

Compliment-Giving Among Filipino College Students: An Exploratory Study

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For this paper, a total of 270 Filipino compliments was collected from college students enrolled in six universities in Manila. Analysis gave results similar to those found by Herbert (1990) and Holmes (1994): use of syntactic patterns that seem formulaic in nature; tendency of female students to give more compliments; and tendency of both genders to compliment the females more than the males. Females' and males' inclination to employ Non-acceptance and Non-agreement responses at a high frequency may be a reflection of these students' adherence to the Filipinos' conservative culture and of their desire to establish and maintain solidarity with each other. Their employment of Acceptance responses on an almost equal frequency, on the other hand, seems to be a manifestation of their regard for the preservation of their interlocutors' "face" needs. Another point observed is the interaction between gender and compliment-giving in terms of frequency of use. Finally, while males seemed to be interested in maintaining solidarity, females tended to continue showing their power to communicate, as reflected in the number of compliments they uttered.

Among the numerous areas in sociolinguistics that may interest researchers is the use of speech acts, not only for their sociological implications, but also for their pedagogical contributions. Speakers of any language are bound to benefit from research findings both in theory and practice. Giving compliments, for instance, has its own structure that needs to be understood if its function

are to be appreciated by both the complimenter and the complimentee. Surprisingly, we hear of people admitting their having uncomfortable feelings when complimented, and often they get the following advice: say "Thank you", or "I appreciate it", or convince yourself that you deserve the compliment. The same advice can probably be found useful by a classroom teacher whose students might not know the proper way of responding to compliments. The occurrence of this speech act on an adjacency pair basis (Sacks, 1967, cited in Coulthard, 1977) renders it capable of either strengthening the relationship or creating a gap between the interlocutors -- that is, achieving the former when the compliment is well-taken, and giving rise to the latter when the compliment is incorrectly perceived or understood.

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Several studies on American compliments have been conducted, among which are Herbert's (1990), Holmes' (1994), and those cited by Herbert (1990): Goody (1978); Lakoff (1975); Manes (1983); Manes & Wolfson (1980); Wolfson (1981, 1983; Wolfson & Manes (1980). Although there are differences, possibly due to the interlocutors' cultural orientation, common observations

have been noted: the use of a limited range of syntactic patterns, making the compliments formulaic in nature; the tendency for women to compliment more; and the inclination of the complimenter to compliment women more (Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1994).

In the Philippines, not many studies on Filipino speech acts exist. The only known study on this aspect, considering the most recent ones, is that of Bautista (1988) who obtained her data from the scripts of seven most popular Pilipino (now Filipino) radio-dramas that ran for 30 minutes each in 1977-78. She noted that responses to the compliments were meant to downplay the expressed praise. Bautista considers the patterns of speaking as good sources of "linguistic and social rules that underlie the communicative competence of speakers in a speech community" (p. 215).

This study can provide additional information on the structure governing compliments and responses using the Filipino language in actual utterances. Likewise, the results can help test if Holmes' (1994) reference to the term as "positive speech acts ... used to express friendship and rapport between people" (p. 139) is true among Filipino college students. The findings too can either support or negate the observation among American, British, New Zealand, and Polish complimenters that this speech act is used "more frequently by women and that women are more complimented than men" (Herbert, 1990, & Holmes, 1988, as cited in Herbert, 1990). This project's relevance in the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in the Philippines where there is scarcity of literature in the area, is also taken into account. Finally, studying the structure of compliment-giving and responding in Filipino can speak of the type of culture the users of the language have.

This study was aimed at identifying the following: syntactic patterns used in giving compliments by Filipino college students; types of responses generated by these words of praises; and possible functions of the uttered compliments and responses. It also aimed to investigate if gender interacted with the use of this speech act.

