

COMPLIMENT RESPONSES IN VIETNAMESE:
THE INFLUENCE OF GENRE AND CONTEXT ON GENDER AND REGION

By

THU MONG LAU

Bachelor of Arts in English Linguistics and Literature
Vietnam National University
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
2008

Master of Arts in TESOL Methodology
Vietnam National University
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
2012

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
July, 2022

COMPLIMENT RESPONSES IN VIETNAMESE:
THE INFLUENCE OF GENRE AND CONTEXT ON GENDER AND REGION

Dissertation Approved:

Carol L. Moder

Dissertation Adviser

An Cheng

Stephanie Link

Shelia M. Kennison

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by thanking my advisor, Dr. Carol Lynn Moder, for all the help and support she has given me since the first days I entered the PhD program at Oklahoma State University. I am eternally grateful for her patience while listening to my ideas and reading long drafts of my dissertation chapters. I would also like to express my sincere and deep gratitude for her time and effort to help me develop during the process of writing my dissertation and throughout my doctoral studies at Oklahoma State University. Without her constant help and warm support, I could not have completed this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. An Cheng, Dr. Stephanie Link, and Dr. Shelia M. Kennison, for their valuable suggestions and constructive feedback regarding research prospectus and dissertation. I especially want to say thank you to Dr. Link for her warm support during the time I worked under her supervision, Dr. Cheng and Dr. Kennison for a quick response to my emails. It was my honor to have all of them in my committee.

My special thanks also go to the professors whom I have taken the courses with at Oklahoma State University: Dr. Gene Halleck who guided me to the world of pragmatics, Dr. Dennis Preston with a fantastic seminar on sociolinguistics, Dr. Carol Moder, Dr. Nancy Caplow, and Dr. Sara Loss with excellent classes of linguistics, Dr. An Cheng for developing research methodologies, Dr. Stephanie Link about L2 writing and technology. Without the knowledge in their classes, I would not have enough knowledge to work on this dissertation.

I would also like to thank my former professors, Dr. Zhengdao Ye, Dr. Dung H. Le, and Dr. Tuan H. Nguyen, who did not hesitate to write me a recommendation letter that gave me an opportunity to pursue my doctoral degree at Oklahoma State University. I am grateful for their help and confidence in me.

I am also indebted to my mom and my younger sister, Suong N. Lau. My mom and my sister always listened to me, talked to me, and supported me throughout my difficult times in the program. Thank you so much for their love and support!

Name: THU MONG LAU

Date of Degree: JULY, 2022

Title of Study: COMPLIMENT RESPONSES IN VIETNAMESE: THE INFLUENCE OF
GENRE AND CONTEXT ON GENDER AND REGION

Major Field: ENGLISH

Abstract: The aim of the present study is to investigate how genre and context impact region and gender in Vietnamese compliment responses (CRs) using two different sets of data. The sociolinguistic interview data was gathered through fieldwork with informal semi-structured interviews in two distinct regions of Vietnam. The talk show data was collected from two contemporary shows broadcast on national television channels. Different from previous studies, the present study focused on speakers' reported feelings about compliments rather than on observing performance. In addition, we categorized CRs based upon observation of real language from a discourse-based perspective, which we believe may provide a fuller picture of this speech act. Regarding compliment behaviors, the results indicated that there were considerable differences in compliment behaviors in movie discourse and talk show discourse. The compliments in movie discourse most frequently performed functions of many other speech acts such as thank-you, encouragement, congratulation, flattery, or flirty, and were involved in a wide variety of topics and several conversational turns. In talk show discourse, the compliments were mainly used as conversational strategies and varied greatly depending on the content of the shows. In terms of CRs, the results showed big differences in regional and gender variation through sociolinguistic interviews but very little regional and gender variation in the two shows. The findings of the present study make a strong case for the view that people's reported behavior in everyday life differ from people's interactions in media contexts. Throughout the present study, we can see that the context does matter very much in giving compliments and interpreting the responses. The results of our sociolinguistic interviews do support the fact that one response form could differ in interpretation. The results of our talk show data make the case stronger as we again found that one form could perform more than one function and the same nonverbal behaviors may have different meanings. The findings of the present study may call our attention to building a new analytical framework for this speech act.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1. Compliments and Compliment Categories	7
2.1.1. Perceptions of Compliments and Compliment Responses	7
2.1.2. Categorizing Compliments	9
2.1.3. Compliments in Previous Gender Studies	12
2.2. Previous Approaches to the Study of Compliment Responses	25
2.2.1. Data Collection Methods	25
2.2.1.1. Discourse Completion Tests	26
2.2.1.2. Role-plays	28
2.2.1.3. Field Observation	30
2.2.1.4. Recordings of naturally occurring language in interaction	31
2.2.1.5. Media Contexts	32
2.2.1.6. Summary	34
2.2.2. Categorizing Compliment Responses	36
2.3. Methodologies Used in the Present Study	47
2.3.1. Sociolinguistic Interviews	47
2.3.2. Talk Show Discourse	49
2.4. Previous Findings of Compliment Responses	51
2.4.1. Compliment Responses across Cultures	51
2.4.1.1. Overview of CRs across Cultures	51
2.4.1.2. CR Patterns according to Compliment Topics	53
2.4.2. Compliment Responses within Cultures	55
2.4.2.1. CRs across Genders	55
2.4.2.2. CRs across Regions	58
2.5. Compliment Responses in Vietnamese	58
2.6. Chapter Summary	61
III. METHODOLOGY	62
PART I - SOCIOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW DATA	63
3.1. Participants	64
3.2. Instruments	68

Chapter	Page
3.3. Procedure	79
3.4. Data Analysis	80
3.4.1. Procedures	82
3.4.2. Coding Reliability	100
3.5. Summary	103
 PART II - TALK SHOW DATA.....	 103
3.6. Procedures.....	106
3.7. Data Analysis	110
3.7.1. Procedures	112
3.7.2. Coding Reliability	120
3.8. Chapter Summary	123
 IV. SOCIOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW RESULTS	 124
REGIONAL VARIATION.....	124
4.1. Responses to Thank-you Compliment	125
4.2. Responses to Encouragement Compliment	129
4.3. Responses to Sport session-ending Compliment	140
4.4. Responses to Joking Compliment.....	149
4.5. Responses to Congratulation Compliment.....	156
4.6. Responses to Flattery Compliment	163
4.7. Responses to Admiration Compliment	170
4.8. Responses to Flirty Compliment.....	176
4.9. Region Summary	182
GENDER VARIATION	184
4.10. Responses to Encouragement Compliment	184
4.11. Responses to Sport session-ending Compliment	192
4.12. Responses to Joking Compliment.....	201
4.13. Responses to Congratulation Compliment.....	209
4.14. Responses to Flattery Compliment	223
4.15. Responses to Admiration Compliment	231
4.16. Chapter Summary	244
 V. TALK SHOW RESULTS	 247
5.1. Overview of the Talk Show Genre	247
5.2. The Talk Show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’)	250
5.2.1. Overview of Compliment Responses.....	251
5.2.1.1. Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance	253
5.2.1.2. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous	269
5.2.2. Regional Variation	275

Chapter	Page
5.3. The Talk Show “Chuyện của sao” (“Story of Stars’)	276
5.3.1. Overview of Compliment Responses	278
5.3.1.1. Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance	279
5.3.1.2. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous	285
5.3.2. Gender Variation	300
5.4. Chapter Summary	301
 VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	 302
6.1. Compliment Behaviors in the Present Study	302
6.1.1. Actual Compliments in Movie Discourse	303
6.1.2. Actual Compliments in Talk Show Discourse	307
6.1.3. Summary	310
6.2. CRs through Sociolinguistic Interviews	312
6.2.1. Regional Variation	312
6.2.1.1. Southern Men vs. Northern Men	312
6.2.1.2. Southern Women vs. Northern Women	317
6.2.1.3. Summary	323
6.2.2. Gender Variation	326
6.2.2.1. Gender Variation in the South	326
6.2.2.2. Gender Variation in the North	327
6.2.2.3. Gender and Regional Variation	331
6.2.2.4. Summary	338
6.2.3. Contributions to Existing Research and New Insights	341
6.3. CRs in Talk Show Discourse	350
6.3.1. Context and Regional Variation	350
6.3.2. Context and Gender Variation	353
6.3.3. Summary	355
6.3.4. Contributions to Existing Research and New Insights	356
6.4. Limitations and Future Research	359
 REFERENCES	 361
 APPENDICES	 370
APPENDIX A: IRB Approval	370
APPENDIX B: Eight Compliment Video Scenarios	372
APPENDIX C: Interview Questions	378
APPENDIX D: Consent Form and Recruitment Methods	379

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1. Combination strategies found in Tang and Zhang (2009)	40
2.2. Herbert's (1990) taxonomy of compliment response types	45
3.1. Southern male participants.....	65
3.2. Northern male participants.....	66
3.3. Southern female participants.....	67
3.4. Northern female participants.....	68
3.5. Description of the eight compliment scenarios.....	70
3.6. A corpus of CRs collected from sociolinguistic interviews.....	81
3.7. Instances that needed additional coding	102
3.8. Description of chosen videos between the female host and the female guests in two regions	107
3.9. Description of chosen videos between the male host and the male and female guests	109
3.10. Description of the strategies under the category of acknowledgment	113
4.1. Responses to thank-you compliment	125
4.2. Responses to encouragement compliment	130
4.3. Responses to sport session-ending compliment.....	141
4.4. Responses to joking compliment	151
4.5. Responses to congratulation compliment	157
4.6. Responses to flattery compliment.....	164
4.7. Responses to admiration compliment	171
4.8. Responses to flirty compliment	177
4.9. Responses to encouragement compliment across genders in the South	185
4.10. Responses to sport session-ending compliment across gender in the North	193
4.11. Responses to joking compliment across genders in the North	203
4.12. Responses to congratulation compliment across genders in the South.....	210
4.13. Responses to congratulation compliment across genders in the North.....	217
4.14. Responses to flattery compliment across genders in the North	224
4.15. Responses to admiration compliment across genders in the South	232
4.16. Responses to admiration compliment across genders in the North	238
5.1. Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance.....	254
5.2. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous.....	269
5.3. Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance.....	280
5.4. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous.....	286

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1. A sample situation used in DCTs	26
2.2. A sample open or naturalistic role-play	29
3.1. The host is looking straight towards the guest.....	111
3.2. The host is facing the camera.....	111
4.1. Feelings of thank-you compliment	125
4.2. Feelings of encouragement compliment	130
4.3. Feelings of sport session-ending compliment.....	140
4.4. Feelings of joking compliment	150
4.5. Feelings of congratulation compliment	157
4.6. Feelings of flattery compliment.....	163
4.7. Feelings of admiration compliment	170
4.8. Feelings of flirty compliment	177
4.9. Feelings of encouragement compliment across genders in the South	185
4.10. Feelings of sport session-ending compliment across genders in the North.....	192
4.11. Feelings of joking compliment across genders in the North.....	202
4.12. Feelings of congratulation compliment across genders in the South.....	210
4.13. Feelings of congratulation compliment across genders in the North.....	216
4.14. Feelings of flattery compliment across genders in the North	223
4.15. Feelings of admiration compliment across genders in the South	232
4.16. Feelings of admiration compliment across genders in the North	237
5.1. Compliment responses of the Southern female guests	251
5.2. Compliment responses of the Northern female guests	252
5.3. SF3's reaction to the direct compliment in Segment 3	256
5.4. Illustration for a change in SF3's reaction during Segment 3	256
5.5. SF5's reaction to the first direct compliment.....	258
5.6. SF5's reaction to the second direct compliment	258
5.7. SF4's reaction to the first two direct compliments	260
5.8. NF1's reaction to the first direct compliment	261
5.9. NF1's reaction to the other two direct compliments.....	262
5.10. Illustration for a change in NF1's reaction during Segment 7.....	263
5.11. Illustration for a change in NF1's reaction to Segment 10	264
5.12. NF3's reaction to indirect and direct compliments.....	266
5.13. NF4's reaction to the two direct compliments.....	267
5.14. SF4's reaction to the third direct compliment.....	270
5.15. NF4's reaction to the first direct compliment.....	271
5.16. NF5's reaction to the first two direct compliments	272

Figure	Page
5.17. Illustration for NF5's reaction to Segment 6	273
5.18. NF5's reaction to the third direct compliment.....	274
5.19. Compliment responses of the male guests	278
5.20. Compliment responses of the female guests.....	279
5.21. SM7's reaction to the first indirect compliment	281
5.22. SF7's reaction to the first indirect and direct compliment.....	282
5.23. SF7's reaction to the second direct compliment	283
5.24. SM1's reaction to the first direct compliment	287
5.25. SM1's reaction to the second direct compliment.....	288
5.26. Illustration for SM1's reaction to the second direct compliment	288
5.27. SM3's reaction to the indirect and direct compliment.....	290
5.28. SM8's reaction to indirect and direct compliments	292
5.29. Illustration for a change in SM8's reaction during Segment 3	292
5.30. SM5's reaction to the indirect compliment in Segment 4.....	294
5.31. Illustration for a change in SM5's reaction during Segment 4	294
5.32. SF3's different reactions to first and subsequent indirect compliments	295
5.33. Illustration for a change in SF3's reaction during Segment 5	296
5.34. Illustration for a change in SF3's reaction during Segment 6	296
5.35. Illustration for a change in SF3's reaction during Segment 7	296
5.36. SF8's reaction to the indirect compliment	298
5.37. SF2's reaction to the second indirect compliment.....	299

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA: Conversation Analysis
CC: Congratulation Compliment
CRs: Compliment Responses
DCT: Discourse Completion Test
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language
FL: Flattery Compliment
FTA: Face Threatening Act
HCMC: Ho Chi Minh City
L1: First Language
L2: Second Language
MD: Minh Duc
NF: Northern Female
NM: Northern Male
OTV: Oc Thanh Van
RQ: Research Question
SF: Southern Female
SM: Southern Male

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research on compliment responses (CRs) has attracted scholarly attention for decades. The vast majority of earlier research on CRs has been contrastive research, with a focus on a comparison of how native speakers of English and speakers of other languages would respond to compliments under the influence of micro-social factors (i.e., power *social status*, social distance *the degree to which interactants know each other*, style or register *the level of formality for a particular context*). For the contrastive purpose, non-native speakers of English in contrastive studies would usually respond to compliments in their L1. Some studies have also analyzed pragmatic transfer, which is the influence of the L1 on the L2 by making a comparison of CRs produced by native speakers of English and learners of English as a second or foreign language. For those studies, EFL and ESL learners would usually respond to compliments in L2 English. Other studies have investigated pragmatic variation between and across L1 varieties of the same language, with a focus on the interplay between micro-social factors and macro-social factors (i.e., region, social class, gender, age, and ethnicity). The methodologies used by previous studies are a matter of considerable concern. Most research has used elicited data collected through elicitation methods that cannot fully represent the features of authentic discourse and so do not illustrate the importance of genre and context in research on compliment and response speech acts. Though some studies have made an attempt to collect more naturally occurring data

through field note methods or recordings of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction, there remain several limitations with regard to collection procedures. In addition, due to an emphasis on analyzing CRs on the action level, most research has analyzed the CR speech act according to conventions of means (i.e., speaker strategies) and conventions of forms (i.e., linguistic devices), in which CRs have been more often coded along a continuum from Acceptance to Rejection based on researcher observation alone. Despite the fact that the results of these studies provide valuable data on how speakers across languages and cultures have perceived and responded to compliments in simulated situations, such a conventional CR categorization might not have characterized all the features of CRs in authentic discourse. A study that uses relatively naturally occurring data and categorizes this speech act based upon specific language contexts is still worth exploring. The main aim of the present study is to investigate how genre and context impact possible region and gender variation in Vietnamese CRs using relatively naturally occurring data, supplemented with semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the two regions of the country. The study aims to examine whether people's interactions in natural contexts differ from people's interactions in media contexts.

In addition to using more natural data sources that may illustrate features of compliments and CRs in interaction, the present study also aims to apply theoretical frameworks other than conventional CR categories and subcategories to the analysis of this speech act. Conventionally categorizing CRs may probably miss pragmatic features of actual language use in interaction while interactional context may play a significant role in interpreting compliments and responses. We believe that an analytical framework that particularly categorizes CRs according to speakers' reports about how they feel about compliments and what CR strategies they would employ in order to show these feelings will help to interpret this speech act more accurately. We

also believe that categorizing CRs based upon observation of real language using a discourse-based analysis methodology in contemporary Vietnamese talk shows, a setting with high expectations for compliments and appropriate responses in public, may provide a new picture of the CR speech act in general and CRs in Vietnamese in particular.

Though the study of CRs has attracted numerous scholars across languages and cultures, in Vietnamese this speech act remains underexplored, especially from the sociolinguistic and discourse-based perspective. From the sociolinguistic perspective, due to the plight of the country for years over history, Southern and Northern Vietnam may well have developed inherent differences in a variety of linguistic and cultural aspects. Thus, a study on CRs between two parts of the country might provide valuable and interesting insights into these differences. Additionally, most research on Vietnamese CRs has used elicitation data as sources of the analysis and has categorized CRs conventionally, so a study using actual Vietnamese language in a specific interaction setting such as in contemporary Vietnamese talk shows analyzed from the discourse-based perspective may provide a new understanding of this speech act in Vietnamese. The present study using sociolinguistic interview and talk show data will, therefore, may provide fascinating insights into compliment and response behaviors in Vietnamese.

The present study is organized into six chapters, including (1) Introduction, (2) Literature Review, (3) Methodology, (4) Sociolinguistic Interview Results, (5) Talk Show Results, (6) Discussion and Conclusion. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews some of the literature on compliment and CR speech act studies that are most relevant to the present study. It will first discuss perception of compliments and CRs together with previous categorizations of compliments. As the methodologies used by previous studies are concerned, the chapter then reviews the methods employed to collect CRs as well as on the way the studies categorized this

speech act. Next, the chapter argues for the methodologies used in the present study and discusses the findings of previous studies with regard to CRs across cultures, within cultures, and in Vietnamese.

Chapter 3 will first introduce the research questions of the present study and then provide the core information about two sets of data that were used in the present study. Following the research questions, Part I of the chapter presents a detailed description of the participants, instruments, procedures, and an analysis framework for the sociolinguistic interview data. Next, Part II of the chapter described the procedures used to collect and analyze the talk-show data.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the sociolinguistic interview data in terms of the first three research questions concerning regional and gender variation. The chapter consists of two main parts, Part I focusing on regional variation and Part II focusing on gender variation.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the talk show data in terms of the last two research questions, which aim to explore how the context of the two shows impact compliment behaviors and CRs. The chapter first provides an overview of the talk show genre and discusses some unique contributions of the talk show data set to our knowledge of compliments and responses. Next, the chapter explores how the context of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) interacts with regional variation and examines influences of the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) on gender variation.

Chapter 6 will further interpret the main findings of the present study and provide the overall conclusions to the study. The chapter will first discuss actual compliment behaviors given in movie discourse and talk-show discourse. Next, the chapter discusses results from sociolinguistic interviews and from talk show discourse to further explain how genre and context

relate to regional and gender variation. It finally describes limitations of the present study and offers recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of the present study is to investigate CRs in Vietnamese, focusing on how genre and context impact regional variation and gender variation. Different from prior research, the present study aims at categorizing compliments based upon real language contexts that we believe will characterize all the features of compliments more accurately. An analytical framework that particularly categorizes CRs according to speakers' reported feelings about compliments and based on observation of real language from a discourse-based approach will be applied to the analysis of the CR speech act in this thesis. The present chapter will first discuss perceptions of compliments and CRs as well as highlight the deficiencies in categorizing compliments in previous studies. Next, we will review compliments in previous gender studies and especially discuss previous approaches to the study of CRs, including an overview of prior data collection methods and an in-depth discussion of conventional CR classifications widely used in the literature. We then discuss the methodological framework used in the present study. Finally, the chapter provides a brief overview of the main findings of this speech act in other languages and in Vietnamese language as well.

2.1. Compliments and Compliment Categories

Complimenting is a complex sociolinguistic speech act that has been characterized as an adjacency pair (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001; Huth, 2006; Lee, 2009; Hornoiu, 2017; Danziger, 2018) or a two-unit turn (Herbert, 1990; Mustapha, 2011). The first part includes the compliment itself, which is expected to be followed by a second part, the compliment response. According to Holmes (1988), compliments may serve a wide range of functions in interaction, depending on how speakers perceive the compliments. The following section will discuss in more detail different perceptions of this speech act and their impact on responses.

2.1.1. Perceptions of Compliments and Compliment Responses

Complimenting is known as a complex speech act, as it can be defined in a number of ways. First and foremost, a compliment is often recognized as a positive speech act, which “explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer” (Holmes, 1988, p. 446). Barnlund and Akari (1985) also defined a compliment as “any expression of positive evaluation concerning the qualities or behavior of another person without manipulative intent” (p. 12). According to Yuhaida, Yusof, and Hoon (2014), “compliments are positive expressions that can boost one’s morale” (p. 77). Following these definitions, a compliment may serve as a positive politeness strategy which aims to satisfy the hearer’s positive face wants. In interaction, positive compliments are considered as ‘verbal gifts’ or ‘social lubricants’ that may help to increase or consolidate solidarity among the interactants (Holmes, 1988; Mustapha, 2011; Farenkia, 2012; Zhang, 2013). One of the most important functions of positive compliments is to soften the effects of criticism (Holmes, 1988;

Billmyer, 1990; Farenkia, 2012) or serve as various other speech acts such as greetings, thanks, and congratulations (Ishihara, 2010; Yuhaida et al., 2014).

