



IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING COMPLIMENTS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Sadriyeva Gulvisar Sodiq qizi²

¹The teacher of Uzbekistan State World Languages University

gulvisarsadriyeva@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5812998>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 15th December 2021

Accepted: 20th December 2021

Online: 25th December 2021

KEY WORDS

compliments, compliment responses, social variables, contextual factors, pragmatics, pragmatic ability.

ABSTRACT

There are vivid differences among cultures in terms of social norms, cultural beliefs, pragmatolinguistic and behaviour patterns. Being the two different cultures, Uzbek EFL learners feel challenges when they communicate in English, especially with socio-pragmatic variations. Therefore, cultural function, norms and different speech acts of the target language should be incorporated into language teaching. In this paper, particular type of speech act- compliments are chosen to show how to integrate culture in foreign language teaching. With the help of sample Unit lesson plan, certain ways, techniques, and some appropriate activities of teaching compliments implicitly will be provided. It is aimed to cover all topics, functions, strategies of compliments and compliment responses through three lessons. The EFL teachers can modify the given sample tasks taking the needs and interests of their target audience.

Compliments are one of the handy tools of the language that can serve the function of opener in greetings, establish friendship and closeness between interlocutors and they can provide meaningful communication in social interactions. In appropriately used compliments and responses to compliments may lead to misunderstanding, embarrassment and even it may be considered as an offense. Holmes (1988) described that serving different function such as conversation starter, maintaining smooth conversation or bring positive mood between speaker and listener, compliments “explicitly or implicitly attribute credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person

addressed, for some good (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.)” (p.485). The underlying meaning of compliment and compliment responses, used linguistic patterns are various in Uzbek and English languages, therefore, most Uzbek learners face difficulties. The designed lessons in this project are aimed to enhance students’ pragmatic ability in comprehending and producing English compliments. Different activities, various tools, authentic materials and relevant assessment types will be employed to address the objectives of the lessons and meet the needs of the target learners. It is aimed to cover all topics, functions, strategies of compliments and compliment responses through three lessons. The first lesson will be



introduction to compliments which includes teaching necessary words, phrases and target grammar structures to enable learners to produce linguistically correct compliments. Furthermore, the main compliment topics will be introduced through various samples so as to enhance learners' pragmatic ability. The second lesson is totally dedicated to teach fundamentals of compliment responses. In this lesson types, strategies and functions of responses will be explained in the formal instruction part and learners have the opportunity of practicing, comparing and contrasting them in different contexts with the help of the chosen activities. The last lesson of the Unit serves as the conclusive lesson that focuses on practicing the theories that have been gained in the previous lessons. Moreover, in this lesson, students will be able to analyze compliments in terms of contextual and social variables (age, gender, social status, intensity, directness, formality, appropriateness of the speech), compare them in the native and target languages both in written and oral forms. Sequencing the topics of the lessons in that order helps students to learn compliments gradually from easier to complicated ones because the topics are sequenced according to their level of difficulty and importance.

The objectives of the whole Unit and every lessons are set with the accordance of the objectives of the course and needs, lacks and strengths of the target learners.

The objectives of the Unit: *SWBAT*

- Compare and contrast importance and structures of compliments and compliment responses in their L1 and L2;
- Produce compliment and responses applying various strategies

according to the function of the speech act;

- Distinguish contextual and social variables of compliments and their responses;
- Use compliments appropriately both in oral and written language.

These general objectives are specified in each lesson according to the main focus of the lesson.

Lesson 1. Introduction to compliments: When and Why do we employ this speech act?

Objectives: *SWBAT*

- Use appropriate phrases in making compliments;
- Compare and contrast main functions and types of compliments;
- Produce short compliments to the given topics and situations.

Lesson 2. How to respond to Compliments: Strategies and their function. Objectives: *SWBAT*

- Compare and contrast compliment responses in native and target languages;
- Apply various strategies to make compliment responses;
- Use appropriate grammar and vocabulary structures to provide responses to compliments;

Lesson 3. Contextual Variables of Compliments. Objectives: *SWBAT*

- Distinguish different functions of compliments in different cultures;
- Evaluate compliments and responses according to different contextual factors
- Practice English compliment and compliment responses in oral and spoken form using both in formal and informal language.



Distinguishing contextual and social variables of compliments is essential skill that enables learners to comprehend the language correctly and produce appropriate language, therefore, the last lesson of the Unit is fully devoted to teaching them. As Ishihara & Cohen (2010) suggested, the best way of presenting contextual variables is letting learners notice and understand them. In that case, different dialogue and video materials are used to present them to learners who will notice social differences in authentic context. Besides that, evaluation and communications tasks are employed to enable learners to put their gained knowledge into practice. For example, they perform the compliments in form role play or mingling activity and define the variables or peers evaluate one another's responses in terms of social and contextual features.