Methodology

A total of 270 compliments was collected at random

for a period of three months through the help of student research assistants. Each of these student assistants was given a template (see Appendix) on which they could write Filipino compliments and the corresponding responses heard from groups of students engaged in informal conversations within the school premises. The template included the following pieces of information: the compliment, under which are the categories F-F, F-M, M-F, and M-M (F meaning females and M, males); age of complimenter, response, age of complimentee, duration of compliment-giving in seconds, the context in which the compliment was given as well as the place where it took place. To obtain data more accurately, the student assistants did the collection ethnographically, observing and staying with most of these groups for sometime and reporting that the participants were mostly their friends, or at least their acquaintances. In a later interview, these female assistants admitted having asked their male friends to collect compliments from their fellow males using the same template. In cases when the research assistants were not aware of the interlocutors' ages, they tried to get this information after compliment-giving had taken place. The possibility of having some compliments uttered by the same students is not remote; thus, the total number of compliments collected does not necessarily indicate the number of students who used this speech act. The method used here is similar to what was employed by Herbert (1990) who asked students to collect the data ethnographically at the State University of New York at Binghamton. His fieldworkers were instructed to record the compliment, compliment response, sex of the speaker and addressee, relationship of interlocutors, location, and presence of interactional bystanders within the student community in the classrooms, dining halls, and similar places where students usually converge. In this study, data gathering took place at the corridors during the students' free time, at the canteens, and in the classrooms during those periods when one class had ended and the students were either awaiting another professor or passing the time away. Compliments and responses came from 16-23 year-old college students from six universities: Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM), University of the Philippines, Manila (UPM), Philippine Christian University (PCU), Technological University of the Philippines (TUP), Mapua Institute of Technology (MIT), and De La Salle University (DLSU), Manila --

all based in the city of Manila, Philippines. Initially, two research assistants were assigned each to UPM and DLSU; the rest had one each, making a total of eight, but the number was doubled because of the willingness of these students' male friends to help in the collection of data.

Framework of the study

Analysis of data on compliment-giving was based on syntactic patterns that surfaced in randomly taken samples. Addressees' responses to given compliments were initially categorized through Herbert's (1986, 1989, as cited in Herbert, 1990) strategies. Some labels were retained but some were renamed according to their connotations in the study.

Compliments are believed to contain a combination of "semantico-pragmatic" (Herbert, 1990, p. 208) components which are: "assertions of positive valuation by the speaker and 'verbal gifts' (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1987, p. 15, cited in Herbert, 1990, p. 208) offered to the addressee" with the content expressing "positive valuation" of the item complimented, and "more or less tied to the addressee." Although necessary, the complimentee finds it difficult to respond to both components: whether to admit as true or not the content part of the assertion, and simultaneously accept or reject the "gift component" (Herbert, 1990, p. 208). A complimentee then who concurs as to the veracity of the praise may accept the compliment or may not accept the compliment, the latter enabling him/her to "avoid self-praise," one of the two general conditions governing the act of responding to compliments, the other one being "agreeing with the speaker" (Pomerantz, 1978, as cited in Herbert, 1990, p. 208).

Responses were generally classified as connoting agreement and non-agreement. Verbal and Non-Verbal signs of appreciation are explicit ways of showing acceptance of the compliments, while Confirmation and Reinforcement connote implicit acceptance of the praise. These three types of responses fall under the Agreement category. Following are explanations and examples.

- agreement
 - acceptance
 - 1) Verbal and non-verbal signs of appreciation are shown by saying *Thank you /Thanks* or by

smiling or nodding.

- 2) Confirmation allows the recipient to concur by, saying *Matagal na* 'I've been like this ever since, in response to: *Ang ganda mo naman* 'How pretty you are!'
- 3) Reinforcement is exemplified by this exchange: *Ang ganda ng skirt mo* 'Your skirt is very nice!' to which the complimentee adds as a form of reinforcement: *Bagay sa akin, di ba?* 'It suits me, doesn't it?' Reinforcement may be equivalent to the term Praise Upgrade used by Herbert (1990), which he explained as the addressee's way of accepting the compliment and asserting that the compliment force needs further upgrading.

- non-acceptance

Responses may encode implicit concurrence or agreement and as Herbert pointed out, shifting of compliment force from the addressee occurs. Comment History, Return, and Reassignment are believed to be responses belonging to this category as the force of the praise is diverted into something or someone else -- a place, as exemplified in Comment History; back to the complimenter, in Return; and another person, in Reassignment. Following are examples.