Under some circumstances, a compliment may also be viewed as a negative act or a face threatening act. As Rees-Miller (2011) defined, a compliment is considered inappropriate or an expression of negative politeness if “it is seen as a form of judgement; the giver assumes the right to evaluate the receiver” (p. 2674). Holmes (1988) added that “compliments can be regarded as face-threatening to the extent that they imply the complimenter envies the addressee in some way or would like something belonging to the addressee” (p. 448). In general, Rees-Miller (2011) and Holmes (1988) indirectly point out that compliments may be significant face threatening acts (FTAs hereafter) in contexts where an action of judgement may occur or in societies in which envy is very strong and common. As a result, a negative compliment may often provoke negative reactions (Farenkia, 2012).

Since the same compliment can be interpreted differently in different contexts, responding to a compliment heavily depends on what kind of communicative act the compliment is perceived to be. When a compliment works as a positive speech act, whose primary function is to make the hearer feel good, people tend to appreciate the compliment (Mustapha, 2011). If a compliment is perceived and experienced as an act threatening to the addressee’s face, like criticism, envy, or an act of judgement on another person, “people may feel uneasy, defensive, or even cynical with regard to the compliments they receive, and thus may have trouble responding to such compliments appropriately” (Yu, 2003, p. 1687). Thus, a preliminary understanding of how participants in the discourse interpret the compliment’s functions in the discourse context in which it is given is very necessary for understanding and interpreting responses. As Rees-Miller (2011) suggests, “the receiver’s response is often key in understanding whether or not the

compliment was welcome and whether it was perceived as appropriate or not in the context” (p. 2674). Accordingly, unlike prior CR research, the present study turns the focus on investigating how the speakers interpret compliments in their contexts of use.

The next section particularly discusses the compliment category framework used in most previous studies and explains why such a methodological framework was not used to categorize the compliments in the present study.

2.1.2. Categorizing Compliments

The vast majority of literature on compliments has categorized compliments according to four major compliment topics including appearance, performance, possession, and personality (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Chen, 1993; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Yuhaida et al., 2014; Danziger, 2018). An appearance compliment, as illustrated in (1) below, refers to the recipient’s personal physical attributes (Holmes, 1988), especially clothing and hair (Herbert, 1990, p. 202).

- (1) Wow, I really like your hair.
That’s a neat jacket.

A performance compliment, as (3) demonstrates, is identified as “a compliment on the addressee’s general skill or ability or on a specific action of the addressee”, while a possession compliment such as in (2) below, is defined as “a compliment on any tangible object that the addressee owns, whether the object is in sight or not” (Rees-Miller, 2011, p. 2675).

- (2) What a watch! I wish I had one like that. (Chen, 1993, p. 70)

- (3) That’s pretty good Taichi you were doing at the party. (Cheng, 2011, p. 2208)

A compliment on personality concerns some intangible character qualities (Rees-Miller, 2011; Parisi & Wogan, 2006), as demonstrated in (4) below, by Tang and Zhang (2009, p. 343).

(4) Thank you! You're really helpful, patient and caring.

One of the advantages of categorizing compliments according to topics is providing a range of possible categories for compliments (appearance, performance, possession, personality), the four topics that by far the most compliments have been paid in. This compliment category framework may in part help to collect possible CR strategies that evolve around these topics. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of CR strategies under each compliment category (appearance, performance, possession, personality) may provide a good understanding of this speech act, both within cultures and across cultures.

However, categorizing compliments according to topics has shown many limitations. The first and foremost limitation of this compliment category framework is its tendency to recognize a compliment most often as a positive speech act - "something which is positively valued by the participants and attributed to the addressee" (Holmes, 1988, p. 455). Studies that categorized compliments according to topics (Lee, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Guo, Zhou, & Chow, 2012; Danziger, 2018) have assumed that compliments serve as a positive speech act without an in-depth analysis of complete complimenting events - the discourse context in which compliments occur. According to Herbert (1990), "the actual sociology of compliment work cannot be understood without considering simultaneously the whole of the compliment event" (p. 202). The context is the key factor that may help to recognize whether the compliment is perceived as a positive or a negative act since the same compliment may serve different functions in different contexts and "what is polite in one context may be less polite or excessively impolite in another context" (Guo et al., p. 349). Take the following compliment, for example.

Your friends have organized a party to celebrate the end of semester. You've dressed up for the party. As you arrive at the party, A - one of your friends - says:

A: *“Hey, you look great! You’re really handsome/beautiful today.”*

(Source: Tang & Zhang, 2009, p. 343)

The above compliment was categorized as a compliment on appearance by Tang and Zhang (2009), who supposed it to function as a positive speech act in this context. However, it seems to us that there was not enough contextual evidence to conclude that the appearance compliment in this context only serves as a positive speech act. Whether the receiver perceives this compliment as a positive act or a FTA may depend on numerous factors such as the atmosphere of the party, the way the complimenter dressed, the facial expressions and body gestures of the complimenter when giving this compliment, whether there is any other conversational turn before this compliment was made, and so forth. As discussed earlier on in section 2.1.1, the same compliment may be interpreted as either a positive or a negative speech act, depending on the way it is delivered to the hearers. Responding to a compliment, thus, depends very much on what kind of communicative act the compliment is perceived to be. Lee (2009) also emphasizes the fact that “compliments should be studied in specific contexts so that their function in the particular setting and speech community becomes apparent” (Lee, 2009, p. 523). Without detailed contextual analysis, categorizing the above compliment as an appearance compliment which functions as a positive act as Tang and Zhang (2009) did remains questionable. As Golato (2003) argues, “if compliments (or their responses) that serve different functions are categorized as being the same before undergoing statistical analysis, the results of the analysis become uncertain” (p. 96).

Despite considerable advantages, grouping compliments according to topics, therefore, may make it impossible to convey all the contextual factors associated with compliments, which may result in a misinterpretation of the compliments and their responses. More importantly,

categorizing compliments according to topics may not be feasible if the compliment contains many conversational turns or if the compliment involves a variety of topics. Hence, although this compliment category framework has attracted the most attention in prior research, it may not be a suitable methodological framework for the compliments in the present study. In order to overcome certain limitations of this compliment category framework, the present study will categorize compliments according to their functions in their specific discourse settings. We believe that categorizing compliments according to their discourse functions in a specific setting may provide a fuller picture of compliment behaviors, as well as help to interpret their responses more accurately.

The aim of the present study is to investigate how genre and context impact regional variation and gender variation in Vietnamese CRs. The main focus of the present study is on the CR speech act; the compliment behaviors are not the main focus of the study. However, to make possible a comparison of cross-gender compliment behaviors elicited in the present study to those in previous gender studies, the following section discusses compliment behaviors in previous gender studies. Section 2.1.3 aims at reviewing how previous gender studies have discussed and categorized compliments, the results achieved, and then accounting for why previous gender studies yielded such results.

2.1.3. Compliments in Previous Gender Studies

A review of previous gender studies on compliments has indicated three major trends in discussing compliments. All the three tend to view compliments more as a positive speech act. The first two were similar in analyzing compliments collected from various settings (e.g., classrooms, dining hall, the student union, and so on). What made a difference between the first

and second trend is that while the former categorized compliments according to four major topics including appearance, performance, possession, and personality, the latter especially discussed compliments according to the personal focus of the act, which may sometimes overlap with syntactic categorization. Despite the third trend also categorizing compliments according to topics, it may differ from the first two in that the third trend discussed actual compliment behaviors in specific settings. The following discusses these three major trends in more detail.

The studies that support the first trend (Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006) tend to group compliments according to four major topics. The data was mainly collected from a variety of settings using field note methods. To illustrate, Holmes (1988) gathered a corpus of 484 compliment exchanges in New Zealand English using the field note method. The majority of data collectors in her study were female students who were asked to note down the compliment exchanges as soon and as accurately as possible together with relevant contextual details. With regard to compliment topics by gender, Holmes (1988) reported that there was a general tendency for New Zealand women to give and receive compliments on appearance from other females (56.7% and 61% respectively), whereas only 36% of the compliments between males were related to appearance. New Zealand men, in contrast, tended to compliment each other on possessions, which may be regarded more as a FTA. More interestingly, New Zealand men tended not to compliment each other on ability or skill but were more likely to compliment women on ability or skill. To explain this finding, Holmes (1988) argued that “compliments on a person appearance may be felt to presume an intimacy which could be regarded as inappropriate in some cross-sex interactions” (p. 456). Moreover, since New Zealand women tend to use and perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, while New Zealand men may perceive them more often as FTAs, Holmes (1988) found that New Zealand men compliment women far

more often than they compliment other men. Regarding frequency of compliments, due to an imbalance in the gender of the data collectors (92% of the data collectors being females), the result showed that “women gave 67.7% of all the compliments recorded and received 74.3% of them” (Holmes, 1988, p. 450). Holmes' (1988) finding that New Zealand women give and receive more compliments than men do, according to Golato (2005), may simply be due to the fact that there were more females than males collecting the data, because females tend to collect compliments to and from females and males tend to collect those to and from males.

Also using the field note method, Parisi and Wogan (2006) collected compliments occurring during spontaneous and everyday interactions on an American University campus in Oregon. Fourteen students were asked to record all their conversations with friends and acquaintances except classroom discourse involving professors and very private moments. While Parisi and Wogan's (2006) corpus showed that American males tended to give females compliments on appearance (60.53%) rather than on skill (only at 31.58%), Holmes' (1988) corpus indicated that New Zealand males were inclined to compliment women on ability or skill because according to Holmes' explanation, appearance compliments were not appropriate in some cross-sex interactions. In addition, Parisi and Wogan's (2006) corpus suggested that American females tended to give males compliments on skill (at 56.09%), whereas Holmes' (1988) corpus revealed that New Zealand females were more likely to give men compliments on both appearance (40%) and ability (35%). The hypothesized reason that American females gave fewer appearance compliments to males (only at 29%) was due to the rules of romance, which according to Parisi and Wogan (2006), was “being afraid of being mistakenly interpreted as a sexual advance” (p. 23).

Holmes' (1988) and Parisi and Wogan's (2006) differences in compliment behaviors may be largely due to the differences in socio-cultural values and politeness varieties of the speakers from two different cultures (New Zealand English vs. American English) but may be also in part due to some limitations in their data collection and analysis methods. Excluding compliments in classroom discourse involving professors may indicate that Parisi and Wogan (2006) paid considerable attention to differences in such factors as age, status, and style or register of a particular context such as classroom settings. However, Parisi and Wogan's (2006) data was still collected from a wide range of contexts and by 14 students whose gender was not mentioned in their study, which may result in a lack of data validity. As Holmes (1988) admitted in her study, compliments between females were likely to be larger in number when the data collector is female and similarly, compliments between males were also likely to be greater in number when the data collector is male. More importantly, according to Golato (2003), their findings would probably become uncertain because the compliments that may serve different functions in different contexts were categorized as being the same. Thus, the two biggest limitations of the first trend in discussing compliments (e.g., Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006) was probably that there was an imbalance in the gender of the data collectors and that the compliments were collected from a wide range of contexts but were categorized and analyzed as being the same. More research based upon specific contexts in which compliments occur is needed in order to confirm the generalizability of Holmes' (1988) and Parisi and Wogan's (2006) findings.

Not addressing the weaknesses of the first trend, research in the second trend (e.g., Herbert, 1990) also collected compliments from very different settings. Using a field note method, Herbert (1990) collected 1,062 compliment events in American English by students at the State University of New York at Binghamton, who were asked to collect compliment events

within the student community, in places such as classrooms, dining halls, the student union, and so on. Instead of discussing compliments according to topics as some studies in the first trend (e.g., Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006) did, Herbert (1990) particularly discussed compliments according to the “personal focus” of the act which may sometimes overlap with the syntactic categorization. This analysis framework mainly examined whether the compliment subject is expressed with a surface 1st, 2nd, 3rd (i.e., impersonal) person focus, for example:

- 1st: I like your hair that way.
- 2nd: Your hair looks good short.
- 3rd: Nice haircut.

(Source: Herbert, 1990, p. 203)

The findings showed that impersonal 3rd person compliments (e.g., ‘Nice haircut’) occurred more frequently in male than female speech (60% vs. 20% respectively). The females, in contrast, tended to employ more personal focus compliments (e.g., ‘I like your hair that way’, ‘I think that color’s perfect for you’) regardless of the gender of the addressee. More noticeably, more than 90% of the 1st person compliments in female speech (chiefly in female-female rather than female-male interactions) were *I like X* and *I love X*. First person compliments were not common in male speech, especially between males. Second person compliments (e.g., ‘Your hair looks good short’) were predominant in interactions from females to males as well as from males to females. There emerge two important questions about Herbert’s (1990) findings. First, of 1,062 compliments events elicited in Herbert’s (1990) corpus, the highest frequency (n=330) was from females to females and the lowest frequency (n=228) was from males to males. The number of compliments in male-female and female-male interactions stayed in the middle range. The first question that arises was whether there was an imbalance in the gender of her data collectors, which resulted in a high frequency of compliments between females and a low frequency of compliments between males. Second, despite Herbert (1990) analyzing compliments according

to the “personal focus” of the act, which seems to focus on the forms of actual compliments, males and females may give different compliments using very different linguistic forms in different settings. Thus, we wonder whether Herbert’s (1990) findings would differ if he focused more on compliments in specific settings instead of analyzing compliments from various settings as being the same. These two questions also seem to be possible limitations of research in the second trend.

As a way to overcome the limitations of the first two trends, recent studies (Wu, 2008; Rees-Miller, 2011; Lee, 2009) especially discussed actual compliments in specific settings and suggested very different findings in terms of male and female compliment behaviors. Regarding a TV-series context, Wu (2008) investigated compliments across genders in the American comedy-drama TV-series *Ugly Betty* which aired on ABC Television Network between 2006 and 2010. Following Holmes’ (1988) definition of compliments as positive speech acts, Wu (2008) collected a total of 72 compliments which were regarded as positive politeness strategies from 18 characters (9 males, 9 females) in four episodes of two seasons airing at the time the study was conducted. Situated in a TV-series setting, Wu’s (2008) study suggested very interesting findings. Collecting and analyzing compliments from various settings as being the same, Holmes (1988) found that New Zealand women give and receive more compliments than men do, which according to Golato (2005), may be in part due to a gender imbalance of data collectors. Wu’s (2008) study showed that despite females making more compliments than males in the TV series, this difference was not so dramatic (54.17% vs. 45.83%). According to Holmes (1988), due to the fact that New Zealand women tend to use and perceive compliments as positive acts while their male counterparts may view compliments more as FTAs, the result showed a general tendency for New Zealand women to give and receive compliments from other women, and for

New Zealand men to compliment women rather than other men. Herbert (1990) eliciting 1,062 compliments events within the American student community came to the conclusion that compliments between females occurred most frequently, while compliments between males were not common in her corpus. Wu (2008) analyzing compliments in an American TV-series setting showed a contrasting result. Wu's (2008) corpus indicated that both females and males tended to compliment the opposite gender rather than the same gender, that is, females like complimenting males rather than females, while males tend to compliment females most. As regards compliment topics, Holmes (1988) also noted a high frequency of appearance compliments among New Zealand women and a low frequency of appearance compliments between New Zealand men. Parisi and Wogan's (2006) study that collected compliments occurring during everyday interactions on an American University campus in Oregon indicated that American males tended to give females compliments on appearance while American females tended to give males compliments on skill. Interestingly, the result by Wu (2008) shows that females and males were most inclined to compliment others on performance rather than on other topics. The second place was related to personality, while compliments on appearance were very rare in Wu's (2008) corpus.

The differences in Holmes's (1988) and Wu's (2009) findings, on the one hand, may originate from certain differences in socio-cultural values and politeness varieties of the speakers from two cultures (New Zealand English vs. American English) or due to an imbalance in the gender of data collectors in Holmes' (1988) study, but on the other hand may be attributed to the differences in settings in which the compliments were given. Holmes' (1988) study yielded such results, in part because her corpus was collected from very different settings in students' everyday interactions; whereas Wu (2008) analyzed compliments in media discourse,

specifically in the American comedy-drama TV-series *Ugly Betty*, the setting where all the participants including males and females were expected to give compliments as strategies that facilitate the conversation. A huge difference in discourse settings may contribute greatly to the differences in findings suggested by Herbert (1990), Parisi and Wogan (2006), and Wu (2008) about actual compliment behaviors in American English. Since Herbert (1990) and Parisi and Wogan (2006) discussed compliments given in a wide range of students' everyday interactions, their findings, as expected, were very different from Wu's (2008) findings. In students' everyday interactions on a university campus, compliments between females were expected to occur more frequently than compliments between males, especially if the data collector was a female. Also, compliments on appearance seem to occur more regularly in everyday conversations between females and compliments on ability or skill were expected to occur at a higher frequency between males or from females to males. However, in a media context such as in a TV-series setting, the characters were more often expected to give compliments as politeness strategies that would help to begin, facilitate, and maintain the conversation. Wu's (2008) finding that males and females favored compliments on performance rather than on other topics perfectly conforms to the expectations of an appropriate topic for compliments in this discourse setting. The differences in Holmes' (1988) and Wu's (2008) findings were not simply due to a difference in two varieties of English but might in part depend on the settings in which compliments occur. Similarly, the fact that Wu's (2008) study yielded results very different from previous studies of compliment behaviors in American English (Herbert, 1990; Parisi & Wogan, 2006) was not completely due to a change and development of American society over time, but again these differences may possibly stem from differences in discourse settings where compliments occur.

The impact of discourse contexts on compliment behaviors was again revisited in Rees-Miller's (2011) study. Following Holmes' (1988) definition of compliments as positive speech acts and using a notebook technique, Rees-Miller (2011) asked her students (data collectors being predominantly females) to choose locations on campus such as the dining hall, snack bar, the recreation center, sites of organized student activities for observation. First, to avoid the concern that a majority of female data collectors would result in a majority of compliments to and by women (Holmes, 1988; Golato, 2005), Rees-Miller (2011) urged her students to be mindful of gender balance in selecting locations for observation. Second, in order to address previous drawbacks of analyzing data from various settings (e.g., Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Parisi & Wogan, 2006) and simultaneously, to indicate the importance of setting in dealing with compliment data, Rees-Miller (2011) especially categorized compliments according to two types of environments in which they occurred. Unstructured settings, as Rees-Miller defined, consist of "the student dining hall or snack bar during meals; dormitory common areas where students are eating, watching TV, or otherwise hanging out; buildings or the campus mall where students are en route to other locations or waiting for classes to begin; to entertainment venues where students are milling about before the event starts" (2011, p. 2679). Goal-oriented activities, in contrast, may occur in "student clubs, organized student activities such as competitive tournaments, and a variety of sports activities including training, practice, pick-up games, and intramural games (games organized between teams of students on campus)" (Rees-Miller, 2011, p. 2679). Distinguishing between compliments given in unstructured and goal-oriented settings may help to avoid analyzing compliments given in different settings as being the same, which may result in uncertainty of findings.

As could be expected, actual compliments given in unstructured settings differed greatly from those given in goal-oriented activities. More like Holmes' (1988) and Herbert's (1990) data, Rees-Miller's (2011) data found that in unstructured settings, women gave and received far more compliments than men did. Women gave around 75% of compliments while men gave approximately 25% of the compliments. Similarly, women received nearly 72% of compliments, whereas men received approximately 28% of the total. The topics of compliments made in unstructured settings also mirrored results reported by Holmes (1988) that women tend to give and receive compliments on appearance while fewer compliments between males concerned appearance. In unstructured settings, Rees-Miller's (2011) data also supported that "compliments on appearance are far more likely to be given and received by women than by men" (p. 2680). To sum up, the data for compliments given in unstructured settings provided similar results as in Holmes (1988) and Herbert (1990), the two studies that analyzed compliments from very different settings as being the same.

Interestingly, an analysis of actual compliments given in goal-oriented activities yielded contrasting results. While in unstructured settings, women tend to give and receive far more compliments than men do, in goal-oriented settings, this was not the case. In goal-oriented activities, Rees-Miller's (2011) data pointed out a higher frequency of compliments given by and to men. While men gave 25% of compliments in unstructured settings, in goal-oriented activities, men gave 55.9% of compliments. Men also received far more compliments in goal-oriented settings, achieving 53.1% as opposed to only 28% in unstructured settings. As expected, the topics of compliments given in goal-oriented activities mostly concerned performance. The most common topic in goal-oriented settings was related to performance, which was quite contrary to the topics of compliments given in unstructured settings that mainly concerned appearance,

especially between two female interlocutors. In short, a comparison of data from the two types of settings in Rees-Miller (2011) again highlighted the importance of discourse settings in dealing with compliment data. The actual compliments, as could be expected, would differ greatly from setting to setting, so analyzing compliments collected from various settings as being the same was not always providing accurate results if we again categorized and examined them in more specific settings.

