1, episode 1)

In general, after all the compliments have function of supportive actions which make them similar to offers, invitations, gift, praises and so on, in this case, the speakers would expect the reply from the recipients to contain more acceptances than rejections,

but at the same time, the second constraint-not satisfiable-place on the recipient of a compliment, namely that of avoiding self praise, otherwise recipients will get face threatening or they will be criticized by coparticipants.

Example 19

Alex(whistles): *She is hot.*

George: *I'm friends with her*

(They look at him)

(Grey's Anatomy, season1, episode 1)

Alex is George's colleague, Alex says to George that Izzie is hot, George can be agree with Alex, for example, George can reply like this *yes, she is*. But he says Izzie is his friend, this is the performance of self praise of George. At this time, they are all new interns, actually they are just acquainted with each other, it is distant to be friend, George got face threatening and embarrassed because they look at him.

3.4.4 Solutions for the dilemma

Recipients are in dilemma that on the one hand they have to accept a compliment or agree with it, on the other hand they have to avoid self praise, Pomerantz (1978) points out that speakers routinely produce compliment responses that are somewhat in between acceptances and rejections, like Table 3. There are 2 ways of dealing with the dilemma, but it will be presented in *Doctor House*.

The first solution in Table 3 is the compliment recipient utters a referent shift, that is, the recipient deflects the compliment away from himself/herself. Like example 7, House gives the compliment to Stacy, *you work fast*, House mainly emphasizes her efficiency of work, but she deflects the compliment away from herself, but shifts to House, *so do you*. The second solution is ignoring, that is, a compliment recipient ignores the compliment entirely, it frequent appears in *Doctor House*, as in the following example.

Example 20

(cut to outside hospital, House is approaching, and Cuddy is leaving, see Cuddy opening the door)

House: *Dr. Cuddy, great outfit.*

Cuddy: *where are you going?* (Doctor House, season1, episode 2)

House compliments to Cuddy's outfit, but she entirely ignores it and transfers the topic.

4. Conclusion

Compliments included are both those to others than the speaker and to speaker himself or herself, they have different functions in context influenced by social factors and social dimensions, essentially they have affective and referential functions, affective functions can be an express of solidarity, while referential functions in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House* can be classified into three kinds: praise and encouragement; change the topic; face threatening including transferring one's attention and being sarcastic.

On the basis of two main different aspects of the distribution of compliments in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*, women tend to give and be received compliments on appearance, because they want to show their solidarity, besides this, sexual humiliation is also the way for women to express their solidarity. while men tend to give and be received compliments on ability, because they see ability as expression of social status. In *Grey's Anatomy*, women have tendency to give self-compliment on ability, men give self compliment on appearance.

The response of compliment has two constraints, it is concurrently relevant but not concurrently satisfiable, the frequent relevant responses are acceptances and rejections, both of these perform in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*, on the other hand, the

respond of compliment should avoid self praise, it is presented two ways to solve the dilemma.

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Primary material

Material used consists of the American TV series *Grey's Anatomy* and *Doctor House*. From each TV-series is selected seasons 1 and 2 respectively, the total is 4 seasons and from each season is further selected episodes 1 and 2. The total primary material of the present study is therefore 8 episodes, 4 from *Grey's Anatomy* and 4 from *Doctor House*

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