- 1) Comment History is employed when some background information related to the item praised is offered by the recipient. An example is: *Bili ko yan sa Hongkong* 'I bought it in Hong Kong'.
- 2) Return type of response shows that a compliment is returned with another praise, usually similar to, or even more generous than what has been given as in : *Aydol kita* 'You're my idol', in response to: *Ang galing mo* 'You are so bright!'
- 3) Reassignment takes place when the addressee refers to the owner of the item admired, as in: *Sa Nanay ko to* 'This is my mother's'. The identity of the owner may or may not be specified, as in: *Hiram ko lang to* 'I just borrowed this'.

- non-agreement responses include the Absence of Response or the No Acknowledgment strategy and those that connote non-concurrence to the substance of the compliment.

- absence of Response
 - 1) No acknowledgment

No response, whether verbal or non-verbal, is given by the addressee.

- Recognition

A complimentee, though not agreeing, acknowledges that someone has spoken. The response may be explicit as in Negation, or it may connote implicit disagreement as in Scale Down, Evasion, and Doubt on Speaker's Intention.

- 1) Negation is expressed when the complimentee contradicts the compliment, as: *Hindi. Maluwag lang ang blouse ko* 'No. My blouse is just loose' to answer: *Pumapayat ka* 'You're getting slimmer'. Negation differs from Evasion as the former expresses a direct refusal to agree with the complimenter's praise.
- 2) Scale Down occurs when the addressee expresses dislike for the object/item complimented by pointing out its flaw/s. Hearing her hair praised, a female says: *Pangit nga eh* 'It's ugly, actually'.
- 3) Evasion is manifested when the addressee, whilst acknowledging that she/he has been addressed, prefers to evade the issue and gives an irrelevant response or tries to divert the speaker's attention. An example is: *Late na ako* 'I'm late' in response to: *Ang seksi mo naman* 'You really are sexy!'
- 4) Doubt on Speaker's Intention may be equivalent to the Question type of response in Herbert's categories. The recipient may question the sincerity of the speaker, as in the following: *Magkanong gusto mo* 'How much do you want?' or find a need to seek confirmation as in *Talaga* 'Really?' in response to: *Ang ganda mo talaga* 'You really are pretty!' The second example has been included here as there were no follow up questions when this was asked to show the addressee's desire for a repetition of the compliment. The recipient's purpose was probably to show acknowledgment that someone had spoken without necessarily agreeing with the compliment.

- Request Interpretation

An example is: ... *gusto mo pagawa ngayong Christmas* (smiling) '...do you want me to make some for you this Christmas?' This was uttered in response to someone's compliment on the pie that she had baked.

Results and Discussion

Syntactic Patterns Used

As observed among speakers of other languages,

certain formulas were noted in compliment-giving using Filipino, and although several of them were used, only seven syntactic patterns are presented - those with total frequencies of four and above. Table 1 shows the syntactic patterns noted in the study. ¹(For easy reading and understanding, syntactic patterns observed in the corpus are presented first in English; then, the example for each pattern is given in three lines: 1) in Filipino; 2) morpheme-by-morpheme gloss in English; and 3) free translation in English).

The students tended to use a limited range of adjectives, the most common of which was ²(*ang*) *ganda* '(very) pretty/nice' -- used to compliment a female person for her appearance -- or to praise an item worn or owned by either a female or a male.

Other frequently used adjectives in compliment-giving are (*ang*) *galing/talino* '(very) smart/brilliant'; cute; (*ang*) *guwapo* '(so) handsome'; and *seksi* 'sexy'. The adjectives (*ang*) *galing* and (*ang*) *husay* '(very) good/well' were also used as adverbs to praise somebody else's performance. The terms *bagay* 'fitted'; blooming; *payat* 'slim'; *mabait* 'kind/nice'; and *mataas* 'high' (to refer to grades) have been frequently used too.