Another valuable contribution to the importance of setting in studying compliment behaviors is Lee's (2009) study that investigated 300 actual compliments given within two days of the Chinese New Year period in Singapore, an important festive season for family visits and gatherings with a high expectation of compliment exchanges. Despite Lee's (2009) data yielding a similar result as in Holmes (1988) and Herbert (1990) that women give and receive more compliments than men do, her data specifically indicated that women with children were the main givers and recipients of compliments. More specifically, of 81% compliments given by females, 57.5% were from married females while only 23.6% were made by unmarried females. Similarly, females received 76.4% compliments, of which married females received up to 43.8% followed by unmarried females at 32.6%. Very few compliments (at 19%) were given by males, of which 11.2% were from married males while only 7.7% were from unmarried males. Males only received 23.6% compliments with 12.9% for unmarried males and 10.7% for married males. Studying actual compliments given in the Chinese New Year context, Lee (2009) was more specific than Holmes (1988) and Herbert (1990) about the results in that Lee (2009) showed that married women tend to give and receive more compliments than unmarried ones, whereas married men gave more compliments but received less compliments than unmarried ones.

Previous gender studies (Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006; Wu, 2008; Rees-Miller, 2011) have shown that the vast majority of compliments fall into the categories of appearance, performance, possession, and personality. However, in the Chinese New Year context, Lee's (2009) data showed that compliments "centers around children's academic success, career success, financial independence, and progress in starting a family of their own" (p. 524). In New Zealand English, Holmes (1988) studying compliments from various settings came to the conclusion that women tended to give and receive compliments on appearance while men tended to compliment other men on possessions and compliment women on ability or skill. In American English, Parisi and Wogan (2006) analyzing compliments gathered from very different settings showed that males were more likely to give females compliments on appearance and females tended to give males compliments on skill. Also, in American English but in a TV-series setting, Wu (2008) found that females and males were inclined to compliment others on performance rather than on other topics. Interestingly enough, despite Lee (2009) reporting that women also tend to give and receive more compliments than men do in the Chinese New Year context, her result showed that most of the compliments between married women focused on many aspects of their children. Appearance compliments were mainly given by married to unmarried women and mostly concerned weight loss, which was more often followed by a private question such as 'do you have a boyfriend?' Men including both married and unmarried ones, in Lee's (2009) study, neither gave nor received any compliments on appearance, which was in great contrast with Parisi and Wogan's (2006) finding that males were more likely to give females compliments on appearance. Both unmarried men and women usually received compliments on their ability to study in prestigious universities, while married men valued compliments on health and job promotions. It is certain that one of the major reasons for Lee's (2009) interesting findings was

possibly due to differences between cultures; however, the particular setting in which the compliments were given may also contribute greatly to such interesting results.

To conclude, a review of three previous major trends in discussing compliments has shown us the importance of setting in studying compliment behaviors. Collecting compliments from various settings, as in some previous gender studies in the first and second trend (Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006; Herbert, 1990), would usually suggest that compliments more often fall into the categories of appearance, performance, possession, and personality while these categories may vary greatly from setting to setting, for example in a Chinese New Year context in Lee's (2009) study. Most importantly, studies about actual compliments given in specific settings (e.g., Wu, 2008; Lee, 2009; Rees-Miller, 2011) have shown dramatic changes in male and female compliment behaviors, compared to studies that analyzed compliments from various settings as being the same (e.g. Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006; Herbert, 1990). All in American English, studies that analyzed compliments from a wide range of contexts as being the same (Herbert, 1990; Parisi & Wogan, 2006) suggested very different findings from studies that discussed actual compliments given in specific settings (Wu, 2008; Rees-Miller, 2011). Within a study, Rees-Miller (2011) also indicated considerable variations between compliments given in unstructured settings and in goal-oriented activities. All these differences again prove the importance of setting in categorizing and analyzing compliments. Setting is also an important factor influencing the way people respond to compliments.

The next section will review previous approaches to the study of compliment responses as well as how previous studies categorized compliment responses. A review of section 2.2 aims to argue for the methodological framework to be used in the present study.

2.2. Previous Approaches to the Study of Compliment Responses

Responding to compliments is a complex sociolinguistic speech act, which has received attention of several scholars across many decades. Pioneering work on CRs was mainly conducted from a sociolinguistic perspective with a focus on analyzing pragmatic or linguistic variation between and across L1 varieties of the same language, whether in many varieties of English (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Wu, 2008; Mustapha, 2011; Zhang, 2013) or in other languages (Golato, 2003; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Guo et al., 2012; Chen & Yang, 2010; Sidraschi, 2014; Ruiz & Cuesta, 2015; Hornoiu, 2017; Danziger, 2018). Some studies analyzed pragmatic transfer, with a focus on the influence of the L1 on the L2 in producing this speech act (Huth, 2006; Allami & Montazeri, 2012; Yun, 2015). Other studies were comparative analyses of two languages as to whether native and non-native speakers of English would differ in perceiving and producing the CR speech act (Chen, 1993; Lorenzo-Dus, 2001; Golato, 2002; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011; Mir & Cots, 2017; Moalla, 2013; Zanella, 2017). These studies have used various methodological frameworks with different tools and methods of data collection whose advantages and disadvantages are discussed next.

2.2.1. Data Collection Methods

Though it is believed that naturally occurring data, such as field observation data or recordings of naturally occurring language in interaction, would be the best sources for analyzing speech acts as such data may better reflect what people actually say and do in their interactions (Golato, 2005; Lee, 2009), many studies have not used these data collection methods due to their potential limitations, for example, being very time-consuming (Zhang, 2013) and the difficulty in controlling social variables (Danziger, 2018). As a result, many studies have employed more

controlled data such as discourse completion tests or role-plays due to their advantages although such elicitation data might not be able to represent the features of authentic discourse (Bieswanger, 2015; Labben, 2016). Very few studies have exploited media contexts like TV-series or Twitter as sources of data.

2.2.1.1. Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs)

The most common instrument used in speech act research is the Discourse Completion Test (DCT hereafter). The DCT is a written questionnaire that contains a set of briefly described situations that would normally focus on compliments on appearance, performance, possession, and personality (Yuan, 2002; Farenkia, 2012; Zhang, 2013; Moalla, 2013). Each situation would provide some information with regard to the setting and some variables such as gender of the interlocutor, relationship with the interlocutor, and so on (Lin, Woodfield, & Ren, 2012; Allami & Montazeri, 2012). Figure 2.1 illustrates a sample situation in traditional DCTs widely used in most research on compliments and responses.

<p>Situation 1 (appearance)</p> <p>Your friends have organized a party to celebrate the end of semester. You've dressed up for the party. As you arrive at the party, one of your friends says: "Hey, you look great! You're really handsome/beautiful today."</p> <p>Your answer: _____.</p>

Figure 2.1. A sample situation used in DCTs (Source: Tang & Zhang, 2009, p. 329)

Another form of DCT is a DCT in a comic strip devised by Danziger (2018). Instead of verbally describing the compliment situations as in most traditional DCTs, Danziger (2018) designed a DCT in comic strip printed in full color showing two speakers, one complimenting the other, with the context for the speech event being set at the top of the page. She believed that

a devised DCT in comic form would provide participants with visual aids that could lessen the imaginary character of the DCTs and make them more tangible.

In both traditional DCTs and DCTs in comic form, the participants were always asked to write down whatever responses they thought to be appropriate (Chen, 1993; Chen & Yang, 2010; Zhang, 2013) or how they would presumably behave within the given context (Danziger, 2018). The reason a written instrument has been widely used to collect CR speech acts is that a written questionnaire may allow for control of certain variables (Golato, 2005; Lin et al., 2012; Danziger, 2018), such as gender, age, social distance, and social power. A written questionnaire also enables the researcher to obtain large amounts of data in a short period of time (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001) and collect socially appropriate CRs in the groups studied under constraint conditions (Golato, 2003; Felix-Brasdefer, 2010; Mir & Cots, 2017). Thus, DCT may be adequate if the aim is to make broad generalizations and not to focus on actual language in use (Tang & Zhang, 2009).

Though the situations used in DCTs more often include a variety of day-to-day life situations (Farenkia, 2012), DCTs have been criticized for not always capturing spontaneously produced compliments and CRs (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001; Golato, 2005; Danziger, 2018). The biggest concern of most studies using DCTs as the main instrument is that DCTs do not require participants to conversationally interact but ask them to fill in “what they believe would be situationally-appropriate responses within possible, yet imaginary, interactional settings” (Golato, 2005, p. 13), which possibly results in producing unnatural responses to compliments (Jucker, 2009). As a result, what we were able to collect is solely participants’ beliefs about pragmatic appropriateness (Yuan, 2002; Golato, 2003; Jucker, 2009).

As a written instrument, the DCT also has “its non-interactive and inconsequential nature” (Lin et al., 2012, p. 1490). Since DCTs do not require participants to conversationally interact, they cannot show various interactional facets of a speech event. It would be thus impossible to elicit conversations with multiple turns and that may involve more than two interlocutors (Yuan, 2001). Such conversational features in face-to-face interaction as turn taking, negotiations between interlocutors, and paralinguistic or nonverbal behaviors (Woodfield, 2008; Lin et al., 2012) could be missed. Hence, another big concern of most studies using DCTs as the main instrument is that a written instrument like the DCT may not yield actual compliments and responses in spoken discourse in which these speech acts would be used (Yuan, 2002; Golato, 2003; Jucker, 2009).

Finally, every compliment situation used in DCTs was often involved with one of four major topics such as appearance, performance, possession, and personality (Chen, 1993) while in reality, a compliment may concern more than one topic, which may yield very different responses. Also, topics of compliments in face-to-face communication may vary from setting to setting (Lees, 2009; Rees-Miller, 2011), and thus topics of compliments in social interaction are not necessarily concentrated on these four major topics as in DCTs. Responses to compliments in interactive spoken discourse, thus, would vary greatly from responses to compliments described in a written instrument like the DCT.

2.2.1.2. Role-plays

Another instrument widely used in CR speech acts studies is open or naturalistic role-play. With this instrument, informants are not aware of the research focus during their role-play performance (Tran, 2010; Cheng, 2011). The participants are given a few minutes to prepare

their role-play and then must act out conversations in the way that they or some other person would in a given situation (Jucker, 2009). Fig 2.2 presents a sample open or naturalistic role-play.

Situation Two:

Today is the day of your dinner party. Now you are at home preparing the food when you receive a call from _____ asking for directions to your apartment. Your talk should include but may not be limited to the following points:

- Mimic phone rings, pick it up. Listen to what your friend says first. (She/he will tell you about getting lost and ask for directions again).
Ask your friend where he/she is and tell how to get to your place.
- (When your friend shows up at your doorstep) Greet him/her and invite him/her to come in. When it is most natural during the talk, compliment your friend on his/her appearance/clothing.
- Respond to your friend's question expressing concern about your health (which is asked because he/she heard from their English teacher that you were sick).
- Your friend brings you a dish. (When she/he gives you the dish) Ask him/her what kind of dish it is. When it is most natural during the talk, compliment your friend on his/her thoughtfulness in bringing the dish.
- At last, show your interest in that dish and ask your friend about how you can cook it on your own or where you can buy it. End your conversation by inviting your friend to join the dinner.

Note: It is very important that you compliment naturally and make your compliments a part of the normal social talk. **DO NOT** make it obvious that the compliments are among the points listed for you.

Figure 2.2. A sample open or naturalistic role-play (Source: Cheng, 2011, p. 2213)

This instrument is preferred and widely used by many researchers due to the features it shares with naturally occurring conversation. This instrument may be more effective than written instruments like the DCT as it may “represent oral production, full operation of the turn-taking mechanisms, impromptu planning decisions” (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 228), and so the data

obtained seem to be more naturalistic, which may include multiple turns and speaking situations and be able to reveal users' pragmatic performance in near-authentic settings (Cheng, 2011).

However, using this instrument may raise some considerable concerns. Though naturalistic role-plays possibly provide more context and interaction, the context of interactions within role-plays is often imagined (Golato, 2005). Participants are often asked to enact roles they are not familiar with or act out situations they might have never been in. Even when subjects are supposed to perform roles, they are familiar with, compliments and responses produced in role-plays would still differ from the ones produced in naturally occurring conversations because role-plays are "predominantly motivated by the researcher's goals rather than those of the interactants" (Golato, 2005, p. 5). The data collected with this instrument may, thus, not accurately represent users' pragmatic ability (Kasper & Rose, 2002), and be incapable of describing compliments behaviors as accurately as they are in authentic spoken discourse.

2.2.1.3. Field Observation

A relatively frequent method of data collection is through field observation (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Lee, 2009; see section 2.1.3 for details). The biggest advantage of the field observation method is that this technique can capture truly naturally occurring data (Rees-Miller, 2011), and thus enables researchers to collect the most naturalistic exchanges along with some important contextual details such as age, gender, interaction setting. Further, this method of data collection allows researchers to collect a very large database from a wide range of speakers and across various settings (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Mustapha, 2011; Guo et al., 2012).

The first limitation of this method is that the data collected may not correctly capture what speakers really do in conversations (Adachi, 2011) as data collectors may be limited in their

capacity to remember and write down accurately what they heard, especially in compliment exchanges with many conversational turns (Jucker, 2009; Yuan, 2001). Second, field workers could also have missed elements that are important in classifying CRs into different categories, such as gestures and head movements (e.g., nods, head down, etc.). There is also a high possibility for missing information on a number of sociolinguistic variables (Ruhi, 2006). In addition, when collecting data through field observation, data collectors may have a tendency to solely notice the production of the compliment and response itself; they may miss the utterances produced prior to the compliment turn, resulting in having missed “vital information necessary to determine the exact action of a given turn” (Golato, 2005, p. 19). Lastly, the major drawback of this method of data collection is that the data was collected from very different settings (e.g., classrooms, dining halls, the student union, etc.) in which the same compliment would have probably served different functions. According to Golato (2003), “if the compliments and their responses that serve different functions are categorized as being the same, the results of the analysis would become uncertain” (p. 95). For these reasons, the field observation method would not be useful if the emphasis is on the interactional or discourse features of the speech events (Golato, 2003). Though few studies (e.g., Lee, 2009) imposed a restriction on a specific setting, it would also be impossible to overcome the first few limitations of this data collection method.

2.2.1.4. Recordings of naturally occurring language in interaction

A few studies collected data through recordings of naturally occurring talk in interaction. The data collected using this method have been more often analyzed within the methodological framework of conversation analysis (CA hereafter). Such data consist of audiotaped or videotaped face-to-face encounters (Golato, 2002; Maiz-Arevalo, 2012; Sidraschi, 2014; Hornoiu, 2017) or audiotaped spontaneous telephone conversations (Golato, 2002; Huth, 2006).

The use of audio or video recording of naturally occurring language is capable of producing a much less formulaic collection of compliments and responses (Maiz-Arevalo, 2012), and allows for an analysis of compliment exchanges in their sequential contexts (Golato, 2005).

Though this method of collecting data may provide compliment exchanges in interactive spoken discourse, there remain inevitable limitations for studies using this technique. First and foremost, this approach may make it rather difficult to control the impact of sociolinguistic variables such as power, distance, status, gender, and age on the outcome of a study (Yuan, 2001). Moreover, it will be also time-consuming to transcribe and code data obtained from recordings of naturally occurring talk in interaction. The biggest limitation is that such data was often collected from very different settings that may be analyzed as being the same and the analysis provides very little information on the discourse participants and the contexts in the tapings (Golato, 2005).

2.2.1.5. Media Contexts

Most research on compliments and responses have focused on interactions in everyday situations while only a few studies have examined compliment behaviors in media contexts. Media contexts are an umbrella term that may cover spoken interactions in the media such as radio phone-ins or television talk shows (Salomaa & Lehtinen, 2018) or online interactions in social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, MySpae (Eslami & Yang, 2018). As we can see in section 2.1.3, although Wu's (2008) data obtained from an American TV-series setting was supposed to bear some resemblance to real life language and suggested very interesting findings, Wu's (2008) study only focused on compliments and disregarded CRs.

A few studies focusing on CRs have investigated CR patterns on Twitter (Yuhaida et al., 2014) and Facebook social networking sites (Maiz-Arevalo, 2013; Eslami & Yang, 2018) indicating that social media contexts elicited quite distinct compliment behaviors and CR patterns. To illustrate, Yuhaida et al. (2014) found that the Malaysian celebrities tended to accept compliments from their fans despite many previous studies showing that rejection was the most favored CR strategy in East Asian cultures such as in Chinese (Chen, 1993; Yu, 2003), Korean (Han, 1992; Yun, 2015), Thai (Cedar, 2006), Malaysian (Azman, 1986), and Taiwanese (Wu & Takahashi, 2016). Exploring responses to compliments on Facebook among Spanish users, Maiz-Arevalo (2013) found that the most predominant CR pattern was the built-in toggle ‘Like’ in addition to ‘No Response’; whereas results analyzed from DCTs showed that Peninsular Spanish speakers prefer to agree with compliments by making a semantically fitted comment (Mir & Cots, 2017) or upgrade compliments ironically (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001). Investigating CR patterns of Chinese-English bilinguals in American (Facebook) and Chinese (Renren) social networking sites, Eslami and Yang (2018) came to the conclusion that these users were inclined to agree with compliments on Facebook but evade or reject compliments on Renren, an online community perceived to be more aligned with Chinese cultural norms. According to Eslami and Yang (2018), these Facebook and Renren users were flexible about “switching between their linguistic repertoires in online settings, to match with the culture of the online community” (p. 19). These findings again have emphasized the importance of context in compliment and response speech act research and discrepancies in CRs between face-to-face interactions in everyday situations and online interactions in media contexts.

2.2.1.6. Summary

The first four data collection methods discussed above are the ones most frequently used in CR speech act research, while eliciting and analyzing CRs from media contexts remains under-explored. Such elicitation techniques as DCTs and role-plays were more suited to prompt speakers to produce certain speech acts, so these methods have been widely used in the fields of intercultural communication and second language acquisition (Golato, 2005). Though DCTs and role-plays may enable researchers to collect more stereotyped responses and reveal actual cross-cultural differences in a sharper contrast (Jucker, 2009), these methods cannot offer insights into speakers' perceptions of compliment and response speech acts.

Field observation or recordings of naturally occurring language in interaction would be useful methods of data collection if the research focus is on the content of CRs, syntactic patterns, or semantic features (Golato, 2005). Moreover, such methods would be especially useful if researchers are interested in the way compliments or any other speech act functions as they can tell us "who actually uses compliments for whom and in what situations" (Jucker, 2009, p. 1627). For these reasons, these methods have been widely used in sociolinguistic and gender studies. Such an approach as field observation may provide more context and interaction; however, "it cannot be expected to yield a more precise definition or further insights into the nature of compliments as a result" (Jucker, 2009, p. 1620).

In order to overcome limitations of elicitation and field methods, a few studies (Lee, 2009; Cheng, 2011) carried out a follow-up semi-structured interview so as to gain further insights into the speech act under investigation. Specifically, Lee (2009) carried out a survey immediately after field observation in order to find out speakers' intuitive judgment as to whether non-acceptance responses are conventional surface responses or true disagreements with

the compliments. Also, Cheng (2011) conducted a retrospective interview with informants who had just performed role-plays in an attempt to account for the reasons participants produced such CRs. Unfortunately, though such a follow-up interview may enable researchers to better understand speakers' CRs, it cannot help to address serious limitations of these instruments and is incapable of providing further insights into the nature of compliments as well as speakers' feelings about the compliments. The main concerns about using these instruments, as discussed in section 2.2.1, remain unsolved.

To conclude, a review of previous data collection methods in the present section reveals certain limitations of these instruments. The biggest weakness of elicitation data is a lack of the interactional context for a speech event and cannot offer insights into speakers' perceptions of compliments. Though the data collected through field observation and recordings of naturally occurring language in interaction sound more 'natural', its severe limitation is incapable of reflecting what speakers actually do in conversations and providing very little information on the discourse participants and the contexts in which compliments and responses occur. Compliments and CRs are contextually bound, so previous CR studies based on these approaches may be valuable for the investigation of CR strategies as well as their syntactic forms and semantic features; however, these studies seemed not to capture all the functions and meanings of compliments along with particular features of the context that may influence compliment behaviors. Many studies may not accurately reflect actual compliments and responses we expect to see in certain contexts; for example, complimenting in movies discourse may differ from complimenting in talk show discourse, or direct person-to-person compliments and responses in sociolinguistic interviews may vary greatly from the ones in media contexts, as it is believed that

people's interactions in media contexts are not the same as people's interactions in their own regions. The present study aims to explore this issue further.

2.2.2. Categorizing Compliment Responses

Most research on CRs have put an emphasis on analyzing CRs on the action level, and so had a general tendency to analyze CRs according to conventions of means (i.e., speaker strategies) and conventions of forms (i.e., linguistic devices). According to Pomerantz's (1978) conversational principle, receiving a compliment may put recipients under pressure as the speakers are supposed to choose to agree with the compliment and accept it, or to avoid or minimize self-praise. As a result, the speakers could choose a wide variety of strategies to accept, evade, or reject compliments, and the choice of strategy depends on various micro- and macro-social factors. Most CR studies have developed different CR taxonomies based on Pomerantz's (1978) principle of conversational constraints in a way that may best describe their current data; whereas the context of compliment speech events - the factor that may deeply influence the choice of CR strategies - has usually not been taken into account considerably in the process of categorizing CRs.