Assessment is a key tool of the lesson that provides information about the effectiveness of the lesson, how well learners acquired the presented topic and teachers will be able to plan the further schedule and content of the upcoming lessons relying on the outcomes of the assessment. In the lesson of the designed Unit, various types of assessment tools are included majority of which are an alternative assessment. Indirect approach of assessment will be used in the first introductory lesson, that is to say assessment is incorporated into structured and communicative activity instead of designing a special task for assessment. Using indirect assessment will lessen learner anxiety and elicits results in natural setting rather than special summative assessments. In the second lesson when learners are taught topics, functions,

strategies of both compliments and compliment responses, it is aimed to assess their pragmatic comprehension through ranking scales, multiple choice and open-ended questions. The existence of rubric facilitates the process of assessing learners' responses. In the last lesson, the main focus of assessment is placed on pragmatic production of the students. In the chosen assessment task, linguistic, socio-pragmatic and analytic skills of the learners can be assessed through role plays and evaluation task. Moreover, peer evaluation is encouraged and teacher provides delayed corrective feedback. Both the teacher and students rely on the analytic rubric, which covers all essential points of the assessment, while evaluating or providing a feedback.

The first step of creating activities has been collecting authentic data as an input to the learners. As Ishihara & Cohen (2010) suggested, data can be collected through five different tools among which intuition, role plays and the videos of natural conversation have been selected to present to the students and the collected data is used in designing activities. In each lesson, the activity that activates learners' noticing skill is included as Schmidt (1990) claimed in his Noticing Hypothesis that learners would never learn target language point unless they notice it in authentic context. For example, in the Unit Lesson Plan, compliment dialogues are used to enable learners notice the structure of compliments, authentic video material is included in the second lesson plan so as to learners notice compliment responses in natural conversation and reading material are used in the last lesson in order to get learners to compare and contrast the importance of compliments in different



cultures. In addition to that, they serve the function of awareness raising. When the target form is noticed, learners should attend to focused tasks so as to store the target form as an intake in their memory (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). According to Batstone (1994), mechanical or form focused tasks that require selected limited production will help learners to notice and understand target form while meaningful process activities are helpful to internalize them. Therefore, after providing formal instruction of the lesson, two different: mechanical and meaningful practice tasks are designed in the Unit Lesson Plans to get students to practice introduced linguistic, socio-pragmatic input. When learners engage in such tasks, they “can realize why that particular form was used in relation to the contextual factors such as the speaker/writer and listener/readers’ relative social status, age, gender, distance, and the level of formality of the occasion” (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Relying on the “Output Hypothesis” (Swain, 1998) and “Interaction Hypothesis” (Long, 1996) which promote comprehensible output and face-to-face interaction to develop second language proficiency, different communicative activities have been designed for each lesson of the Unit. For example, role plays to the given situations, face-to-face mingling activities, presentations are chosen as communicative tasks to urge learners to speak in L2. Moreover, assessment activities have been included to enhance the effectiveness of the lessons. As Ishihara

& Cohen (2010) recommended, two different assessable activities are focused on testing comprehension and production of the pragmatic use of compliments which assess pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic and metapragmatic aspects.

Designing and selecting appropriate materials for the lesson determines half success of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, authentic and engaging materials are included in the three lesson so as to draw and keep learners’ attention. In addition to designed materials, authentic compliment situations, dialogue samples, reading materials retrieved from shortcompliments.com, bbc.com, cscanada.net and other sites. Ishihara & Cohen (2010) claimed that incorporating audio/video materials into the pragmatics classes will facilitate learners’ comprehension as they serve as role models. Keeping that point in mind, authentic YouTube videos are included in different parts of the lesson such as warm-up task, in formal instruction part and even in the communicative part. Another supplementary but beneficial tool is technology that makes the lesson much more interactive and meaningful, increases the mood of the class. In the designed lesson plans various technological apps and games, even blocks are used for educational purposes to practice compliments. For example, **Kahoot quiz** is used to revise the lesson, **Pickerwheel** random chooser used as a warm up task or **Padlet.com** implemented in writing task.

REFERENCES:

1. Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton., & Snow, M. Eds. (2014). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (4th Ed.)* Heinle, CENGAGE.



2. Graves K. (2000) *Designing Language Courses*, Heinle & Heinle
3. Hess K. (2001) *Teaching Large Multilevel Classes*, Cambridge University Press
4. Holmes, J. (1988). Compliments and compliment responses in New Zealand. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 28(4), 485-508.
5. Ishihara, N., Cohen, D. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. UK: Pearson Education Limited.
6. Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. *Second Language Research*, 8 (3), 203-31.
7. Lim, S. (2000). Compliments and responses to compliments: The reflection of culture. *English Teaching*. 55(4), 119-139.
8. Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 129-158.