Pattern 1 seems popular, not only among female complimenters, but also among males, although on a minimal degree for the latter. Females seem to use this pattern very spontaneously, particularly when they are addressing other females. Samples of this category include the following:

- (F-F) 1. *Wow, ang sarap ng binake mo na pie, ha*
'Wow, Your pie is really delicious, huh!'
- (M-M) 2. *Ganda ng ka-eyeball mo* 'Your co-eyeball is pretty.' (When interviewed, the student research assistants explained that the term *co-eyeball* means a companion, a friend. Their explanation was confirmed by students of the same age range from other schools.)

Two variations can be noted on the use of adjectives in this pattern-first, the use of *ang* meaning 'how' before an adjective to connote a description of high intensity; second, the omission of the same intensifier (*ang*) to possibly show preference for an abbreviated compliment and most likely to make the compliment sound different

Table 1. Syntactic Patterns in Compliment-Giving Using Filipino

SYNTACTIC PATTERN		FEMALES	MALES
1. (Wow/Uy/Ay/Shit)	(How) Adj (Enc) NP V (Ang) <i>ganda (talaga) ng buhok mo!</i> 'How nice (really) the hair your!' 'Your hair (really) is nice!'	84	23
2.	(How) Adv Pro V (Enc) (Ang) <i>galing (mo) (namang) magsayaw.</i> How well you (do) dance. 'You dance (really) well.'	25	17
3. (Wow/Uy/Ay)	(How) Adj Pro V <i>now</i> (Ang) <i>seksi mo ngayon.</i> 'How sexy you now.' 'You look really sexy now.'	15	4
4. (Uy/Ay/Parang)	(Pro) LV Adj (now) (ah) <i>Pumapayat (ka) (yata) (ngayon) ah.</i> Growing slimmer (you) (seem) (now) ah. You seem slimmer now (ah).	13	3
5. <i>Bagay</i>	(Enc) NV really V Pro <i>Bagay talaga sa iyo ang buhok mo.</i> 'Suited (really) for you the hair your.' 'Your hairstyle really suits you..'	12	2
6. (Wow/Ay/Uy)	NP LV Adj -- <i>Maganda ang boses niyan - journalist-like</i> 'Nice the voice her - journalist-like.' 'Her voice is nice -- journalist-like.'	8	4
7.	I like Np <i>Gusto ko ang blouse mo.</i> 'Like I blouse your.' 'I like your blouse.'	4	2

from the commonly used pattern.

Both females and males employed these variations, the former using the second variation at a frequency equivalent to 2.72%, and the latter, 13.63%. Males' preference to use the shortened form, although minimal, may be supportive of the common observation that men prefer to use less words.

Curse words were employed too but minimally, as in:

(F-F) 3. *Tang...! Ang payat na natin eh (Tang is the*

abbreviated form of Son of a bitch)...
'You're very slim now!'

(F-M) 4. *Shet! Ang galing mo* 'Shit! You are smart!'
(M-M) 5. *Pucha pare, perfect ka? Galing a '...Golly (Pucha might have come from Puta meaning prostitute which seems to have become an expression among many male speakers of informal language), buddy, perfect aren't you? Smart...'*

The students' employment of curse words in giving compliments, regardless of gender, is probably their way of maintaining a non-formal atmosphere to establish closeness with each other. These lexical items seem to have functioned more as expressions to alternate with *Wow*, *Uy*, or *Ay* and which the students probably found appropriate because of the age group involved in this speech event.

The use of *Gusto ko* 'I like' in Pattern 7, *Bagay* 'Suited' in Pattern 5, and the LV in Pattern 4 like *Pumapayat* 'Getting slimmer' or *Gumaganda* 'Becoming prettier', is common, too, in Filipino compliment-giving. Of interest to note is the choice of the plural pronoun *tayo* 'we' and *natin* 'our' as:

- (M-F) 6. *Wow, naka-dress tayo ngayon* 'Wow, (we) wearing a dress now'.
 (F-F) 7. *Pare, ok porma natin ngayon* 'Buddy, . . . (our) looks okay today.'