The taxonomy that has been widely used in most previous studies was the Accepting-Deflecting/Evading-Rejecting continuum. The most pioneering work was developed by Holmes (1988) who coded CRs based on three major categories of Accept, Reject and Deflect/Evade. The ACCEPT category was defined as an agreement with the compliment and the complimenter, which consisted of appreciation/agreement token (e.g., thanks, yes), agreeing utterance (e.g., I think it's lovely too), downgrading (e.g., it's not too bad is it?), and return compliment (e.g., you're looking good too). The REJECT category usually appeared in three major forms:

Disagreeing utterance (e.g., I'm afraid I don't like it much), Question accuracy (e.g., Is beautiful the right word?), Challenge sincerity (e.g., You don't really mean that). The EVADE included shift credit (e.g., my mother knitted it), informative comment (e.g., I bought it at that Vibrant Knits place), ignore (e.g., it's time we were leaving, isn't it?), legitimate evasion, request reassurance/repetition (e.g., do you really think so?). Because this taxonomy may help to present a general classification of CRs and fit in many types of data, the Holmes' (1988) three-way classification of CRs has been modified and used widely in many subsequent studies on CRs.

The biggest problem of the tripartite system - Acceptance, Deflection/Evasion, and Rejection originally proposed by Holmes (1988) is the assumption that one response form would not perform more than one function. For example, appreciation token (e.g., thanks) or an agreement token (yes) was always coded as an acceptance; agreeing utterance (e.g., I think it's lovely too) and return compliment (e.g., you're looking good too) would signify an acceptance. Similarly, such a disagreement as 'I'm afraid I don't like it much', a question accuracy as 'is beautiful the right word?', and a challenge sincerity as 'you don't really mean that' were known as fixed forms of rejection; whereas, this would probably not always be the case.

Many later studies have adopted Holmes' (1988) three broad categories to describe their corpus. The main concern of those studies was that Holmes' (1988) CR categorization cannot accurately reflect the nature of their current data. Though the three main categories - Acceptance, Deflection/Evasion, and Rejection were still used to describe their data (Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Zhang, 2013), strategies under the three main categories have been modified in order to be able to account for what they have in their corpus. For instance, while Holmes (1988) with her New Zealand English corpus defined ACCEPT as an agreement with the compliment and the complimenter with certain major forms (appreciation/agreement token, agreeing utterance,

downgrading, return compliment), Lee's (2009) Chinese data allowed her to define ACCEPT in the sense that the hearer agreed with the compliment giver in a subtle way without violating his/her role as a humble compliment recipient. Acceptance in Lee (2009), thus, consisted of neutralizing utterance (e.g., *hai keyi it's okay*), smile, and appreciation (e.g., *xiexie thank you*). 'Downgrade' was categorized as a strategy of accepting compliments in Holmes (1988), but in Lee (2009) it was under the category of REJECT or Non-Acceptance. Also, 'Return' was known as an acceptance in Holmes (1988), but in Lee (2009) it was coded as an EVADE - the strategy used to avoid uttering words of acceptance or rejection. Thus, categorizing CRs according to Holmes' (1988) tripartite system may raise a serious concern about how to account adequately for the response data in our analysis. There are a few questions that need to be asked, for example, whether such an inconsistency in CR categorization among studies adapting Holmes' (1988) tripartite system may cause any concern about the validity of the taxonomy, and whether such an inconsistency in CR categorization was due to differences in socio-cultural values or situational contexts.

Moreover, one of the major problems that some studies adapting Holmes' (1988) CR categorization encountered is its being incapable of describing CRs that combine two or more strategies. Most prior research on CRs tends to assign one semantic formula (or interpretation) to each response token regardless of whether a response may consist of two or more parts (Yuan, 1996; Mustapha, 2011); whereas, according to Yuan (1996), each response should not automatically be assigned only one semantic formula since a response may consist of two or more parts. Taking this problem into account, a few later studies (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011) began to categorize the responses at combination levels. Specifically, Chen and Yang (2010) found a great number of combination strategies under each of the three

broad categories - Accept, Deflect/Evade, and Reject. 'Combination' under Acceptance was often combinations of two or more individual strategies used under this category, as illustrated below.

Thanking + Returning: 'Thanks. Yours looks good, too'.

Returning + Encouraging: 'It would look good on you, too. You should buy one for yourself'

Thanking + Explaining: 'Thank you for your compliment. In fact, I didn't do anything more than practicing what the teacher had told us'.

Agreeing + Explaining + Encouraging: 'Yes. I saved hard for it. You can do it, too'.

(Source: Chen & Yang, 2010, pp. 1956-1957)

Similarly, 'Combination' under Deflect/Evade was the combinations of two or more individual strategies employed under this category, including Seeking confirmation + D/E-Explaining (e.g., 'Really? I've been too busy lately to take care of my appearances'), and Seeking confirmation + Returning (e.g., 'Really? I think your necklace is more beautiful'). 'Combination' of Rejecting were also the combinations of two or more strategies used under this category, including Disagreeing + Returning (e.g., 'No. You are more handsome/beautiful'), Disagreeing + R-explaining (e.g., 'No, No. [I look okay] because of the dress'), and Denigrating + R-explaining (e.g., 'It was not that good. I was a bit nervous. I would do better next time.').

Unlike Chen and Yang (2010), Cheng (2011) defined a 'Combination' as "a situation in which both Acceptance and Evasion are adopted in a single compliment response sequence" (p. 2207); for example, 'Thanks. It's a gift from my mom.' was coded as a 'Combination' as it combines two individual strategies: Accept [*appreciation*] plus Evade [*credit-shifting*]. Similar to Cheng (2011), Tang and Zhang (2009) also referred to a 'Combination' as two or more individual strategies adopted in a single CR sequence, such as Accept plus Evade, Evade plus Accept, Reject plus Accept, or Accept plus Reject, as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Combination strategies found in Tang and Zhang (2009, p. 340)

Accept ¹ + Evade ² strategies (Appreciation token + Shift credit)	
CR 164:	Xièxie! Nǐ guòjiǎng le! 謝謝! 你過獎了! Thank you! ¹ <u>You are too kind.</u> ²
CR 199:	Xièxie nǐ de biǎoyáng. Qíshí, wǒ hěn jǐnzhāng. 謝謝你的表揚。其實，我很緊張。 Thanks for your compliment. ¹ <u>Actually, I was very nervous.</u> ²
Evade ¹ + Accept ² strategies	
CR 140:	Zhēn de ma? Xièxie! 真的嗎? 謝謝! <u>Honestly?</u> ¹ Thanks! ² (Request reassurance + Appreciation token)
CR 233:	Shì ma? Hái kěyǐ ba? Nǐ de shǒujī yě hěn hǎo a! 是嗎? 還可以吧? 你的手機也很好啊! <u>Really?</u> ¹ It is ok, isn't it? Your mobile phone is very good too. ² (Request reassurance + Return compliment)
Reject ¹ + Accept ² strategies (Disagreeing utterance + Return compliment)	
CR 163:	Méi shénme. Háizi hěn kě'ài. 沒什麼。孩子很可愛。 <u>It's nothing.</u> ¹ Your child is very sweet. ²
CR 198:	Bù huì a. Nǐ yě kěyǐ zuò de hěn hǎo de. 不會啊。你也可以做得很好的。 <u>Not really.</u> ¹ You can do it very well too. ²

According to Chen and Yang's (2010) coding system, despite combination strategies being formed by two or more parts, they were still assigned only one semantic interpretation. For example, Thanking plus Returning (e.g., 'Thanks. Yours looks good, too') would be decoded as an acceptance; Seeking confirmation plus Returning (e.g., 'Really? I think your necklace is more beautiful') was known as an Evade while Disagreeing plus Returning was interpreted as a rejection. At first sight, it is likely that Chen and Yang's (2010) CR coding scheme has distinguished individual responses from responses at combination levels; however, semantically such a categorization had yet to draw a sharp distinction between the two. As discussed and exemplified above, Chen and Yang (2010) categorized any combination of two or more strategies used under the ACCEPT category as an acceptance or under the REJECT category as a

rejection; for example, Agreeing plus Explaining plus Encouraging (e.g., ‘Yes. I saved hard for it. You can do it, too’) was interpreted as an acceptance or Disagreeing plus Returning (e.g., ‘No. You are more handsome/beautiful’) would be interpreted as a rejection. Nonetheless, this might not always be the case if we put this combination strategy into a full interactional context and based on the speakers’ feelings about the compliment. Lau (2021) categorizing CRs based on the speakers’ reported feelings found that a combination of Disagreeing plus Returning (e.g., [*Haha*] *Em đừng nói vậy. Chị thấy em cũng xinh mà. Có thua kém gì chị đâu* [*Cười mỉm*] ‘[Laughing]. You shouldn’t say that. I see you are pretty too, not less than me [Smile slightly]’) did not indicate a rejection as Chen and Yang (2010) interpreted. In contrast, such a combination strategy was to show the recipient’s pleasure in a modest way. There was a high possibility for the recipient to accept the compliment. Accordingly, Chen and Yang’s (2010) assigning a certain semantic interpretation to responses at combination levels based mainly on the linguistic forms of their components was highly problematic.

Probably in order to avoid assigning a certain semantic formula to a certain combination strategy as discussed above in Chen and Yang (2010), a few other studies (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011) interpreted the meanings of responses at combination levels based on the linguistic forms of each individual strategy included in them and in the order each individual strategy appeared in the CR sequence. To illustrate, Cheng (2011) decoded the combination: “Thanks. It’s a gift from my mom.” as ACCEPT plus EVADE; Tang and Zhang (2009) interpreted the combination: “*Xiexie! Ni guojian le.* ‘Thank you! You are too kind.’” as ACCEPT plus EVADE or “*Zhen de ma? Xiexie!* ‘Honestly? Thanks!’” as EVADE plus ACCEPT. If combination strategies beginning with ACCEPT occur at a lower frequency, it would be interpreted that the speakers may have a tendency to avoid self-praise and reflect humbleness (Tang & Zhang,

2009). In contrast, if combination strategies starting with either EVADE or REJECT which is followed by ACCEPT occur at a higher frequency, it would be interpreted that the speakers sound more indirect in accepting compliments. That way, though these studies (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011) attempted to categorize responses at combination levels, their data interpretation was given based mainly on the linguistic forms of each component included in the combination and the order in which each component appeared in the CR sequence. At first sight, such a data categorization and interpretation framework may be good since it indicates a high possibility for a combination response to perform more than one action and so helps to avoid the common problem of many previous studies that one response token is given only a single semantic interpretation at a time. However, such a data categorization and interpretation method may not be a good option in cases where a combination strategy can perform a quite different function from its linguistic forms and from the order in which each component appears in the CR sequence. To illustrate, an initial actual analysis of the data collected from sociolinguistic interviews in the present study, as described and discussed in detail in section 3.4.1, showed that the combination ‘smiling thank-you’, irrespective of whether a smile or thank-you comes first, could be given four different ways of interpretation. Based on the speakers’ reported feelings about the compliment, a ‘smiling thank-you’ may signify the recipient’s pleasure, find solace, show shyness, and pretend an interest. Thus, categorizing and interpreting combination strategies based on their linguistic forms and the order in which each individual strategy appeared in the CR sequence could not always provide a more comprehensive picture of the use of CRs as some previous studies have attempted to prove.

A very common problem of the CR classification originally proposed by Holmes (1988) and then devised by some subsequent studies is that their CR categorizations may have missed

non-verbal metalinguistic signs, the ones that would probably play an important part in understanding the illocutionary force of speech acts (Gumperz, 1999) and in categorizing responses (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001; Guo et al., 2012). Their categorizations were mainly created on the assumption that all the participants would verbally respond to compliments or choose not to respond or not to say anything, which was often coded as ‘No acknowledgment’ or ‘No Response’ (e.g., Herbert, 1990; Yu, 2003; Mustapha, 2011). ‘No acknowledgment’ can be interpreted as an Evasion (Mustapha, 2011), as a Non-Agreement (Herbert, 1990) or could stand alone as one of the macro-strategies (Yu, 2003). According to these studies, it is apparent that ‘No acknowledgment’ was often given when recipients perceived a compliment more as a FTA.

In order to account for the case when the speakers choose to respond to compliments nonverbally, some studies (Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Cheng, 2011; Allami & Montazeri, 2012) have attempted to analyze nonverbal responses in isolation or occasionally in combination with verbal ones by classifying them into certain categories. ‘Smile’ and its combination (e.g., Is that so? Thank you [smile]; Mustapha, 2011, p. 1341) were more often seen as positive strategies (Ruhi, 2006), and so were often put under the ACCEPT category (Lee, 2009; Allami & Montazeri, 2012; Cedar, 2012), as a compliment acceptance and a form of appreciation. If a response consisted of a head nod and a smile, then it would be also classified as an acceptance (Herbert, 1990). In contrast, the non-verbal responses such as ‘hisses to show off’ (Mustapha, 2011), ‘silence’ and ‘laughter’ (Ruhi, 2006; Cheng, 2011; Katsuta, 2012), or giggling (Cheng, 2011), were more often interpreted negatively as strategies of disagreement or evasion.

There may be a concern about the validity of the above categories of nonverbal responses. Though ‘smile’ has been previously interpreted as a positive non-verbal response which indicates an acceptance (Yu, 2003; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011), Lau (2021) investigating

CRs in Vietnamese and categorizing CRs based on the speakers' reported feelings about compliments proposed more than one interpretation of 'smile'. On the one hand, 'smile' can be interpreted as a positive response as it signified the speaker's pleasure, which was consistent with the interpretation of many previous studies (Yu, 2003; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Allami & Montazeri, 2012; Cedar, 2012). On the other hand, it would also work as a 'fake' smile which mostly supported a 'pretend interest', in the case the speaker was not interested in compliments bestowed upon him/her but they must pretend to be interested as a matter of courtesy. Moreover, an initial actual analysis of the talk show data in the present study, as presented in detail in Chapter 5, found that nonverbal responses were ambiguous. They could be positive or negative. The same nonverbal reaction may have different functions depending on its occurrence in the interactional context and whether it is combined with a different group of nonverbal behaviors. Thus, the assumption that 'smile' was a positive nonverbal response which indicates an acceptance or 'silence' was a rejection would not be always true. Assigning a semantic interpretation to certain types of nonverbal behaviors as many previous studies did is a matter of great concern.

Another CR taxonomy that has been among the most widely accepted in prior research is the continuum between the poles of Agreement and Non-Agreement, originally proposed by Herbert (1990) and then adapted by a few others (Guo et al., 2012; Cao, 2016). Herbert classified CRs into two main categories: (1) Agreement that the recipient "agrees with the semantic content of the compliment act" (p. 213), and (2) Non-Agreement that "the recipient avoids agreeing with the semantic content of the compliment" (p. 214). The Agreement pole was divided into two sub-categories: (a) Acceptance (appreciation token, comment acceptance, praise upgrade), and (b) Non-acceptance (comment history, reassignment, return). The Nonagreement pole usually

appeared in five major forms including scale down, question, disagreement, qualification, and no acknowledgment. Further, Herbert (1990) proposed the category ‘Request Interpretation’ in the case “Addressee, consciously or not, interprets the compliments as a request rather than a simple compliment. Such responses are not compliment responses per se as the addressee does not perceive the previous speech acts as a compliment” (p. 209). Table 2.2 demonstrates Herbert’s (1990) CR taxonomy and its examples.

Table 2.2
Herbert’s (1990) taxonomy of compliment response types

CR Categories	Examples
AGREEMENT	
Acceptance	
Appreciation token	Thanks; Thank you; [nod]
Comment acceptance	Yeah, it’s my favorite too.
Praise upgrade	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn’t it?
Nonacceptance	
Comment history	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.
Reassignment	My mother gave it to me.
Return	So’s yours.
NONAGREEMENT	
Scale down	It’s really quite old.
Question	Do you really think so?
Disagreement	I hate it.
Qualification	It’s alright, but Len’s is nicer.
No acknowledgment	(a) Responds with an irrelevant comment (b) Gives no response
REQUEST INTERPRETATION	You wanna borrow this one too?

Herbert's (1990) CR taxonomy is beneficial for some reasons. First and foremost, Herbert (1990) drew a sharp distinction between explicit and implicit acceptance under the AGREEMENT category. The acceptance in the form of appreciation token, comment acceptance, and praise upgrade were recognized as an explicit acceptance (coded as ACCEPTANCE in Table 2.2 above) since it reveals that the recipient explicitly agrees with the semantic content of the compliment act. In contrast, the acceptance in the form of comment history, reassignment, and return were classified as an implicit acceptance (coded as NONACCEPTANCE in Table 2.2). Though the recipient agrees with the semantic content of the compliment act, his or her agreement was implicitly expressed by shifting via such strategies as comment history, reassignment, and return. Second, by adding 'Request Interpretation' to his CR taxonomy, Herbert (1990) may have indirectly pointed out the fact that responses to real compliments and compliments performing other functions such as a request may vary greatly. Therefore, in his study, the responses to compliments perceived as a request were not counted as CRs and were classified into the 'Request Interpretation' category. These two advantages have in part made Herbert's (1990) CR taxonomy more reliable and widely used.

Nonetheless, based on common problems discussed earlier on in the present section concerning Holmes' (1988) three-way classification of CRs as well as its different versions in subsequent studies, Herbert's (1990) taxonomy may cause concern. First, Herbert's (1990) CR taxonomy cannot address the common problem that one form would not perform more than one function. As shown in Table 2.2, Appreciation token (e.g., Thanks; Thank you) were coded as an explicit acceptance; Return (e.g., So's yours) was seen as an implicit acceptance; Disagreeing utterance (e.g., I have it) or No acknowledgement were recognized as strategies of nonagreement. As we discussed earlier on in the present section, this would probably not always

be the case. Second, Herbert (1990) neither describes CRs combined by two or more parts nor avoids one of the most popular problems that one response token is given only a single semantic interpretation at a time. As can be seen in Table 2.2, Herbert (1990) seems to have assigned a certain semantic formula to a certain response token. Finally, though Herbert (1990) includes nonverbal responses such as [nod] in his CR taxonomy, [nod] in his study functions as an explicit acceptance while its validity and universality need to be tested.

In summary, Holmes' (1988) and Herbert's (1990) CR taxonomies were the most widely used and accepted ones in CR speech act studies. These categorizations and their different versions were mainly made according to formal meanings of speech and linguistic forms of responses, while functional aspects of compliments and responses have been neglected or not taken into consideration seriously. As a result, there remain numerous problems associated with those existing CR taxonomies. Therefore, it is necessary to find a better way of categorizing CRs that would make good use of the existing categories but still be able to address their common problems as discussed above.

2.3. Methodologies Used in the Present Study

In order to address some of the issues of previous approaches to the study of CRs, the present study was designed to obtain the data through sociolinguistic interviews together with interviews from talk shows. A review of these two approaches is presented next.

2.3.1. Sociolinguistic Interviews

The Sociolinguistic Interview, according to Becker (2013), is “a controlled speech event designed to elicit a wide range of contextual styles from an individual speaker” (p. 92). The two

most common ways to conduct sociolinguistic interviews were defined in the study by Gregersen et al. (2018, p. 5), as presented below.

The most influential one, modeled on Labov's work, uses a set of questions to elicit as much free conversation as possible, with some reading tasks designed to elicit a range of styles. Another way of going about it is simply to let the conversation flow. This more open-ended type of interviewing is intended to reduce the distance between interviewer and subject, making the interaction more natural.

These two definitions by Gregersen et al. (2018) show that the two most popular styles to conduct sociolinguistic interviews were 'structured' and 'semi-structured' models. The former sounds more controlled because the data would be elicited based on a number of questions and reading tasks prepared in advance. The Sociolinguistic Interview used in the present study is the modification of the latter style, a semi-structured model which sounds more casual. In addition to some questions designed in advance to gather some information about the participants' background such as region, whether being college students, and current location of residence in the beginning of each interview, no more controlled questions arise during the interview itself. Each interview was conducted on the basis of one-on-one, i.e., between one interviewer (also the researcher) and one individual speaker (also a research participant) through field trips to university campuses in two regions of the country (see section 3.3 Chapter 3 for detail).

Such an approach would enable the researcher to have casual interactions with people in their own regions, which probably allows for collecting the data that may reflect certain dialects in two regions of the country. The Sociolinguistic Interview, according to Pichler and Hesson (2016), was seen as "the primary data source for studies of language variation and change" (p. 1), since this method may allow the researcher to collect large amounts of comparable speech data (Grieser, 2019) from a sampling of some speech community (Pichler & Hesson, 2016). Further, having casual conversations with student participants available on university campuses

may encourage speakers to talk as long as they like instead of focusing mainly on certain forms and features (Schilling, 2013), which “ideally resembles a conversation more than a formal question and answer session” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 158).

