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In ordinary speech communication, a complement is firmly established as a speech act. The exchange of compliments is an established politeness tactic in many language communities, though not all.

A complement is often described as a ritualized (not always real) admiration of items that directly affect the partner; the speaker strives to persuade the addressee of his esteem by executing a speech action of a compliment. Such a definition excludes the basic idea of a "genuine" complement, which refers to displays of admiration for a person's excellent traits that are regarded natural and distinctive. Such a compliment "mythologizes" the addressee, elevates him or her to extraordinary heights, points to the precedent of his or her qualities.

Combining the above "narrow" characteristics, we get the following, "broad" definition of a compliment as a speech act: A compliment can be considered any statement of sincere admiration for the addressee's positive qualities or their ritual positive assessment, expressed by the speaker in order to convince the interlocutor of his respect. J. Holmes similarly defines the speech act in question, highlighting the criteria that a compliment must meet in order to be considered a compliment at all: A compliment is a speech act that explicitly or implicitly ascribes to someone else, who, as a rule, does not speak to the addressee, something "good" (property of the recipient of the compliment, his qualities, skills, etc.), which is positively assessed by the speaker and listener. In most cases, compliments are rated "good" for the recipient, and even if the compliments are clearly directed to a third party, they may be indirect compliments to the recipient.

A compliment, as a polite speech action, performs many functions in the communication process. One of the most important is the psychological-emotional function: it is believed that a social individual can only maintain his identity if others accept it. Observations show that every psychologically healthy person tends to have a motivationally distorted in a positive way, which does not correspond to reality, self-image. Therefore, to confirm self-esteem, a person is looking for recognition, respect for a partner. Through compliments, an atmosphere of mutual participation and trust can be created in which one partner can be sure of the patronage of the other. Flattering recognition of each other's merits increases the self-esteem of each participant in communication; By the ritual-game reversal of the natural feeling of superiority, the speaker reduces social tension and creates the prerequisites for friendly, pleasant cooperation.

Conventions for the exchange of politeness formulas provide the participants in communication with a scheme for interpreting social positions, actions and intentions - the partner's behavior becomes predictable and calculable for both interactants. Thanks to ritual structuring, communication becomes doubly "reliable" - predictable and not dangerous (devoid of malicious intent), which allows its participants to mutually determine the prospects

for action without exposing them to failure, which means that we can talk about the cognitive function performed by compliments.

A compliment serves to express to the addressee or a third person a positive assessment of the speaker. If the compliment is addressed to the listener, then it can be assumed that it will cause a positive reaction from the recipient. He experiences positive emotions, because, firstly, he finds confirmation, recognition of his successes or external qualities, and secondly, because his success and, therefore, he himself as a person finds recognition from another person - the speaker. As a result, on the basis of the commonness of views, interests, and tastes that have arisen, a social bond is created between individuals. In other words: the speaker identifies with the listener. This is another function that is attributed to speech acts of compliment: Expression of solidarity or social bonding.

Compliments create a social bond where a relationship needs to be built or maintained. With a compliment, the speaker shows the addressee that he respects and appreciates him as a person and is interested in him and in good relations with him. In a word, “the most obvious function of a compliment as a positive affective speech act is to lubricate the social mechanism <...>”.

Within the framework of the theory of P. Brown and S. Levinson, giving compliments is considered as a “positive strategy of politeness”.

In this regard, the authors point to the assumption that every competent adult member of society has a face as self-respect that can be threatened or taken care of. In general, one should proceed from the fact that communication partners cooperate within the framework of interaction in order to save their own face and that of the partner (preserving one's own face also depends on the partner, since if the face of the other is threatened, then he resorts to strategies that jeopardize the positive self-assessment of the initiator of the conversation, that is, the threat to the partner's face returns as a ricochet to the speaker). In other words, a compliment, which is made in the interests of the interlocutor, indicates his inclusion in the subject's value system, contributes to the development of relationships between communicants. The perlocutionary effect of a compliment is the assertion of the superiority, perfection of the addressee.

Such a solidifying effect of a compliment is especially noticeable at the beginning of a conversation, since with a successful initiating compliment, the speaker creates access to the speaker and ensures his readiness to cooperate in the upcoming conversation.

Differences of a compliment from other speech acts. Compliments are close to other speech acts with an identical form: speech acts of praise, flattery or congratulations-wishes.