This style, which I often hear being employed by other age groups as well, has been uttered by the students on several occasions. I see one or both of two reasons: 1) for variation in ^{28.89%}ing it sound a little more formal and respectful; and (2) for subduing the impact of the compliment both on the complimenter and the complimentee. The compliments' very formulaic nature can make the addressee doubt the speaker's intention. Varying the style to make it sound less informal can make it easier for the recipient to appreciate the given compliment. I believe too that both tasks of giving and receiving compliments are not always easy. Our culture sets certain limitations that can make the speaker and the recipient feel uncomfortable in performing their respective roles—the former who might be uncertain whether their compliments would be positively received or not, and the latter who might feel shy or somewhat uneasy being complimented by either of two sexes. In both cases, there is a desire to protect the other person's "face" needs (Brown & Levinson, 1978, as cited in Coates, 1986). The use of the plural form can help the two parties relate more to each other, thus narrowing whatever social gap or social distance that may exist. Complimenting and being complimented then become less embarrassing and uncomfortable experiences.

The same cultural limitations mentioned above are probably the reasons, too, why complimenters give their compliments somewhat indirectly. Note the use of

positive titles in numbers 8 and 9, and the third person instead of the second, in number 10.

- (M-F)8. Hello, Miss Palawan!
 (M-F)9. Hi, Miss *Ganda* "... Miss Beautiful!"
 (M-M)10. *Bago shoes ni Matt* 'New shoes - Matt's.'

One other point I have noticed is the students' employment of humor as in the following:

- (F-F) 11. *Ang sabi ko shirt lang hindi yung tao* 'I said shirt only, not the person.'
 (M-M)12. *Grabe, Cris! Isa kang alamat! Isa kang pabula, isa kang maikling kuwento-isa kang Diyos* 'Incredible, Cris! You are a legend! You are a fable, you are a short story . . . you are God!'
 (M-M) 13. *San burol* 'Where's the funeral?'

Number 12 was uttered after a classmate succeeded in answering a difficult question which no one else had answered correctly, while number 13 was meant to compliment a well-dressed young man. Filipinos regard one's funeral as a solemn and formal occasion, thus their notion that non-casual clothes are to be worn at that particular event.

The employment of humorous compliments was also noted by Lorenzo-Dus (2001) among her respondents' compliments, in combination with agreement responses, two of which are History and Return.

Compliment-Giving by Gender

Percentages in Figure 1 mean that out of 270 compliments collected by female and male research assistants, 189 were uttered by female students, and 177 were received by them. This finding supports other researchers' claim that more compliments are heard from, and are directed to, women (Holmes, 1994). Males, on the other hand, complimented females and males minimally but on an almost equal frequency.

Students' compliments focussed mostly on appearance which includes admiration for one's hair style or appropriateness of clothes. Ranking second is their possessions -- bags, clothes, cell-phones, CD-roms, and even boyfriends and girlfriends. The students also paid attention to each other's traits/talents, usually in relation