Compared to field observation or recordings of naturally occurring language in interaction, the Sociolinguistic Interview would allow the researcher to control sociolinguistic variables (Grieser, 2019) and be easy for the fieldworker (also the researcher in the present study) to gather demographic information (Becker, 2013). In the present study, we use sociolinguistic interviews combined with video prompts that include compliments and require responses to compliments (see section 3.2 for detail). While watching and giving a response to eight video clips of compliment scenarios, participants were encouraged to freely talk and make comments about compliments scenarios as well as their responses. Thus, we believe that the data obtained would be relatively casual and natural. In watching the compliment scenarios, people may get so caught up in the stories of compliments that “they may forget all about the fact that they are being recorded or participating in a linguistic study” (Schilling, 2013, p. 102), so we are likely to obtain relatively naturally occurring data than with such elicitation techniques as written questionnaires or role-plays. For those reasons, a semi-structured sociolinguistic interview combined with video prompts was chosen to collect the first set of data in the present study.

2.3.2. Talk Show Discourse

According to O’Keeffe (2006), “the talk show genre is a social speech event whose rules of interaction become recognizable to a community that shares or has knowledge of those rules” (p. 42). The talk show discourse, as described in O’Keeffe (2006), is the discourse of interactions between the host and celebrities being interviewed. Tolson (2010) characterized such a spoken

interaction as a conversation of care-structure as “it is governed by institutional protocols” (p. 278), distributed “not only to a studio audience but also, and primarily, to a home audience” (Salomaa & Lehtinen, 2018, p. 133). On the surface, talk show discourse may include “linguistic features associated with everyday interactions” (Sifianou, 2013, p. 89); however, due to its particular features, spoken interactions in such a media context “can never be the naturally occurring ‘ordinary conversation’ of everyday life” (Tolson, 2010, p. 278). The talk in such a media interaction is always shaped for and by the audience of interest in a certain social context (O’Keeffe, 2006).

As discussed in section 2.2.1.5, studies investigating CRs in social networking sites have shown that there are certain discrepancies in CRs between interactions in everyday situations and online interactions in social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or Renren. Since “social media provides individuals with two-way communication and many-to-many information broadcasting” (Teng, Khong, & Goh, 2015, p. 43), users of social media platforms were expected to interact in a way that may match the culture of the online community (Eslami & Yang, 2018). Collecting a second set of data from spoken interactions in media contexts, such as in television talk shows, aims to examine whether people’s interactions in media contexts may differ from people’s everyday interactions in their own regions. A comparison of the data obtained from semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews and from contemporary talk shows may provide a very interesting insight into this issue. Thus, talk show discourse was chosen as a second data source for the present study, in addition to sociolinguistic interviews.

2.4. Previous Findings of Compliment Responses

Research on CRs usually falls into two main categories: (1) cross-cultural studies that focus on a comparison of how native speakers of English and speakers of other languages would respond to compliments, and (2) within-cultural studies that investigate CRs across L1 varieties of the same language. We have so far discussed different data collection methods and CR taxonomies used in previous CR speech act studies. This section presents an overview of the most important findings of those studies.

2.4.1. Compliment Responses across Cultures

Most cross-cultural studies have discussed general patterns of CRs between cultures and CRs according to compliment topics, which are presented in detail in the present section.

2.4.1.1. Overview of CRs across Cultures

General patterns of CRs in cross-cultural studies have been usually interpreted on the basis of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of positive and negative politeness, Gu's (1990) self-denigration maxim, and Leech's (1983) maxims of agreement (i.e., maximize agreement between self and others) and modesty (i.e., minimize praise to self). Within Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory and Gu's (1990) notion of self-denigration, studies on native speakers of Chinese using elicitation data have reported two contrasting trends in CRs. The old Chinese generation were more likely to lower themselves and to reject compliments as a strategy of politeness and modesty (Chen, 1993; Yu, 2003). However, this is not the case to the Chinese youth who are now more westernized and willing to accept others' compliments rather than rejecting them. Recent studies have shown that due to recent social changes in China and much

exposure to Western culture, strategies of acceptance have been increasing (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011, Istifci, 2017), whereas those of non-acceptance have been on a downward trend (Cao, 2016).

In Korean culture, none of pragmatic changes in responses to compliments have been reported over two decades, from the study by Han (1992) using data obtained through field observation to the dissertation project by Yun (2015) using such elicitation data as DCTs and role-plays. Han's (1992) findings showed that the most common response to compliments in Korean interactions was rejection (45%) while the least frequent response was acceptance (20% only). More than 20 years later, Yun's (2015) results again confirmed that the Korean group employed the Amend and the Reject strategy considerably more frequently. Saying differently, Korean society has made no changes in the view of politeness and modesty over two decades. Still, boasting about one's achievements or possession is considered as rude, uneducated, and unacceptable (Yun, 2015).

Analyzing data collected from DCTs, Wu and Takahashi (2016) found that in Taiwanese, the spirit of modesty was manifested in using a range of formulaic expressions to avoid accepting compliments frankly, such as “真的嗎?/ Zhēn de ma?” (‘really?’), “是嗎?/ Shì ma?” (‘really?’), “沒有啦/Méiyǒu la” (“Not really”) or “還好啦/ Hái hǎo la” (“It was alright”). Adachi (2011) that obtained data through group sociolinguistic interviews and Katsuta (2012) that attempted to collect relatively naturally occurring data through free-flowing conversations between the researcher and participants suggested that in Japanese culture, to be modest and polite, the Japanese were expected to avoid either accepting or rejecting compliments. Instead, the most expected and appropriate response was evading compliments (Adachi, 2011; Katsuta, 2012).

In English speaking cultures, Leech's (1983) agreement maxim has been given more weight. Cross-cultural studies on native speakers of English using elicitation data such as DCTs and role-plays have shown that an acceptance with a 'thank-you' was supposed to be a formulaic and most favored response to a compliment. In American English, rejection and downgrading was close to self-humiliation, almost damaging one's face (Chen, 1993; Cheng, 2011; Yun, 2015; Zanella, 2017). Evade and rejection would be interpreted as hypocritical and insulting, and therefore might be seen as discourteous in Australian English (Tang & Zhang, 2009). Verbalizing disagreements directly was not socially appropriate in British English (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001) and none of the studies by far have indicated that compliment rejection was common or welcomed in British English.

In short, it is apparent that compliments can be interpreted very differently across cultures, and thus, responding to compliments may also differ from culture to culture. As Guo et al. (2012) argued, what is polite in one culture may be less polite or excessively impolite in another culture.

2.4.1.2. CR Patterns according to Compliment Topics

In addition to discussing general patterns of CRs between cultures, some cross-cultural studies reported results according to four common major topics of compliments: appearance, personality/character, ability, and possession.

In Mandarin Chinese, the acceptance rate for compliments on appearance and ability was relatively high; whereas the Chinese were less comfortable with personality and possession compliments (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011). The Chinese frequently accepted appearance compliments directly using an 'Appreciation token' or a 'Return' (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng,

2011) but acknowledged compliments on ability indirectly using more 'shift credit' which "may be attributed to the modesty that the Chinese are supposed to show" (Tang & Zhang, 2009, p. 334). For compliments on personality/character, the Chinese favored Evade strategies such as 'shift credit' (Tang & Zhang, 2009) or ignoring/giggling (Cheng, 2011) as a way to show modesty. The Chinese also employed Evade most when receiving compliments on possession. The difference was that if 'shift credit' was the most favored strategy among character CRs (Tang & Zhang, 2009), then 'Informative comment' was the most preferred option for compliments on possession (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011).

In English, 'Accept' was reported as the most dominant CR strategy irrespective of topics of compliments. The Australian English native speakers, as reported in Tang and Zhang (2009), were most likely to accept compliments; depending on the topics of compliments, the micro strategies to be employed may vary. Specifically, the Australian speakers frequently accepted appearance and ability compliments with an 'Appreciation token' and 'Return', and compliments on character/personality and possession using an 'Appreciation token' or 'Downgrading'. The American English native speakers, as claimed in Cheng (2011), had a tendency to accept all the compliments with an 'Appreciation token'. In addition, the American speakers could accept compliments on appearance with a 'Return', on character/personality with a 'Shift-credit', and on ability with a 'Qualifying' strategy (Cheng, 2011).

To sum up, the topics of compliments may draw a difference in the way people respond to compliments. The choice of CR strategies may vary greatly depending on the topics of compliments given. Different cultures could prefer different topics of compliments and so would produce quite different responses accordingly.

2.4.2. Compliment Responses within Cultures

Most within-cultural CR research has been to pinpoint language variation and pragmatic differences based on gender and region.

2.4.2.1. CRs across genders

Studies on native speakers of English using data obtained through field observation have shown certain differences between males and females in responding to compliments. In New Zealand English, though Holmes (1988) found that men and women were most likely to accept and least likely to reject a compliment, there remained divergences within the EVADE category between two genders. Compliments were more often experienced as FTAs by New Zealand men than by New Zealand women because compared to women, men tended to avoid a verbal response by ignoring the compliment or responding to some other aspect of the previous speaker's utterance. In contrast, women tended to use and perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, so they were more likely to respond positively to compliments, such as shifting credit or providing informative comments.

In American English, Herbert's (1990) claimed that the gender of the complimenter made a greater difference than the gender of the recipient. Herbert (1990) found that male-male compliments had a higher rate of acceptance than female-female compliments (61.4% vs. 60.3%), and male-female compliments were more often accepted than female-female compliments (83.3% vs. 60.3%). While male-to-female compliments scored the highest rate of acceptance (at 83.3%), female-to-male compliments had the lowest rate of acceptance (at 59.8%). Herbert's (1990) results showed that females were more likely to accept compliments

from males (at 83.3%) rather than from other females (at 60.3%). Males tended to accept the compliments from other males (at 61.4%) rather than from females (59.8%).

Studies on CRs in Chinese using data obtained from field observation have also drawn a distinction between males and females. In Singaporean Chinese, Lee (2009) found that the majority of CRs on the Chinese New Year setting fall into the non-acceptance category (53%), as opposed to 22.8% of acceptance. Females tended to reject compliments from other females; males tended to reject compliments from other males; and males were also inclined to reject compliments from females. Under Non-acceptance, disagreeing utterances (e.g., *meiyou* 'don't have'; *meiyou la* 'don't have la'; *buhui la* 'not able la') were the largest CR category. The male-female compliments were very rare, of which females generally accepted compliments from males with an appreciation token 'Thank you'.

In Mandarin Chinese, Guo et al. (2012) investigating CRs in the speech community of Shanghai pointed out a contrasting result that the Chinese speakers in their study prefer acceptance responses over non-acceptances ones. However, their multivariate analysis of acceptance strategy revealed that gender seems not to play a decisive role in the rate of acceptance. In contrast, the two factors that were significant for acceptance strategy were age and social distance. The results in relation to gender were very limited; a multivariate analysis of appreciation strategy (e.g., thank you) suggested that compliments tend to be appreciated by females, but not to be appreciated by males.

Eliciting data in Israeli Hebrew among Jerusalem students using a DCT in comic form, Danziger (2018) found discrepancies in CRs between genders. Her data revealed that Israeli men were less expected to accept compliments from other men, but were more expected to accept compliments from women, since its acceptance rates were 41.3% versus 49.5% respectively. In

contrast, Israeli women were more expected to accept compliments regardless of whether compliments were given by men or by other women with a relatively high acceptance rate at 52.3% and 49.5% respectively. In terms of “emotion” choice, according to Danziger (2018), the gender of the receiver had more influence over the “emotion” expression than the gender of the complimenter. Her results revealed that Israeli men were more likely to show a happy expression when accepting a compliment (56.5%) than women (46.6%), who tended to show a more embarrassed emotion (48.9% as opposed to 32.4% for men).

To sum up, such gender variation in CRs in those studies (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Lee, 2009; Guo et al., 2012; Danziger, 2018) were more often attributed to the differences in social values between and within cultures. However, it is also worth questioning whether the gender variations in CRs found in previous studies can be attributed to the differences in interaction settings and data collection methods to be employed. With a field note method, Holmes’ (1988) and Herbert’s (1990) data was collected from different settings, so it would be impossible to conclude which specific settings their findings would apply to. Despite investigating CRs in Chinese, the study by Lee (2009) that collected the data at the Chinese New Year setting through field observation and by Guo et al. (2012) that was built on a corpus of 1,190 naturally occurring compliment exchanges collected from very different interaction settings also via field observation in Shanghai suggested contrasting results. Thus, a CR study that focuses on the interactional or discourse features within a specific type of discourse using different methods of data collection is worth exploring.

2.4.2.2 CRs across Regions

Although region may exert an influence on the way the speakers respond to compliments, very little research has examined the impact of region on CRs. The only work we found in the literature by far was Sidraschi's (2014) study about compliments and CRs in Novara and Grottaglie of Italy. In Novara (Northwest Italy), a compliment was viewed as a positive act or gift, and so people were inclined to accept with a direct thank-you. On the contrary, in Grottaglie (Southern Italy), compliments were perceived more as a FTA or an 'accident'. They were "potential threats to the addressee" in the sense that "they could cast an evil-eye on the complimentee" (Sidraschi, 2014, p. 233). As a result, people in Grottaglie tended to respond with non-verbal signs such as a smile which has been usually analyzed as an acceptance by quantitative researchers. Sidraschi's (2014) findings showed that compliments can be interpreted differently within cultures and responding to compliments may also differ between cultural regions. What is good in one region may be dangerous in another cultural region. Thus, an investigation on CRs between cultural regions may also contribute to understanding of how the speakers from different cultural regions interpret compliments.

2.5. Compliment Responses in Vietnamese

In Vietnamese, very little research has been conducted on the compliment and response speech acts. Some were contrastive research whose main purpose was to compare how native speakers of English and Vietnamese native speakers would respond to compliments (Tran, 2010; Nguyen, 2016). Some others especially focused on CRs in varieties of Vietnamese (Pham, 2014; Lau, 2021). From different approaches, these studies (Tran, 2010; Nguyen, 2016; Pham, 2014; Lau, 2021) have revealed a wide range of findings about the CR behaviors in Vietnamese.

Tran (2010), a contrastive study that aimed at investigating how Australian English native speakers and native speakers of Vietnamese would respond to compliments, used the Naturalized Role-play cards describing the compliment situations to collect the data. The instrument consisted of two Naturalized Role-play situations conducted by a role-play informant and a role-play conductor. She then conventionally classified CR strategies into the continuum of acceptance and rejection. Acceptance appeared in forms of appreciation/agreement token, agreeing utterance, explanation, downgrading, and return compliment. As reviewed in section 2.2.1.2 in the present chapter, with role -plays, “informants are asked to act out in given contexts that highlighted or were designed to feature the speech acts under investigation” (Adachi, 2011, p. 53), and so “may not reflect exactly what happens in actual encounters” (Lee, 2009, p. 522). As a result, Tran’s (2010) data showed that male and female native speakers of Vietnamese tended to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty and politeness. The acceptance rate was very low in her data (n=4, at 20%).

Nguyen (2016) investigated CRs between Vietnamese ESL learners and American English native speakers through field observation on an American university campus, from different settings such as break time and lunch time at school, conference presentation venues, and classroom. His data was categorized based on Holmes’ (1988) three-way classification that includes Accept, Reject, and Deflect/Evade. Despite the subjects in Nguyen’s (2016) study being Vietnamese ESL learners who have been studying in an American university, his findings still indicated a lower percentage of Accept (46.65%) and a higher percentage of Reject and Evade (53.3% altogether) though the imbalance would not be so dramatic (44.65% vs. 53.3%). Noticeably, under the Accept category the Vietnamese ESL learners preferred using Downgrading strategy (26.68%) to Appreciation token (13.3%) and Agreement (6.67%), the two

strategies used most frequently by American English native speakers. This is to say, despite accepting compliments, the way the Vietnamese ESL learners accepted compliments was supposed to show modesty.

Pham (2014) obtained the data through a structured interview with 120 Vietnamese native speakers. There were six interviewers in her study aged at different ranges (two at twenties, two at middle-age, and two at fifties). The interviewers were free to choose the interviewees based on their social networks regardless of age, status, gender, and the level of intimacy. As Pham (2014) described, “the interviews were conducted as a normal extended conversation in which the interviewer tactfully complimented the interviewees on any suitable topics” (p. 160). All the interviews were tape-recorded. With this approach, Pham’s (2014) findings pointed out a very low rate of acceptance ($n=59$, 16.39%) and a very high rate of Reject and Deflect (70.27% altogether), of which Reject accounted for 55.83% ($n=201$). If we counted one rejection element in combination strategies, the total percentage of Reject in her study would go up to 66.95%. As such, Pham’s (2014) results were consistent with previous findings of CRs in Vietnamese that native speakers of Vietnamese tend to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty and politeness (Tran, 2010; Nguyen, 2016).

Lau (2021) used video segments portraying compliment scenarios, enriched with informal interviews that asked participants about why they responded as they did as an effort for collecting the data in a more naturalistic setting. The CRs were not conventionally categorized on the continuum of acceptance and rejection as Nguyen (2016), Tran (2010), and some others did. Lau’s (2021) study in analyzing CRs based on speakers’ reported feelings showed a contrasting result. Her findings showed that the Southern Vietnamese women overwhelmingly perceived congratulation and flattery compliments as positive speech acts and generally

responded to the compliments with a sense of happiness, whereas the majority of the Northern women viewed the compliments as negative and tended to produce positive reactions to disguise their lack of interest in the compliments.

Due to the difference in research methodologies, prior research has suggested different CR behaviors in Vietnamese. To further explore the issue and address some of the weaknesses of previous approaches to the study of CRs, the present thesis, as described in detail in section 2.3, was designed to obtain the data through sociolinguistic interviews together with interviews from contemporary talk shows. The study aims at examining whether CRs in Vietnamese would differ due to gender, region, or context of use.

2.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed perceptions of compliment and response speech acts. A review of previous approaches to the study of compliments and responses has pointed out many areas of concern in categorizing compliments and analyzing responses. In order to address some of the weaknesses of previous approaches to the study of CRs, the present chapter represents a different methodological framework that we believe would help to interpret this speech act more accurately and would provide a new picture of studying the CR speech act in general and CRs in Vietnamese in particular. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will present the methodologies to be employed in the present study in detail.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The present chapter presents the research design that was used to investigate how genre and context impact region and gender in Vietnamese CRs. The study consists of two sets of data, sociolinguistic interview and talk-show data. The sociolinguistic interview data was used to answer the following research questions with regard to regional variation:

1. How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments?
 - a) How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments given by a woman?
 - b) How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments given by a man?
2. How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments?
 - a) How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments given by a woman?
 - b) How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments given by a man?

, and gender variation:

3. Do compliment responses in Vietnamese differ across genders? If yes, how do compliment responses in Vietnamese differ across genders?

A discourse-based approach using the talk-show data was used to further explore how genre and context impact region and gender in addition to sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the two regions of the country. The talk-show data was used to answer the following research questions with regard to regional variation:

4. What does the context of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) tell us about regional variation?

, and gender variation:

5. What does the context of the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) tell us about gender variation?

This chapter provides information about two sets of data that were used in the study. The first part describes the procedures used in collecting and analyzing the sociolinguistic interview data. The second part discusses how to collect and analyze the talk-show data.

PART I - SOCIOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW DATA

The interview data in the present study were gathered through fieldwork with informal semi-structured interviews in two distinct regions of Vietnam. This data collection method may enable the researcher to avoid weaknesses of elicitation data used in prior research. In addition, informal interviews through fieldwork may allow a higher degree of variable control since macro-social factors involved in this study (i.e., region and gender) can be systematically manipulated. The following section provides a description of the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis framework for the interview data.

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 80 native speakers of Vietnamese ranging in age from 18 to 22, who had never been abroad at the time of the study. Forty were from Northern Vietnam and another 40 were from Southern Vietnam. The participants were divided into four groups: Group 1- 20 Southern Males (SM), Group 2- 20 Northern Males (NM), Group 3- 20 Southern Females (SF), and Group 4- 20 Northern Females (NF). All the Northern participants were college students at big universities in the area of Hanoi, from Hanoi or surrounding areas (e.g., Ha Nam, Hai Duong, Thai Binh, Phu Tho, Bac Giang, Hai Phong). Likewise, all the Southern counterparts were college students at big universities in the area of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), from HCMC or surrounds (e.g., Long An, Dong Nai, Binh Duong, Can Tho, Ben Tre, Tien Giang). Tables 3.1 to 3.4 in the next pages describe detailed information about the participants' background. Although the information about whether a participant was from the city or rural was included, this was not an influential factor in the present study. Very few participants were from the rural areas and an actual data analysis did not yield distinct results between those from rural and those from the city, so an inclusion of this piece of information in Tables 3.1-3.4 simply aims at providing a full picture of the participants. The city-rural factor was not especially examined in the present study.