However, all the unanimity of researchers practically ends with a statement of the identity of the named speech acts, and many disagreements appear: V.V. Leontiev defines the speech acts of flattery and compliment as varieties of the speech act of praise. N.D. Formanovskaya and V.I. Karasik classify a compliment as flattery, and American linguists identify speech acts of praise (compliment) and flattery. Despite the structural and thematic proximity of speech acts of compliment and praise, they have, in our opinion, significant differences: praise is subject to more restrictions than an illocutionary independent statement of a compliment, since praise always has a status dependence: a superior can praise a subordinate as much as he likes, but not vice versa - the subordinate cannot send even

justified praise (but an admiring compliment) to the superior. Since praise is an assessment of achievements, the person who praises must have the competence of evaluating, the subordinate cannot have such competence (by status).

The criterion of status and role differentiation of partners determines another characteristic feature of a compliment, which often remains underestimated in studies - an obligatory moment of intimacy, that is, entry into the personal (including intimate) semantic field of the addressee, participation in modeling and modifying his "personal self-image".

This moment determines the delicacy of a compliment as a special speech act, in contrast to praise, in the production of which the sign of status distance is not neutral. Intimacy in a verbal compliment is created by spatial proximity, visual contact, a smile, a private topic of conversation.

As distinguishing features of a compliment, in addition, its brevity, as well as occasional, appearance in certain situations, a lower degree of sincerity compared to praise.

The last feature is probably explained by the fact that when expressing a compliment on many occasions, it is more important to express feelings than to actually experience them, that is, for the successful completion of a speech act of a compliment, as a rule, it does not matter whether the speaker's sympathy is sincere or not. This does not mean, however, that a compliment is always insincere, like flattery. Rather, neither the speaker who performs the verbal action of the compliment, nor its addressee, simply think about whether the speaker is experiencing the emotions that he declares.

In praise, achievements are evaluated that are the result of the efforts of its addressee, that is, praise gravitates towards the image of an anticipated normative and by no means unexpected result; a compliment, on the other hand, includes a situational assessment, which is focused not so much on merit as on a non-standard given that goes beyond the everyday routine (for example, appearance, taste, even character). The conventional nature of the ritual compliment is obvious to all participants in the communication; no one takes it seriously; praise tends to have stronger arguments.

The ritual of a compliment is often criticized for being predictable and redundant: the speech act of a compliment necessarily triggers the thanksgiving mechanism, which, in turn, necessarily implies an assurance of the redundancy of gratitude, since the speech act of the compliment was sincere and pleasant to its performer. Despite the transparency of the complimentary "buttering" and its low informational value, interactants do not refuse to perform it, since this ritual is very important at the level of relations, its omission is condemned. Repeated complimentary assurances can give the partner new information and change the situation of communication: in cases where the initiative compliment is perceived by the addressee as too exaggerated, obviously insincere, he is forced to politely reject it; and only after repeating the compliment, when the seriousness of the speaker's intentions becomes obvious, the addressee reconsiders the result of his first interpretation, making a conclusion on the basis of the conventions of politeness and situational circumstances about the intentions of the speaker corresponding to the words.

The second remark on which the criticism of compliments is based is the attitude to a compliment as a useless and time-consuming "idle", as a symptom of the poverty of thinking. To prove that these reproaches have no basis, it will help to refer to the division of speech

acts into locutionary and illocutionary. The one who condemns compliments as lies is probably reacting to the locutionary act, to the proposition of the utterance, and ignores its illocutionary role and effectiveness in maintaining relationships, softening social mores. The fact that interactants are usually not sincere in their statement (they usually say what they think the addressee wants to hear), and the fact that both partners have no misconceptions about this fact, emphasizes the importance of compliments.

It should, however, be noted that the formality of the compliment remains hidden from the addressee, because if the ritual character and the desire to express solidarity are too obvious, then the speaker can easily be convicted of insincerity: a successful compliment must, according to the addressee, be spontaneous and sincere.

At the same time, one should not forget about the prescriptiveness of saying a compliment as an obligatory speech act and its “built-in” prescriptiveness as a binding speech act: a compliment obliges the addressee to accept the rules of the speaker’s game. After all, it is polite not only to give compliments, but also not to accept, to ignore a compliment is often simply impolite (unless the addressee attaches great importance to the risk of worsening relations as a result of the addressee’s frank unwillingness to accept a compliment and respond to it, “as is customary”).

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