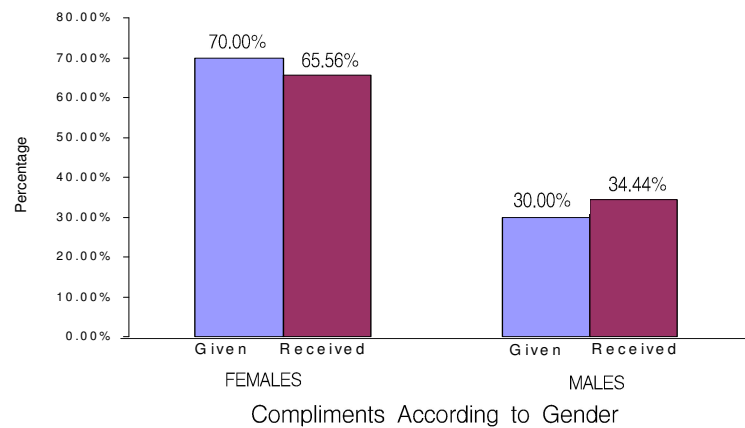


Figure 1. Given and Received Compliments

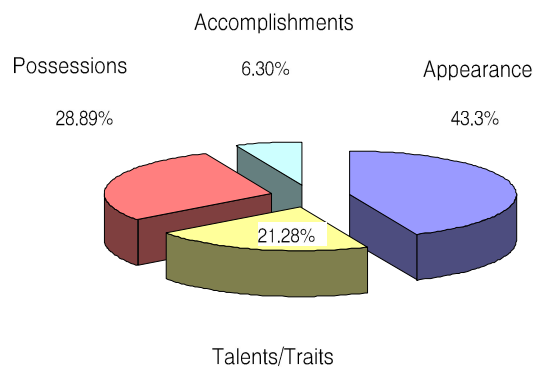


Figure 2. Distribution of the students' preferred topics in compliment-giving.

to schoolwork, making this category rank third. Their last chosen subject in giving compliments is their own accomplishments with a frequency equivalent to a little less than 7%. Choice of appearance as a focus of compliment-giving was likewise found to be common by Holmes (1994) and Herbert (1990). Figure 2 shows the distribution of the students' preferred subjects in compliment-giving.

As in Holmes' study among New Zealand speakers, female students did most of the complimenting, not only on appearance, but on all the other categories as well.

More than half of the total compliments were directed by females to members of their sex. Females' compliments to males made up almost 20% of the data gathered. Table 2 displays the frequency distribution of uttered compliments in different categories.

Generally, the males showed a level trend in giving compliments, with percentages ranging from 2.96 to 5.93, except on accomplishments -- their least preferred topic - where they complimented females at a frequency equivalent to barely 0.4%. Males and females did not differ significantly in complimenting each other's

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Uttered Compliments

Gender Category	TOPICS OF CONCERN									
	Appearance		Possessions		Accomplishments		Traits/Talents		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
F- F	72	26.67	38	14.07	6	2.22	20	7.41	136	50.37
F-M	19	7.04	15	5.55	3	1.11	16	5.93	53	19.63
M-F	14	5.19	10	3.70	1	0.37	16	5.93	41	15.19
M-M	13	4.81	13	4.81	6	2.22	8	2.96	40	14.82
TOTAL	118		76		16		60		270	

accomplishments, making a difference of 2.59% only in favor of the female students.

Responses to Compliments

As observed in uttering compliments, giving responses can pose a problem to people whose culture inhibits them from meeting both conditions believed to govern the act of responding to a compliment (Pomerantz, 1978, pp.81-82, cited by Herbert, 1990, p.

208), namely: agreeing with the speaker and avoiding self-praise. Filipinos, who come from a very conservative culture, are not immune to this difficulty, termed an "interactional dilemma" by Herbert. In this study, high frequencies involving Acceptance responses occurred within the F-F category, implying that the Verbal and Non-Verbal signs were preferred more frequently by women. Data in Table 3 indicate the use of more Non-acceptance and Non-agreement responses by the students sampled. The difference, though very little, may

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Compliment Responses

Response Category	F-F		F-M		M-F		M-M		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
▪ <i>greement</i>										
• <i>ceptance</i>										
1. Verbal and Non-verbal signs	41	15.19	12	4.44	14	5.19	9	3.33	76	28.15
2. Confirmation	11	4.07	4	1.48	8	2.96	7	2.59	30	11.11
3. Reinforcement	14	5.19	2	0.74	4	1.48	2	0.74	22	8.15
• <i>m-acceptance</i>										
4. Comment History	11	4.07	1	0.37	2	0.74	1	0.37	15	5.57
5. Return	5	1.85	1	0.37	1	0.37	0	0.0	7	2.59
6. Reassignment	3	1.11	2	0.74	1	0.37	5	1.85	11	4.07
▪ <i>on-agreement</i>										
• <i>isence of Response</i>										
7. No Signs of Acknowledgment	6	2.22	2	0.74	4	1.48	3	1.11	15	5.57
• <i>ognition</i>										
8. Negation	13	4.81	1	0.37	2	0.74	2	0.74	18	6.67
9. Scale Down	11	4.07	5	1.85	9	3.33	8	2.96	33	12.22
10. Evasion	5	1.85	5	1.85	2	0.74	0	0.0	12	4.44
11. Doubt on speakers intention	15	5.56	5	1.85	4	1.48	6	2.22	30	11.11
▪ <i>request</i>										
<i>Interpretation</i>	1	0.37	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.37

be an indication of what Filipino' students believe is a better way of responding to compliments without praising themselves.