Table 3.1

Southern male participants (Group 1, N=20)

Males	Regional Upbringing	City/Rural	Duration of Stay in HCMC	Year	University
SM1	TpHCM	City	18 years	1	Sai Gon University
SM2	TpHCM	City	18 years	1	Sai Gon University
SM3	Cà Mau	City	2 years	2	Economics
SM4	Bến Tre	City	3 years	2	Economics
SM5	Bình Thuận	City	5 years	2	Economics
SM6	Bến Tre	City	5 years	2	Economics
SM7	TpHCM	City	20 years	2	Economics
SM8	Long An	City	4 months	1	Economics
SM9	Long An	City	4 months	1	Hutech
SM10	TpHCM	City	18 years	1	Hutech
SM11	Đà Lạt	City	4 months	1	Hutech
SM12	TpHCM	City	18 years	1	Hutech
SM13	Bình Phước	City	18 years	1	Open University
SM14	TpHCM	City	12 years	2	Open University
SM15	Đồng Tháp	City	2 years	2	Open University
SM16	TpHCM	City	18 years	1	Hutech
SM17	Trà Vinh	Rural	4 months	1	University of Science
SM18	Sóc Trăng	Rural	3 years	3	University of Science
SM19	Tây Ninh	Rural	3 years	3	University of Science
SM20	Lâm Đồng	Rural	3 years	3	University of Science

Table 3.2

Northern male participants (Group 2, N=20)

Males	Regional Upbringing	City/Rural	Duration of Stay in Hanoi	Year	University
NM1	Thanh Hoá	City	1 year	1	National Economics
NM2	Thái Bình	Rural	1 year	1	National Economics
NM3	Thanh Hoá	Rural	2 years	2	Commerce
NM4	Hà Nội	City	18 years	1	Commerce
NM5	Hà Nội	City	19 years	2	University of Science and Technology
NM6	Hà Nội	City	20 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM7	Nam Định	Rural	4 months	1	University of Engineering and Technology
NM8	Nam Định	Rural	2 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM9	Hà Nội	City	19 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM10	Hà Nội	City	19 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM11	Nam Định	Rural	2 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM12	Hải Dương	City	2 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM13	Nam Định	Rural	2 years	2	University of Engineering and Technology
NM14	Hà Nam	Rural	3 months	1	Open University
NM15	Hà Nội	City	18 years	4	National Economics
NM16	Nam Định	Rural	7 years	4	University of Science and Technology
NM17	Hà Nội	City	1 year	1	University of Science and Technology
NM18	Hà Nội	City	23 years	4	University of Science and Technology
NM19	Hà Nội	City	23 years	4	University of Civil Engineering
NM20	Hà Nội	City	20 years	3	Academic of Journalism and Communication

Table 3.3

Southern female participants (Group 3, N=20)

Females	Regional Upbringing	City/Rural	Duration of Stay in HCMC	Year	University
SF1	Long An	Rural	2 months	1	Economics
SF2	Biên Hoà	City	2 years	2	Economics
SF3	Bình Phước	Rural	2 years	2	Economics
SF4	HCMC	City	11 years	2	Economics
SF5	Tiền Giang	City	1.5 years	2	Economics
SF6	Bình Dương	City	1.5 years	2	Economics
SF7	HCMC	City	20 years	2	Hutech
SF8	Kiên Giang	City	3 months	1	Hutech
SF9	HCMC	City	20 years	1	Hutech
SF10	Bình Dương	City	2 years	2	Open University
SF11	Bình Dương	City	2 years	2	Open University
SF12	Bến Tre	City	2 years	2	Open University
SF13	Bình Dương	City	2 years	2	Open University
SF14	Đồng Nai	Rural	1.5 years	2	Economics
SF15	Tây Ninh	Rural	1 year	1	Economics
SF16	Bình Dương	City	2 years	2	Open University
SF17	Đồng Nai	Rural	1 year	1	Hutech
SF18	Cần Thơ	City	1 year	1	Open University
SF19	Bình Phước	Rural	1 year	1	Open University
SF20	Bình Dương	City	2 years	2	Open University

Table 3.4

Northern female participants (Group 4, N=20)

Females	Regional Upbringing	City/Rural	Duration of Stay in Hanoi	Year	University
NF1	Bắc Giang	Rural	14 years	1	National Economics
NF2	Thanh Hoá	City	1 year	1	National Economics
NF3	Ninh Bình	City	0.5 year	1	Commerce
NF4	Phú Thọ	City	2 years	1	Commerce
NF5	Thanh Hoá	City	4 years	4	Commerce
NF6	Thanh Hoá	City	4 years	4	Commerce
NF7	Hà Nội	City	22 years	4	Commerce
NF8	Thanh Hoá	City	3 months	1	Engineering
NF9	Nghệ An	Rural	1 year	1	Education
NF10	Hà Tĩnh	City	1 year	1	Education
NF11	Hà nội	City	19 years	1	Education
NF12	Hà nội	City	19 years	2	Education
NF13	Bắc Giang	Rural	1 year	1	Foreign Languages
NF14	Bắc Giang	Rural	1 year	1	Foreign Languages
NF15	Hà nội	City	19 years	1	Education
NF16	Hải Phòng	City	1 year	1	Science and Tech
NF17	Hà nội	City	19 years	3	Science and Tech
NF18	Hải Dương	City	1 year	1	Science and Tech
NF19	Nam Định	City	3 months	1	National Economics
NF20	Hưng Yên	Rural	3 months	1	National Economics

3.2. Instruments

The instrument consisted of eight compliment video scenarios extracted from various Vietnamese movies which were published on YouTube channels between 2017 and 2018. The eight video situations include compliments and require responses to the compliments (see Appendix B). The compliment video segments were chosen as the data collection instrument for many reasons.

A large number of previous studies have employed the DCTs as the main instrument. As reviewed in section 2.2.1.1, DCTs have been heavily criticized for low construct validity and failure to represent the features of authentic discourse (Bieswanger, 2015; Labben, 2016). The

participants have to imagine the interactional settings described in DCTs, and therefore data collected with DCTs do not reflect the speakers' relatively accurate interpretations on compliments given. To address some of the methodological weaknesses of DCTs, this study used video segments portraying compliment scenarios, enriched with informal interviews that asked participants about why they responded as they did.

One advantage of the video segments is that they contained all the contextual information associated with the compliments, and “paying more attention to ‘context’ - when, how and to whom speakers are paying compliments - is undoubtedly critical for precisely decoding the illocutionary force of this speech act” (Adachi, 2011, p. 20). Second, the compliment video situations show non-verbal and paralinguistic cues like smiling, laughing, head nods, silences, winking and so on (Guo et al., 2012). These non-verbal behaviors may provide very important contextualization cues which are valuable to the participants in understanding the compliments and producing most appropriate responses. As Li (2015) argues, the use of body language along with the use of facial expressions, tone of voice, laughter, and so forth strongly influences the overall production of compliment responses. Taking compliment situations in the form of videos as the instrument, the study sought to gather not only verbal responses but also non-verbal cues which may also help to understand and analyze responses.

The vast majority of literature on compliments has categorized compliments according to four major compliment topics including appearance, performance, possession, and personality (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Chen, 1993; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Yuhaida et al., 2014; Danziger, 2018). As discussed in section 2.1.2, despite some advantages of categorizing compliments according to topics, such a compliment category framework has shown many limitations. First, categorizing compliments according to topics

would be impossible to convey all the contextual factors associated with compliments, which may result in a misinterpretation of the compliments and their responses. More importantly, categorizing compliments according to topics cannot categorize if the compliment contains many conversational turns or if the compliment may be involved in a variety of topics. Hence, although this compliment category framework has attracted most attention of most prior research, it may not be a suitable methodological framework that should be used to categorize compliments elicited in the present study. As Table 3.5 describes, the present study especially categorized compliments according to their functions in specific settings. We believe that categorizing compliments according to their discourse functions may provide a fuller picture of compliment behaviors as well as help to interpret their responses more accurately. For the purpose of examining gender variation, eight compliment video scenarios were classified according to four main categories (woman-man, man-man, woman-woman, man-woman). Table 3.5 provides a short description of eight compliment scenarios used in the present study.

Table 3.5

Description of the eight compliment scenarios

Category	Video scenarios	Types of Compliments
Woman to man	Video 1	Thank-you
	Video 2	Encouragement
Man to man	Video 3	Sport session-ending
	Video 4	Joking
Woman to woman	Video 5	Congratulation
	Video 6	Flattery
Man to woman	Video 7	Admiration
	Video 8	Flirty

As Table 3.5 shows, the woman-to-man category consisted of two compliments with two different functions. Video 1 provides the context of a thank-you compliment. A woman (Lan Anh) in business clothes is going to work, but unfortunately her motorbike is broken down. She cannot start its engine. By then, her neighbor (Hung) who is also in business clothes is coming. He helps Lan Anh fix her motorbike, and after a while her motorbike gets to work again. Instead of saying thank-you to Hung, Lan Anh gives him a compliment on his vehicle-fixing ability:

Woman (Lan Anh): Dạ [thử khởi động động cơ] Ah Xe nổ rồi. **Anh giỏi thật đó!**
(‘Yes [try starting the engine] Ah The engine works. You are very good!’)

Man (Hung): _____.

As we can see in Appendix B, the young man (Hung) was very confident about fixing vehicles. He said to the woman that he was going to open a motorbike repair shop. Before he lets the woman start the engine, he reminds her not to pull the handbrake too tightly, which may indicate that he is very good at fixing motorbikes. In the end, the woman gives the man a compliment instead of a thank-you for his help. Previous studies would normally code the compliment in this context as an ability compliment. However, in the present study this way of coding cannot mirror a full picture of what is happening in this situation and so is impossible to fully describe the discourse function the compliment may perform. Categorizing the compliment in this scenario as an ability compliment would be impossible to reveal that when giving the compliment, the complimenter (the woman) was happy as the complimentee (the man) has helped her fix her motorbike. This way of coding neither describes the fact that the man in business clothes, who was ready to go to work, has spent lots of time and effort to fix the motorbike for the woman while they are only neighbors nor describes the man’s enthusiasm for helping the woman. Thus, in avoiding coding the compliment that cannot fully describe discourse features of the scenario,

the present study categorized the compliment in this context as a thank-you compliment, the one that may fully describe the discourse function the compliment may perform.

Video 2 describes the context of an encouragement compliment. A young man is in despair as he gets frustrated in his current life, job, and future. A young woman (his friend) comes and sits beside him to solace him. To help him feel better, the woman first tells him that everybody is missing him a lot. Yet, it is likely that he does not trust the woman as he expresses some doubt about its sincerity: “Thiệt hả? Mọi người cần tôi thiệt hả?” (‘Really? Does everybody really need me?’). To encourage the man, the woman finally pays him a compliment on his vehicle-fixing ability and nice personality.

Woman: Thiệt mà. **Anh vá xe giỏi lại tốt bụng.** Anh cố gắng lên đi, sau này mở một tiệm vá xe, vá thật nhiều xe. Mọi người cũng nhớ anh lắm đó. Bà Tư bán cà phê cũng hay nhắc anh nữa. **(‘Yes, that’s true. You are good at repairing motorbikes and are a nice person. Try your best. You can open a motorbike repair shop in the future. Everybody is missing you. Uncle Four selling coffee usually talks about you.’)**

Man: _____.

Previous studies would often categorize the compliment in this context as an ability or a personality compliment; however, in the present study this way of coding could be inaccurate as the compliment in this scenario was involved in two different topics, both ability and personality. Categorizing this compliment as an ability or a personality compliment neither accurately describes the topics of compliment involved nor reveals that the main function of this compliment was to help the woman solace the man in depression. To provide a fuller picture of the compliment, the present study categorized the compliment in this situation as an encouragement compliment, the one that may fully describe the discourse function the compliment may perform.

The next two video scenarios portray two different compliments given by a man to a man, one occurring at the gym where two men are practicing boxing (Video 3) and one occurring at the workplace (Video 4). The compliment in Video 3 was given by Man 1 who wants to stop playing boxing after a while:

Man 1: Một, hai, một, hai. Lên gối. Cúi đầu. Đỡ đỡ. Okays, tốt lắm. Minh nghỉ nha. Khôi dạo này đánh khá lắm.
(**‘One, two, one, two. Raise your knee. Lower your head. Avoid my shot. Okay, very good. Let’s stop. Khôi, recently you hit quite well.’**)

Man 2 (Khôi): _____.

This compliment occurs in a sports setting when Man 1 wants to stop practising. To end the practice session, Man 1 gives Man 2 (Khôi, his friend) a compliment on ability to play boxing. Previous studies would frequently categorize this compliment as an ability compliment; however, this way of coding might be inaccurate since the compliment in this context might not be a real compliment that mainly serves as part of an ending sequence. In order to describe distinct discourse features of the compliment in this scenario, the present study coded this compliment as a sport session-ending compliment.

Video 4 describes the compliment between two men at the workplace, Man 1 being the Head of the Office and Man 2 being his staff member. Man 1 brings a vase of flowers to his office and says happy New Year to his staff in the office. As can be seen in Appendix B, before the male staff member (Man 2) gives a compliment on the action of buying flowers of Man 1, the female staff member also compliments Man 1 on his action of bringing a vase of flowers to the office. She then asks whether he bought this vase of flowers for his wife and he says yes. He explains that buying this vase of flowers is very difficult for him. His response to the woman ends with his laughing. Right at this moment, a male staff member jumps into the conversation with a compliment, as follows:

Man 2: Anh Phúc anh đúng là mẫu đàn ông lý tưởng để em học hỏi. Anh đúng là thần tượng của em luôn á.

(‘Mr. Phuc, you are an ideal man for me to learn from. You are truly my idol.’)

Man 1: _____.

Though previous studies would probably categorize the compliment in this situation as a character/personality compliment, in the present study such a categorization would be impossible to describe distinct discourse features of the compliment in this scenario. As discussed in section 2.1.2, categorizing compliments according to topics cannot describe the compliment with many conversational turns. As can be seen in Appendix B, the compliment in this context contains many conversational turns and involves more than two interlocutors. In addition, categorizing this compliment according to topics would be impossible to describe the happy atmosphere of the New Year where the compliment was used mainly as a strategy to create a humorous atmosphere in the office and between staff members and the Office Head. In avoiding categorizing the compliment independently of the context, the present study categorized the compliment in this scenario as a joking compliment that fully describes the discourse function the compliment may perform.

The two chosen video situations under the woman-to-woman category portray two different compliments - congratulation compliment and flattery compliment. Video 5 describes the context of the congratulation compliment. A young woman (Woman 1) is standing in front of her new shop to welcome guests on the opening day when another young woman (Woman 2) comes and initiates the conversation with a greeting act “Em gái” followed by a compliment:

Woman 2: “Em gái. Trời ơi, hôm nay đẹp quá à! Hoàn hảo quá!”

(‘Younger sister. Oh my god, today you look very beautiful! Very glorious!’)

Woman 1: _____.

In Vietnamese, addressing Woman 1 as “Em gái” (‘younger sister’) shows a small age gap (Woman 1 being younger) and a close relationship between the two women. When saying “Trời ơi, hôm nay đẹp quá à!” (‘Oh my god, today you look very beautiful’), Woman 2 is looking at Woman 1. She then turns her gaze to the new shop saying “Hoành tráng quá” (‘Very glorious’). As discussed in section 2.1.2, it would be inappropriate to categorize this compliment according to topics as the compliment in this scenario was involved in a variety of topics. Woman 2 first gives Woman 1 a compliment on appearance, and then pays an accomplishment compliment on the new shop. Further, categorizing this compliment according to topics cannot describe the discourse function of this compliment that was employed as a social strategy, serving as an act to congratulate Woman 1 on her shop’s opening day. Thus, in order to avoid categorizing the compliment according to topics, the compliment in this context was categorized as a congratulation compliment in the present study.

Video 6 portrays a compliment occurring between two women in the same company, one from the sales department (Woman 1, sales department head) and one from the reception department (Woman 2, receptionist). Woman 1 walks from the main door to the front desk and stops by the front desk as the receptionist stops her to remind of the upcoming anniversary of their company. As can be seen in Appendix B, the receptionist begins the conversation with a compliment on accomplishments of the whole sales department, and moves on with a compliment on the appearance of all female staff in the sales department. In response to the receptionist, the sales department head (Quynh Lan) rejects all these compliments. However, the receptionist continues the conversation by giving another compliment which is directly on Quynh Lan’s appearance:

Woman 2: “Uhm. Em nói thiệt nè. Trong phòng kinh doanh có chị trưởng phòng Quỳnh Lan là đẹp nhất nè.

(‘Uhm. I’m telling the truth. In the sales department, the head Quỳnh Lan is the most beautiful.’)

Woman 1: _____.

In Vietnamese, usually a female speaker would refer to herself as *em* if she is younger and would refer to the older female as *chị*. In this situation, addressing herself as “em” and the head *Quỳnh Lan* as “chị” shows that the receptionist is slightly younger than the head *Quỳnh Lan*. This form of address also, to some extent, shows some respect for the head *Quỳnh Lan*. Previous studies would more often categorize this compliment as an appearance compliment. Nonetheless, such a categorization would be incapable of fully describing all the discourse features of the compliment in this context. As described above, the compliment in this scenario contains many compliment turns. During the conversation, the receptionist gives excessive praise to the sales department before she gives a direct compliment on the appearance of the sales department head. Thus, in order to provide a good picture of what is happening in this scenario, the present study avoided categorizing this compliment as an appearance compliment. As an alternative, the present study categorized the compliment in this scenario as a flattery compliment that may on the one hand indicate a gap in social status between the complimenter (receptionist) and the complimentee (sales department head), and on the other hand, may accurately describe a wide range of compliment turns.

The last category comprised two different compliments given by a man to a woman. Video 7 portrays the context in which a woman is playing violin on the stage of a coffee shop. Two men and another woman sitting in the coffee shop suddenly recognize her as their new colleague. After the woman finishes the song, a young man (Man 1) steps towards the coffee

shop stage and gives flowers to the woman. The man then compliments the woman on her ability of playing violin:

Man 1: [Bước về phía sân khấu và tặng hoa cho cô gái] Cô đàn hay lắm. Tôi có thể yêu cầu cô đàn một bài được không?
(*[Step towards the coffee shop stage and give flowers to the woman] You play the violin very well. Can I invite you to play a song?*)

Woman: _____.

Although Man 1 has known the woman before, he did not know her quite well. As we can see in Appendix B, Man 1 was surprised (“Sao là cô ấy” ‘Why is that her?’) seeing the woman playing violin on the stage of the coffee shop. The video shows that this young man pays very much attention to the woman’s performance. He really appreciates the woman’s ability to play the violin. Normally, such a compliment would be previously categorized as an ability compliment. However, because the compliment in this scenario contains many conversational turns and involves more than two interlocutors, in the present study the compliment in this scenario was coded as an admiration compliment, as a way to reveal the man’s affection for the woman including both his compliment and his action of giving flowers to the woman.

The compliment in Video 8 is situated in a completely different context in which a poor family including a young woman (Diep), an old lady (Mom of Diep), and an old man (Uncle Four of Diep) are eating dinner. They are having dinner with a young man (Diep’s friend) who is also the doctor of the old lady. Through the conversation with the old man, the young man compliments Diep on her cooking ability:

Young Man: Dạ, không phải vậy đâu chú Tư [Nhìn vào người phụ nữ và nói] Con thấy ở đây ngon là vì Diệp nấu ăn ngon.
(*No, it isn’t, Uncle Four [Look at the woman and say] I feel tasty when eating here because Diep cooks very well.)*

Young woman (Diep): _____.

As can be seen in Appendix B, the old man asks whether the doctor is enjoying the meal which only includes vegetables of poor people. The answer of the young man is yes. The old man continues the conversation by guessing that the young man has been accustomed to good foods, so eating vegetables of poor people makes him feel a new taste. The young man's answer proves that the guess of the old man is not correct. Looking at the woman, the young man says that he feels tasty when eating with the family because the woman (Diep) cooks very well. Such a compliment could be categorized as an ability compliment in previous studies; however, this way of categorization cannot fully describe the compliment in this scenario for many reasons. First, the compliment in this context contains many conversational turns and involves more than two interlocutors. Second, categorizing such a compliment as an ability compliment would be impossible to describe the man's affection for the woman and the goal the compliment was given. It is apparent that the man used the compliment in this scenario as a strategy to win the woman's love and affection. Thus, in order to avoid some limitations of categorizing compliments according to topics, the compliment in this scenario was categorized as a flirty compliment in the present study.

The eight compliment video scenarios were chosen as the instrument in the present study since they may portray relatively frequently-occurring contexts in everyday life of Vietnamese people. More importantly, the choice of two different complimenting contexts under each category may also help to investigate whether participants interpret compliments differently in two different contexts. The next section will discuss the procedure used to collect the data.

3.3. Procedure

In the present study, the data was collected in two biggest cities of Vietnam, Hanoi in the North and HCMC in the South. The Southern data was obtained in the last two weeks of November while the Northern data was elicited in the first two weeks of December 2018. To collect relatively authentic data in natural environments, the researcher in casual clothes visited the campus of many universities in the area of Hanoi and HCMC. The researcher selected students who were available, that is, sitting alone or talking with friends on the campuses. After apologizing for interrupting them, the researcher introduced herself and the purpose of the study, and asked questions to ensure that the informants were college students, from either Northern or Southern Vietnam and were willing to join the study. If they were not either Southerners living and studying in the area of HCMC or Northerners living and studying in the area of Hanoi, they were not invited to join the study. If they met the study criteria and agreed to participate in the study, the researcher obtained written consent. The researcher asked a few questions about the participants' background (see Appendix C) and then played video clips of compliment situations. Each individual participant responded to the compliment in each situation in Vietnamese. In cases where the participants encountered trouble getting themselves into the given context, that video situation was played over until they were able to grasp the video context. The researcher occasionally asked some in-depth follow-up questions to explore why responses were given and to ensure whether the participants were responding from their point of view. Non-verbal responses were noted down on the paper by the researcher, and verbal responses were recorded using an iPhone 7 device. The duration of each interview was between 8 and 15 minutes. The recorded data was transcribed and then were saved as Word documents. Details about how this set of data was analyzed are presented in the following section.