It can be observed that the students preferred to exercise modesty, through the Scale Down strategy, in responding to compliments, making this type of response rank second among all categories. This finding supports Bautista's (1988) observation that responses in scripted radio-dramas were meant to downplay the given compliments. The two other Non-agreement responses used often are Negation and Doubt on Speaker's Intention, which, together with Scale Down, seem to be reflections of the Filipinos' timidity. Male students appeared to be as modest as females, but females tended to negate and question the speaker's sincerity more than the males.

The only datum obtained on request interpretation looks similar to what Holmes (1994) observed among the Samoans who, when complimented, feel indebted to the complimenter, thus offering the complimented item to the speaker. In this study, however, it may not be as "face-threatening" as noted by Holmes (p.43), since the students seem to be too familiar with each other as reflected in the template used in data gathering, that accepting services for free, like baking more pie, may not be regarded as embarrassing. These students seemed to have developed a high level of camaraderie that enabled them to offer compliments and accept offers of services in return without fear of embarrassment. It is not unusual to hear them complimenting one for her/his talent and then prodding her/him to share what she/he has made or produced.

Conclusion

This exploratory but interesting study offers some useful insights. There are indications that Filipino college students still possess the earlier generations' timidity as reflected in their use of more Non-acceptance and Non-agreement types of responses to compliments. Although they employed Acceptance responses only a little less frequently, findings show that the Modern Age has not managed to totally negate these students' conservative natures. In addition, their use of such types of responses indicates their desire to maintain social balance with their respective interlocutors, as Non-acceptance replies

enable them to shift the complimentary force while Non-agreement responses help them to weaken or deny that force (Herbert, 1990). Males, too, are observed to be aiming for solidarity in the use of this speech act. The gender's interaction with compliment-giving in terms of frequency of use is also notable.

The function of offering solidarity as seen in males' speech was also noted in my earlier study (Mojica, 1999). When asked to construct dialogues based on contrived situations, the participants manifested a tendency to assign more of the investigated linguistic features to characters of their sex even if such features were normally identified with the opposite gender. Males, for instance, were observed to have assigned more codeswitches, descriptive lexical items, and tag questions -- all female-ascribed features -- to their male characters. This gesture of the males was interpreted as their desire to establish solidarity with the females. On the other hand, females' giving more compliments on almost all categories, coupled with their tendency to use curse words to an almost equal degree as the males, seems to imply the other point I noted in my 1999 paper - that they want to assert their power in language, referred to by Valentine (1986, p.75, as cited in Singh & Lele, 1990, p.541) as the "ability to effectively communicate..." The female participants in both studies seem to have shown their ability to use both the female and the male-identified speech with confidence, with an "air of power" (Mojica, 1999, p. 223).

More investigations of this type involving participants with the same cultural background can be done in order to make firmer claims on the possible functions of compliments and responses among the users of the native language. Follow up studies can provide further insights that may help validate the apparent notion that female and male language does not vary greatly, and that achieving solidarity with the opposite gender is finding its manifestation in male speech, contrary to the common belief that such observation can be noted mostly in female language.

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Notes

1. The Filipino language follows the VSO order; thus: Umalis na sila 'They left already' is equivalent to 'Left already they' on a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss in English.
2. When used before an adjective, the intensifier ang can mean 'how' or 'so'; before a noun, it functions as a determiner, as in ang bata 'the child.'

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Appendix Template for Data Gathering

Compliments (Pls. indicate: F-F; F-M;M-F; or M-M).	Complem enters Age	Response	Complimentees Age	Duration in seconds	Context in which Compliment-giving is done /Place