3.4. Data Analysis

As reviewed in section 2.2.2, the semantic coding of CRs in many previous studies (e.g., Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011; Mustapha, 2011) mainly followed the taxonomy of Acceptance, Evade, and Rejection. The analysis focused more on quantifying the CRs according to frequency and percentage of individual CR strategies. Many studies adopted Holmes' (1988) and Herbert's (1990) CR classifications as the key analysis framework along with developing some new categories and subcategories to fit into the current data. In these studies, some statistical tests such as Fisher's test, Chi-square test, paired t-test, or One-way ANOVA were conducted to test the significant difference between groups. Few studies (e.g., Wu & Takahashi, 2016) looked into the syntactic structures of CRs. Though some studies (e.g., Li, 2015) collected qualitative data to explore participants' perceptions or individualistic features of compliment responses, these studies in general examined differences in linguistic items or individual strategies independently of the context. This analysis framework disregarded pragmatic features of language use in interaction (Barron & Schneider, 2009), while interactional context plays a significant role in interpreting compliments and their responses (Mills, 2003; Adachi, 2011). As Gumperz (1999) argued, social and linguistic meanings together with the speakers' intentions are only made available to interactants through cultural- and context-dependent interaction. Most importantly, the prior research did not analyze CRs based on the speakers' reported feelings about compliments that may help to interpret response strategies more accurately.

As shown in Table 3.6, the sociolinguistic interviews provided a corpus of 640 compliment responses, of which 320 were Southern data and another 320 were Northern data.

Table 3.6

A corpus of CRs collected from sociolinguistic interviews

Category	Types of Compliments	Region		Gender	
		SM	NM	SF	NF
Woman to man	Thank-you	20	20	20	20
	Encouragement	20	20	20	20
Man to man	Sport session-ending	20	20	20	20
	Joking	20	20	20	20
		SF	NF	SM	NM
Woman to woman	Congratulation	20	20	20	20
	Flattery	20	20	20	20
Man to woman	Admiration	20	20	20	20
	Flirty	20	20	20	20
Total		160 CRs	160 CRs	160 CRs	160 CRs
		Southern CRs: 320 instances Northern CRs: 320 instances			

As discussed in section 2.1.3, previous gender studies investigating actual compliments occurring during spontaneous and everyday interactions through field note methods (Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006; Herbert, 1990; Rees-Miller, 2011) have shown that compliments would usually fall into the categories of appearance, performance, personality, and possession. Put into movie discourse settings, section 3.2 in the present chapter demonstrates that a compliment in movie discourse would be usually involved in a wide variety of topics and contain several compliment turns before it. In avoiding some limitations of categorizing compliments according to topics, as discussed in section 2.1.2, Table 3.6 demonstrates actual compliments

observed in movie discourse in the present study that were categorized according to functions they may perform in specific movie discourse segments. The following section presents a detailed procedure for analyzing the data.

3.4.1. Procedures

Focusing on participants' behaviors, most prior research on CRs has analyzed CRs according to conventions of means (i.e., speaker strategies) and conventions of forms (i.e., linguistic devices), based on Holmes' (1988) three-way classification of CRs and Herbert's (1990) Agreement and Non-Agreement continuum. Though Holmes' (1988) and Herbert's (1990) CR taxonomies and their different versions have been widely used and accepted in CR speech act studies, those taxonomies, as argued in section 2.2.2, cannot address the common problem that one form would not perform more than one function and that one response token is given only a single semantic interpretation at a time (see section 2.2.2 for detail). Further, despite including nonverbal responses, the existing CR taxonomies would often categorize such nonverbal behaviors as [smile] or [head nod] as an acceptance while its validity and universality need to be tested. Thus, in avoiding numerous problems associated with those existing CR taxonomies, the present thesis particularly categorized CRs according to the respondents' reports about how they felt about the compliment. This analysis framework may enable the researcher to access the speakers' feelings about the compliments, and thus helps to interpret the response strategies more accurately. Collecting data from compliment video scenarios may also allow the analysis to go beyond individual linguistic forms and response strategies and so helps to examine CRs in larger units of discourse.

The first step to analyze CRs collected from the sociolinguistic interviews was to develop such categories and subcategories that manifest how the speakers feel about each of the eight compliment scenarios. The second step of the analysis process was to investigate what response strategies were employed to show such speakers' feelings. The response strategies in the present study consisted of sequences of both verbal responses and nonverbal reactions. Although the specific linguistic form of compliment responses in the two regions would be of interest, especially from the point of language variation, the formal variations were not the focus of this study. The illustrative examples for categories and subcategories were extracted from the current data and outlined in both Southern Vietnamese (SV) and Northern Vietnamese (NV). However, due to the plight of the country for years, Southern and Northern Vietnam may well have developed inherent differences in a variety of linguistic and cultural aspects, so each dialect has some response strategies unique to itself. Since there exist some categories and subcategories that are unique to either Southern Vietnamese or Northern Vietnamese, the examples to illustrate such categories and subcategories were correspondingly given in either Southern or Northern Vietnamese. Different from previous studies that focused on participants' behaviors, the present study especially focused on speakers' reported feelings about the compliment. Thus, one form may perform more than one function and one response token may receive more than one semantic interpretation at a time. This accounts for why the same CR strategy may be classified into different categories and why we can see repeating strategies under many categories and subcategories, as explained and exemplified in the following.

(A) Happiness -- The recipient reported a feeling of happiness with the compliment. The happiness responses usually fall into four categories as presented next.

(1) Pleasure -- The recipient said that inside his/her heart s/he felt happy with the compliment, and so would like to let the complimenter know that s/he was happy. The recipient used a variety of strategies to show such pleasure:

a) The recipient signified pleasure by using different forms of thank-you, including:

Formulaic thank-you: Simply includes a thank-you. For example:

SV: Ok Cám ơn anh đã khen.
(‘Ok Thank you for your compliment.’)
(SM18, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: Cám ơn.
(‘Thank you’)
(NM20, Joking compliment scenario)

Promising thank-you: Usually includes a smile, a thank-you along with statements that promise to do better in the future. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cám ơn. Tôi sẽ cố gắng tốt hơn.
(‘[smile] Thank you. I will try to do better.’)
(SM5, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: Cám ơn. Lần sau em sẽ cố gắng tốt hơn nữa.
(‘Thank you. Next time I will try to do a lot better.’)
(NM7, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Smiling thank-you: Usually includes a smile and a thank-you. For example:

SV: Ok Cám ơn anh [cười]
(‘Ok Thank you [smile]’)
(SM9, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: [cười] Cám ơn
(‘[smile] Thank you’)
(NM2, Joking compliment scenario)

Humorous thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you and joking expressions.

For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh. Anh dẻo miệng quá.
(‘[silent] Thank you. Your mouth is too sweet.’)
(SF1, flirty compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn anh. Ngày nào anh cũng có thể qua để ăn đồ em nấu.
(‘Thank you. You can come to eat the food I cook everyday.’)
(NM10, flirty compliment scenario)

Happy thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you and statements that express the speaker's gladness. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cảm ơn em. Anh rất vui vì lời khen của em.
(‘[smile] Thank you. I’m glad with your compliment.’)
(SF19, thank-you compliment scenario)

Courteous thank-you: Usually includes a smile, a thank-you along with statements of expectation and invitation. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị. Mời chị vào.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Sister, please come in.’)
(SM2, congratulation compliment scenario)

Explaining thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you and statements that provide further information about the object complimented. For example:

SV: [Cười] Trời ơi. Cảm ơn chị nha. Em mất khá nhiều thời gian để trang điểm
ấy.
(‘[smile] Oh my god. Thank you, sister. It took me a long time to put on
makeup.’)
(SM5, congratulation compliment scenario)

- b) The recipient created mutual pleasure by including a similar compliment in the response, including:

Smiling return: Usually includes a smile and a ‘Return’. For example:

SV: [Cười] Bạn cũng vậy.
(‘[smile] You too.’)
(SM13, session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: Đẳng ấy hôm nay đánh cũng tốt phết thể nhỉ [Cười]
(‘Today you played very well too.’)
(NM12, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Silent return: Usually includes silence and a ‘Return’. For example:

SV: Anh cũng tốt lắm. Hôm sau sẽ trở lại đánh tiếp.
(‘You are also very good. Let’s come back to continue tomorrow.’)
(SM8, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: [Im lặng] Chú mày cũng thế.
(‘[silent] You too.’)
(NM13, Joking compliment scenario)

Smiling return thank-you: Usually includes a smile, a thank-you, and a ‘Return’. For example:

SV: [Cười] Em cảm ơn chị. Chị cũng đẹp mà.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. You are beautiful too.’)
(SF9, congratulation compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn [cười] Nhưng tôi không đánh tốt bằng bạn.
(‘Thank you [smile] But I cannot play as well as you.’)
(NF14, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Emotionless return thank-you: Simply includes a thank-you and a ‘Return’. No supporting non-verbal behaviors were observed. For example:

SV: Cảm ơn. Bạn cũng vậy.
(‘Thank you. You too.’)
(SF3, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn chị. Chị cũng đẹp quá.
(‘Thank you, sister. You are also very beautiful.’)
(NM19, congratulation compliment scenario)

c) The recipient responded to the compliment humorously. The humorous responses often appeared in four forms, including:

Smiling joke: Usually includes a smile in combination with joking expressions.

For example:

SV: [Cười] Vậy mới làm anh của cậu được chứ.
(‘[smile] If not, how I can become your brother.’)
(SM2, Joking compliment scenario)

NV: Mày cứ đùa [cười]
(‘You are joking [smile]’)
(NM14, Joking compliment scenario)

Silent joke: Usually includes silence in combination with joking expressions. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Các cậu nên học hỏi nhiều đi nha chứ không là không có vợ được đâu.
(‘[silent] You should learn more from me; otherwise, you cannot find a wife.’)
(SM11, Joking compliment scenario)

NV: Em được cái nói ngọt. Đạo này em có hay uống nước mía không mà nói ngọt thế? [Cười]
(‘Your mouth is too sweet. Have you recently drunk sugarcane juice so your mouth is that sweet? [smile]’)
(NF12, flattery compliment scenario)

Thankful joke: Usually includes a thank-you along with joking expressions. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cám ơn em. Cô khéo nịnh quá. Có muốn chuyển sang phòng kinh doanh của chị làm không?
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister! You are good at flattering. Do you want to move to my sales department?’)
(SF5, flattery compliment scenario)

Closing joke: A joke made before closing the conversation. For example:

SV: [Cười] Bé này biết cách nịnh người khác. Thôi em làm việc đi. Chị đi công việc xiu.
(‘[smile] This little girl, you know how to flatter people. Go continue your work. I must go to work.’)
(SF8, flattery compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười tươi] Con bé này mày khéo miệng. Em làm việc đi.
(‘[Smile sweetly] This little girl, your mouth is very smooth. Continue your work.’)
(NF10, flattery compliment scenario)

d) The recipient agreed with the compliment with pride. For example:

SV: [Cười haha] Chứ sao. Đã lên chủ rồi mà.
(‘[Laughing] That’s right. I have become an owner.’)
(SF20, congratulation compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Tớ mà nhi.
(‘[smile] That is me.’)
(NM12, Joking compliment scenario)

- e) The recipient responded with a smile or silence whose comments show that the recipient felt happy with the compliment.

(2) Modesty -- The recipient said that s/he was happy but must appear humble. The modesty responses usually appeared in six major forms:

- a) The recipient minimized the force of the compliment with different strategies of scale-down, including:

Thanking scale-down: Usually includes a smile, a thank-you along with statements that downgrade the compliment. For example:

SV: [Cười tươi] Cảm ơn em. Chuyện nhỏ mà.
(‘[smile] Thank you. It’s just a small thing.’)
(SM9, thank-you compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Tôi đã cố gắng rất nhiều.
(‘[smile] Thank you. I’ve tried a lot.’)
(NM3, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Smiling scale-down: Usually includes a smile along with statements that downgrade the compliment. For example:

SV: [Cười] Không có gì đâu. Chuyện bình thường thôi.
(‘[smile] No problem. That is just a normal thing.’)
(SM17, thank-you compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Không có gì đâu. Cũng bình thường thôi mà.
(‘[smile] No problem. It’s just a normal thing.’)
(NM13, thank-you compliment scenario)

Explaining scale-down: Usually includes a smile and justifications to downgrade the compliment. For example:

SV: [Cười] Điều đó cũng đơn giản thôi. Nếu chịu khó tìm hiểu bạn sẽ sửa được.

([smile] That is also simple. If you spend time learning about it, you will be able to fix it.)
(SM10, thank-you compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Không có gì. Đây là một việc người đàn ông có thể dễ dàng làm.
([smile] It's no problem. This is what a man can do easily.)
(NM1, thank-you compliment scenario)

b) The recipient disagreed with the complimenter. For example:

SV: [Haha] Em đừng nói vậy. Chị thấy em cũng xinh mà có thua kém gì chị đâu
[Cười mỉm]
([Laughing] Don't say that. I see you are beautiful too, not less than me
[smile slightly])
(SF15, flattery compliment scenario)

NV: Uh. Không có gì. Mình cảm giác mình chưa tốt lắm, mình vẫn bình thường, chưa thể bằng người ta.
([Uh] It is nothing. I feel I'm not very good. I'm still normal, not as good as others.)
(NF15, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

c) The recipient shifted the compliment to the third party not present in the conversation. For example:

SV: [Cười] [Gãi gãi đầu] Đâu có, chị thấy trong phòng có nhiều người giỏi và đẹp hơn chị mà.
([Smile] [Scratching head] I'm not. I see there are many other people in the sales department who are more talented and beautiful than me.)
(SF18, flattery compliment scenario)

d) The recipient shifted the praise to the complimenter or to those who are present in the conversation. This kind of response usually appeared in three forms:

Silent credit shift: Usually includes silence in combination with statements that shift the praise to the complimenter. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Tất cả là nhờ anh đó.
([silent] All is thanks to you.)
(SM11, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: [Im lặng] Tất cả đều do quá trình tập luyện và nhờ bạn đã giúp tôi.
([silent] All is thanks to the practice process and your help.)
(NM2, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Smiling credit shift: Usually includes a smile in combination with statements that shift the praise to the complimenter. For example:

SV: [Cười] Nhờ ông mà tôi mới được như vậy á.
(‘[smile] I am this good is thanks to you.’)
(SM14, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Thanking credit shift: Usually includes a thank-you in combination with statements that shift the praise to the complimenter. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cảm ơn anh. Khả năng em tốt lên vậy cũng là nhờ vào sự giúp đỡ của anh.
(‘[smile] Thank you. Also thanks to your help, my ability is getting better.’)
(SF13, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh. Là do em có một người thầy dạy tốt.
(‘[smile] Thank you. It’s because I have a good teacher.’)
(NM4, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

e) The recipient expressed some doubt about the compliment. For example:

SV: [Cười] Thật chứ? Mình thấy mình cần cố gắng nhiều.
(‘[smile] Really? I feel I need to try a lot more.’)
(SF17, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: Thật hả? [Im lặng]
(‘Really? [silent]’)
(NF9, thank-you compliment scenario)

f) The recipient stopped the complimenter. For example:

SV: [Cười] Thôi được rồi ông ơi. Khen quá tôi nờ mũi giờ.
(‘[smile] Alright, sir. Your praising me too much makes my nose bigger.’)
(SF1, Joking compliment scenario)

(3) Find Solace -- The recipient reported that s/he feels more positive with the compliment. The recipient responded to the compliment with different strategies:

a) The recipient responded with different forms of thank-you, including:

Formulaic thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you in combination with silence, or a thank-you along with a nod, or simply includes a thank-you. For example:

SV: Cảm ơn em [im lặng]
(‘Thank you [silent]’)
(SM10, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn.
(‘Thank you’)
(NM18, encouragement compliment scenario)

Promising thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you along with statements that promise to do better in the future. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn em. Anh sẽ cố gắng hơn.
(‘[silent] Thank you. I’ll try harder.’)
(SM6, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn mọi người. Anh sẽ quay lại.
(‘Thanks everybody. I’ll come back.’)
(NM12, encouragement compliment scenario)

Happy thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you along with statements that express the speaker's gladness or positive feeling. For example:

SV: Cảm ơn. Tôi đã ổn hơn vì lời động viên của bạn.
(‘Thank you. I am getting better with your encouragement.’)
(SF19, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn em. Như thế này mà có người an ủi thì anh thấy tốt hơn.
(‘Thank you. I feel better as there is somebody to comfort me.’)
(NF14, encouragement compliment scenario)

Smiling thank-you: Usually includes a smile and a thank-you. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cảm ơn bạn đã động viên.
(‘[smile] Thank you for your encouragement.’)
(SF11, encouragement compliment scenario)

b) The recipient expressed some doubt about the compliment. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Thật hả? Mọi người thật sự cần tôi hả?
(‘[Silent] Really? Does everybody really need me?’)
(SF9, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Thật hả? [Im lặng]
(‘Really? [silent]’)
(NF8, encouragement compliment scenario)

c) The recipient made a promise to try better.

SV: [Im lặng] Anh sẽ cố gắng để mọi người không thất vọng.
(‘[silent] I will try not to let everybody down.’)
(SF5, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: [Im lặng] Có thể tôi sẽ cố gắng nhiều hơn.
(‘[silent] I might need to try a lot more.’)
(NF1, encouragement compliment scenario)

d) The recipient kept silent and the comments show that the recipient feels much more optimistic and positive with the compliment.

(4) Shyness -- The recipient reported that s/he was happy but felt slightly shy with the compliment. The recipient used a variety of strategies to show such shyness:

a) The recipient appreciated the complimenter using different forms of thank-you, including:

Formulaic thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you in combination with silence, or simply includes a thank-you. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Cám ơn anh.
(‘[silent] Thank you.’)
(SF3, admiration compliment scenario)

NV: Cám ơn.
(‘Thank you.’)
(NM16, flirty compliment scenario)

Smiling thank-you: Usually includes a smile and a thank-you. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cám ơn.
(‘[smile] Thank you.’)
(SM14, flirty compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Cám ơn anh.
(‘[smile] Thank you.’)
(NF6, flirty compliment scenario)

Modest thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you along with statements that aim to downgrade the compliment. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Em cảm ơn anh. Anh quá khen, em chỉ biết nấu những món đơn giản thôi ạ.
(‘[silent] Thank you. You are overpraising me. I am only able to cook such simple dishes.’)
(SF7, flirty compliment scenario)

NV: [Mím cười] Cảm ơn anh nhưng mà em vẫn còn kém lắm.
(‘[smile] Thank you but my skill remains very bad.’)
(NF14, flirty compliment scenario)

Courteous thank-you: Usually includes a smile, a thank-you along with statements of expectation and invitation. For example:

NV: Cảm ơn anh [Cười] Anh ăn nhiều vào một chút.
(‘Thank you [smile] You should eat more.’)
(NF17, flirty compliment scenario)

b) The recipient ignored the compliment with a slight smile in combination with statements that accepted the complimenter’s suggestion. For example:

SV: [Cười mím] Dạ được chứ. Nếu mà anh muốn thưởng thức thì em sẽ đàn tiếp.
(‘[smile slightly] Yes, of course. If you’d love to enjoy it, I can continue playing.’)
(SF13, admiration compliment scenario)

NV: Có thể [Cười mím]
(‘Possible [smile slightly]’)
(NF4, admiration compliment scenario)

c) The recipient explicitly negated the compliment.

NV: Em không nấu ăn ngon lắm đâu. Không cần phải khen em đâu.
(‘I don’t cook very well. You don’t need to compliment me.’)
(NF11, flirty compliment scenario)

d) The recipient made a joke as a response to the compliment. For example:

SV: [Cười mím] Anh khéo nịnh. Thấy ghét.
(‘[smile slightly] You’re good at flattering. I hate you.’)
(SF16, flirty compliment scenario)

e) The recipient expressed some doubt about the compliment. For example:

NV: Thật hả?
(‘Really?’)
(NF8, flirty compliment scenario)

f) The recipient stopped the complimenter. For example:

SV: [Cười mỉm] Thôi anh ăn đi.
(‘[smile slightly] Come on, eat your food.’)
(SF6, flirty compliment scenario)

g) The recipient responded to the compliment with a slight smile or silence whose comments show that the recipient felt shy with the compliment.

(B) Lack of Interest -- The recipient reported a lack of interest in the compliment. The responses fall into the two following categories.

(1) Lack Interest -- The recipient reported not being interested in the compliment, and so the recipient did not acknowledge the compliment, using various strategies:

a) The recipient explicitly negated the compliment. For example:

SV: [Cười] Không có gì phải khen. Đó là trách nhiệm của người đàn ông. Đó là việc người đàn ông cần phải làm.
(‘[smile] There is nothing praiseworthy. That is the responsibility of a man. That is what a man needs to do.’)
(SM10, joking compliment scenario)

NV: Đẹp cái gì. Xấu lắm. Không đẹp lâu.
(‘Beautiful what? Very ugly. Not beautiful.’)
(NF9, flattery compliment scenario)

b) The recipient responded with a formulaic thank-you that usually includes a thank-you in combination with silence or a thank-you along with statements that reject the complimenter’s suggestion. For example:

SV: Cảm ơn [Im lặng]
(‘Thank you [silent]’)
(SM7, congratulation compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn anh. Xin lỗi thời gian còn phải dành cho tiết mục khác.

(‘Thank you. Sorry, the time needs to be spent on another performance.’)
(NM16, admiration compliment scenario)

- c) The recipient minimized the force of the compliment using two main strategies of scale-down, including:

Smiling scale-down: Usually includes a smile along with statements that downgrade the compliment. For example:

NV: [Cười] Điều đó cũng bình thường thôi.
(‘[smile] It is very normal.’)
(NM1, flattery compliment scenario)

Thanking scale-down: Usually includes a thank-you along with statements that downgrade the compliment. For example:

NV: Cảm ơn. Em khen quá lời.
(‘Thank you. You are overstated.’)
(NM4, flattery compliment scenario)

- d) The recipient ignored the compliment. For example:

NV: Mới khai trương nên cần chị ủng hộ em nhiều hơn. Mời chị vào trong.
(‘Just opened, so I need you to support me more. Please come in.’)
(NF19, congratulation compliment scenario)

- e) The recipient switched to another topic. For example:

SV: Ok bạn. Giờ chúng ta đi ăn gì đi.
(‘Okay. Now let’s go eat something.’)
(SF7, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: Sao hôm nay không đi cùng bạn trai à?
(‘Why don’t you go with your boyfriend today?’)
(NF20, congratulation compliment scenario)

- f) The recipient expressed some doubt about the compliment. For example:

NV: [Cười] Có thật không vậy?
(‘[Smile] Is that true?’)
(NF19, flattery compliment scenario)

- g) The recipient closed the conversation. For example:

NV: [Im lặng] Chị phải lên làm việc rồi.
(‘[Silent] I must go to work.’)
(NF20, flattery compliment scenario)

- h) The recipient kept silent and the comments show that the recipient is not interested in the compliment for some doubt about its insincerity.

(2) Pretend Interest -- The recipient reported not being interested in the compliment but s/he said that s/he must pretend to be interested in it as a matter of courtesy. A variety of strategies were employed to disguise the recipient’s lack of interest.

- a) The recipient responded to the compliment using different forms of thank-you, including:

Formulaic thank-you: Usually includes a thank-you, or a thank-you along with statements that reject the complimenter’s suggestion. For example:

SV: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh đã khen. Có thể tôi sẽ đàn cho anh nghe vào một dịp khác. Hy vọng một ngày nào đó anh sẽ đến nghe tôi đàn tiếp.
(‘[silent] Thank you for your compliment. I may play you another song the other time. Hopefully the other day you will come and listen to my music again.’)
(SF16, admiration compliment scenario)

NV: Cảm ơn em.
(‘Thank you’)
(NM20, thank-you compliment scenario)

Smiling thank-you: Usually includes a smile and a thank-you. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cảm ơn.
(‘[smile] Thank you.’)
(SM10, congratulation compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Cảm ơn
(‘[smile] Thank you.’)
(NM3, thank-you compliment scenario)

Courteous thank-you: Usually includes a smile, a thank-you along with statements of expectation and invitation. For example:

SV: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Mong sự ủng hộ của mọi người.
(‘[Smile] Thank you. Hoping for the support of everybody.’)
(SF7, congratulation compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Dạ em cảm ơn chị. Em mời chị vào.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. I invite you in.’)
(NF1, congratulation compliment scenario)

Emotionless return thank-you: Simply includes a thank-you and a ‘Return’. No supporting non-verbal behaviors were observed. For example:

NV: Em cảm ơn. Đạo này chị cũng đẹp ra.
(‘Thank you. These days you look beautiful too.’)
(NF11, congratulation compliment scenario)

Cảm ơn. Em cũng tốt như anh thôi.
(‘Thank you. You are also as good as me.’)
(NM9, joking compliment scenario)

b) The recipient reluctantly responded with “uh, ah”. For example:

NV: Uh Ah
(‘Uh Ah’)
(NF12, congratulation compliment scenario)

c) The recipient gave an explanation. For example:

NV: Hôm nay ngày trọng đại của mình, mình phải chỉnh chu chứ. Với lại có nhiều khách mời mà nên mình cần phải đẹp chứ.
(‘Today is my big day, I must look good. Moreover, there are many guests so I need to look beautiful.’)
(NF14, congratulation compliment scenario)

d) The recipient agreed with the complimenter. For example:

NV: Tôi biết mà [Cười]
(‘I know [smile]’)
(NF9, Joking compliment scenario)

e) The recipient returned a similar compliment. This response strategy usually appeared in the form of a smiling return that includes a smile and a ‘Return’.

NV: [Cười] Hôm nay chị cũng đẹp lắm. Hai chị em mình cùng xinh xắn.
(‘[smile] Today you are also very beautiful. Both of us are lovely.’)
(NM16, congratulation compliment scenario)

- f) The recipient responded with a smile whose comments show that the recipient was not interested in the compliment but s/he appeared happy with a so-called ‘fake’ smile.

(C) Dissatisfaction – This category was very rare, only including two instances. The recipient reported that giving a compliment is not sufficient. The recipient used a silent scale-down to imply that s/he is not satisfied with just a compliment.

SV: [Im lặng] Không có gì đâu tôi nghĩ đó là việc tôi nên làm.
(‘[Silent] No problem. I think that is what I should do.’)
(SM5, thank-you compliment scenario)

(D) Embarrassment -- The recipient reported that s/he has never been in such a situation before, so s/he felt slightly embarrassed in producing a response.

- a) The recipient responded with a smile or silence whose comments show that the recipient did not know how to respond to the compliment.
- b) The recipient simply responded to the compliment with a formulaic thank-you and then rejected the complimenter's suggestion about playing one more song. For example:

NV: Cảm ơn anh vì lời khen. Em sẽ đàn cho anh nghe vào dịp khác [Im lặng]
(‘Thank you for your compliment. I will play you another song the other time [silent]’)
(NM9, admiration compliment scenario)

(E) FEEL BAD -- The recipient reported that a compliment in the context makes the recipient feel bad. A variety of strategies were employed to show that the recipient is feeling bad.

- a) The recipient implicitly negated the compliment. For example:

SV: Chắc mọi người chỉ đang an ủi mình thôi [Im lặng]
(‘Everybody is possibly comforting me [silent]’)
(SF6, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Tôi nghĩ tôi chưa đủ tốt bụng để em nói như vậy.
(‘I think I’m not good enough for you to say so.’)
(NF19, encouragement compliment scenario)

- b) The recipient kept silent and the comments show that the recipient even felt worse with the compliment.

(F) NO FEELINGS -- The recipient reported that the compliment does not make any sense in the context. Though the recipient appreciates the complimenter, s/he reported that it is not necessary to respond to the compliment. A variety of strategies were employed to show that the recipient had no feelings with the compliment.

- a) The recipient responded with a formulaic thank-you. For example:

SV: Cám ơn.
(‘Thank you.’)
(SM20, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Cám ơn.
(‘Thank you.’)
(NM16, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

- b) The recipient minimized the force of the compliment using two main forms of scale-down, including:

Silent scale-down: Usually includes silence along with statements that aim to downgrade the compliment.

SV: [Im lặng] Anh quá khen rồi ạ. Tôi có thể đàn theo yêu cầu của anh.
(‘[silent] You are overpraising me. I can play a song upon your request.’)
(SF5, admiration compliment scenario)

NV: [Im lặng] Cũng bình thường thôi mà.
(‘[silent] That is normal.’)
(NM13, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

Smiling scale-down: Usually includes a smile along with statements that aim to downgrade the compliment.

NV: [Cười] Bình thường mà.
(‘[smile] Just normal.’)

(NM14, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

c) The recipient made a promise to try better. For example:

SV: Uh Tao sẽ cố gắng
(‘Uh I will try.’)
(SM19, encouragement compliment scenario)

d) The recipient reluctantly agreed with the complimenter. For example:

SV: Uhm Tôi biết mọi việc rồi sẽ qua [im lặng]
(‘Uhm I know everything will pass away [silent]’)
(SM12, encouragement compliment scenario)

NV: Vâng anh.
(‘Yes, brother’)
(NM17, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

e) The recipient expressed some doubt about the compliment. For example:

NV: [Im lặng] Một người đàn ông vá xe giỏi và tốt bụng liệu có thể có một tương lai tốt hay không?
(‘[silent] Can a good motorbike repairer and a nice man have a better future?’)
(NM1, encouragement compliment scenario)

f) The recipient closed the conversation.

SV: OK [Im lặng] Chúng ta kết thúc. Nãy giờ chúng ta chơi cũng lâu rồi.
(‘OK [silent] Let’s stop. We have been playing for a long time.’)
(SM20, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

NV: [Cười] Vậy mình chơi tiếp.
(‘[smile] Then let’s continue playing.’)
(NM18, sport session-ending compliment scenario)

g) The recipient responded with a head nod, smile, or silence whose comments show that a compliment is not appropriate in the context.

3.4.2. Coding Reliability

As mentioned in section 3.1, the interview data was collected from two main groups of native Vietnamese speakers, 40 from Southern Vietnam (20 males, 20 females) and another 40 from Northern Vietnam (20 males, 20 females). To ensure the reliability of the data analysis, a

second rater who is also a native speaker of Vietnamese in addition to the primary researcher was invited for a second coding. Twenty five percent of the data from each group was randomly chosen and independently coded by the second rater. Due to regional constraints, Zoom meetings were conducted with the second rater to: (a) explain the purpose of the study, and (b) explain the necessary steps the second rater needed to take. The materials given to the second rater and discussed on Zoom meetings consisted of the following:

1. An explanation of the eight compliment scenarios used in the study;
2. An explanation of what is understood as a compliment response as well as what is recognized as the speaker's reported feelings about the compliment;
3. A list of possible categories and subcategories that manifest how the speakers feel about the compliments; this list was compiled based on an actual analysis of the current data;
4. A list of possible response strategies with examples; this list indicated the possible response strategies that were employed to show the speakers' feelings about the compliments;
5. An explanation of the steps the second rater needed to take in order to categorize the data;

The second rater was given a data sheet that contained four columns: (1) Number of participants, (2) The participants' responses, (3) Response strategies, and (4) Speakers' reported feelings. The second rater needed to perform two steps in the data sheet:

1. To categorize the speakers' reported feelings about the compliment, i.e., to fill out column [4] by either choosing one of the categories provided in the list or providing her own categories in cases none of the given categories were applied;

2. To identify the response strategies that were employed to show such feelings, i.e., to fill out column [3] by either choosing one of the response strategies provided in the list or providing her own ones in cases none of the given strategies were applied;

Then, the results of the second coding were analyzed to see whether or not the results confirmed the researcher’s initial categorization. The cases that did not confirm the researcher’s categorization were given to a third rater so as to conclude the categories of the speakers’ reported feelings. For the Northern data, four of the 80 instances required a third person while three of the 80 instances in the Southern data needed additional coding. The instances that required additional coding were all observed under the congratulation compliment scenario, as presented in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7
Instances that needed additional coding

Instances	Northern data	Southern data
1	NF1: [Cười] Dạ em cảm ơn chị. Em mời chị vào. (‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. I invite you in.’)	SF7: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Mong sự ủng hộ của mọi người. (‘[Smile] Thank you. Hoping for the support of everybody.’)
2	NF10: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị. Mời chị vào trong. (‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Sister, please come in.’)	SM2: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị. Mời chị vào. (‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Sister, please come in.’)
3	NF17: Cảm ơn anh [Cười] Anh ăn nhiều vào một chút. (‘Thank you [smile] You should eat more.’)	SM18: [Cười] Em cảm ơn chị. Lần sau nhớ đến quán em ủng hộ nha. (‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Next time remember to come to support my shop.’)
4	NM4: Cảm ơn chị. Mời chị vô. (‘Thank you, sister. Sister, please come on in.’)	

The instances that needed additional coding, as presented in Table 3.7, were initially classified into the category of ‘courteous thank-you’, the one that includes a smile, a thank-you along with

statements of expectation and invitation. According to the 2nd coder, ‘courteous thank-you’ seems not to be an appropriate term that may best describe these response tokens, so the 2nd coder suggested using a different term instead of ‘courteous thank-you’. However, the 2nd coder was not sure which term would be the best. Thus, the researcher then discussed this problem with a third rater and finally we came to an agreement that we would use ‘courteous thank-you’ to describe these response tokens, as originally suggested by the researcher.

3.5. Summary

Part I of this chapter presented a detailed description of the participants, instruments, procedures, and an analysis framework for the sociolinguistic interview data. The following section, Part II, will describe the procedures for collecting and analyzing the talk-show data, a second set of data used in the present study. The purpose of using talk-show data in the present study was to examine whether or not findings from the talk-show data, a more naturally-occurring source of data in media contexts, will support findings found from the sociolinguistic interview data.

PART II - TALK-SHOW DATA

Previous studies on compliments have shown that compliments may perform a wide range of functions depending on the context of the speech event. In naturally occurring data obtained through field observation, compliments may serve more as a positive politeness strategy which explicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speakers (Holmes, 1988; Mustapha, 2011). With this function, compliments might be used as a social lubricant that aims to make the hearer feel good (Mustapha, 2011), reduce social distance between speaker and hearer (Holmes,

1988), and create rapport between interlocutors (Maiz-Arevalo, 2012). Compliments in a festive season such as in a Chinese New Year context may function as “a kind of small talk to create amicable relations”, or as devices to defuse “the potential hostility of silence in situations where speech is conventionally anticipated” (Lee, 2009, p. 523). In elicitation data gathered via DCTs, compliments were mainly employed as “expressive speech acts since their goal is to create positive feeling for the hearer and strengthen his/her positive self-image” (Danziger, 2018, p. 76).

In movie discourse, section 3.2 in the present chapter shows that compliments may function as various other speech acts, for example, thanks, encouragement, part of sequence ending, joking, congratulations, flattery, admiration, and flirty as Ishiraha (2010) claimed. In media contexts such as in talk show discourse, the present study yielded very interesting and distinct functions of compliments. The most common functions of compliments in this context were to begin and facilitate the conversation or to start and develop a conversational topic. Especially, as could be expected in this discourse setting, the host may also use compliments to introduce the guest to the audience. Compliments in this setting may also function as pre-contexts for the question coming up soon after the compliment, or as devices seeking information from the guest or giving the conversational turn to the guest (not actually complimenting the guest). Since compliments may perform a number of functions in different discourse settings, compliments should be studied in specific contexts. A comparison of CRs obtained through sociolinguistic interviews and from contemporary talk shows may provide a very interesting insight into people’s interaction in media contexts and people’s everyday interactions in their own regions.

Thus, the second set of data was collected from two talk shows, “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) broadcast on VTV3, one of the national television channels and then published again on a YouTube channel, and “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) broadcast on VTV9, a national television channel and also a specialized channel for viewers in the Southern region of Vietnam. The two talk shows were chosen for data collection since they are contemporary shows, which may provide contemporary data sources of CRs in Vietnamese. The two shows center on a chat between the host and a celebrity. Though there was no physical participation of audience members at the site of the interviews, there were millions of TV viewers watching the two talk shows across the country.

“Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), with a main focus on beauty and living a happy life, was hosted by the female actress *Oc Thanh Van* (OTV) who was born in Northern Vietnam but grew up in Southern Vietnam. Because the gender of the compliment giver and receiver may have an impact on CRs, a female host and only female guests were chosen in an attempt to control the gender variable of the host and the guests. To serve the purpose of investigating how the context of this show impacts regional variation, which aims to seek an answer to Research Question 4 presented in the beginning of this chapter, the female guests from both regions, Southern and Northern Vietnam, were chosen for data collection. As the main theme of this show was about beauty and living a happy life, female guests were often female models, Miss Ladies, Miss Vietnam, actresses, dancers, and singers. The compliments given in the show were often appearance compliments.

“Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) that revolves around outstanding performance or recent achievements of guests was hosted by the male journalist *Minh Duc* (MD), who was born and grew up in Northern Vietnam but has been living and working in Southern Vietnam for

years. The topics of the compliments in this show mainly concerned performance and achievements rather than appearance as in the first show. Guests for this show were male and female singers, actors, actresses, and models. Because the gender of the complimenter may have an impact on CRs, a male host was chosen as an effort to control the variable of the host's gender, while varying the gender of the guest. The purpose was to investigate how the context of this show impacts gender variation, which aims to seek an answer to Research Question 5 presented in the beginning of this chapter. In order to control the region variable, only the interviews between the male host and the male and female guests in the South were chosen for data collection. The following section will describe the procedures used to collect the talk-show data.

3.6. Procedures

The show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) provided compliments between the female host OTV and the female guests in the two regions. There were a total of six interview videos that contain at least a compliment between the female host OTV and the Southern female guests and five interview videos that contain at least a compliment between the female host OTV and the Northern female guests were downloaded. In order to avoid potential impacts of age on responses, one interview video with a Southern female guest whose age is over 40 was excluded. Hence, the data chosen for analysis comprised 10 interview videos, of which five were between the female host OTV and the Southern female guests while another five were between the female host OTV and the Northern female guests. Table 3.8 describes detailed information about the videos chosen from this show.

Table 3.8

Description of chosen videos between the female host and the female guests in two regions

Videos	Published	Southern Female Guests	Job	Age	Compliments (N=10)	
					Direct (n=8)	Indirect (n=2)
SF1	03/18/2012	Dương Yến Ngọc	actress, model	33	1	0
SF2	11/01/2012	Đặng Thu Thảo	Miss Vietnam 2012	21	1	0
SF3	02/19/2012	Kim Thu	actress	34	1	0
SF4	03/21/2012	Phan Thị Mơ	model	22	3	1
SF5	03/31/2020	Trần Tiểu Vy	Miss Vietnam 2018, model	20	2	1
Videos	Published	Northern Female Guests	Job	Age	Compliments (N=19)	
					Direct (n=14)	Indirect (n=5)
NF1	06/17/2014	Lan Phương	actress, comedian, dancer, MC	31	3	1
NF2	10/19/2012	Hoàng Thị Yến	Miss Beautiful and Successful Lady 2009, businesswoman	36	3	1
NF3	12/10/2012	Thanh Mai	actress, model, dancer, MC	39	1	2
NF4	09/19/2014	Thu Hoài	Miss Lady 2012, businesswoman	38	4	0
NF5	07/31/2013	Hồ Quỳnh Hương	singer	33	3	1

There were two groups of compliments collected from the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’). Regarding compliments between men, a total of 15 interview videos that contain at least a compliment between the male host MD and the male guests were downloaded. As an initial analysis of the current data showed that the guests who are over 40 years of age tended to respond very differently from the others, in order to avoid potential impacts of age on responses, interviews with guests who are over 40 years of age at the time interviewed were not chosen for analysis. Eleven out of the 15 had male guests younger than 40.

In terms of man-to-woman compliments, 10 interview videos that contain at least one compliment between the male host MD and the female guests were downloaded, of which only eight met the age restriction. To balance the dataset as well as to have an equal number of the videos between the male host MD with male and female guests, eight out of eleven interview videos between the male host MD and the male guests were randomly selected as data for analysis, using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Table 3.9 presents a detailed description of the chosen videos that portray compliments between the male host and the male and female guests.

Table 3.9

Description of chosen videos between the male host and the male and female guests

Videos	Published	Southern Male Guests	Job	Age	Compliments (N=24)	
					Direct (n=10)	Indirect (n=14)
SM1	08/05/2017	Ngô Kiến Huy	singer, actor, MC	29	2	2
SM2	11/30/2019	Minh Sang	singer, model	29	2	3
SM3	10/21/2017	Nguyễn Lê Bá Thắng	singer, actor, MC	38	2	1
SM4	08/31/2019	Khắc Minh	singer, actor	25	0	1
SM5	06/01/2019	Trần Vũ	singer	27	0	1
SM6	05/26/2018	Mai Quốc Việt	singer	30	2	2
SM7	07/10/2017	Ứng Hoàng Phúc	singer, actor	36	1	3
SM8	12/07/2019	Võ Tấn Phát	actor, MC	24	1	1
Videos	Published	Southern Female Guests	Job	Age	Compliments (N=25)	
					Direct (n=5)	Indirect (n=20)
SF1	08/18/2018	Võ Hạ Trâm	singer, model, TV shows host	28	2	1
SF2	01/19/2019	Minh Thư	singer, composer, actress	36	0	3
SF3	09/22/2018	Thuý Huyền	singer	32	0	4
SF4	09/16/2017	Cao Mỹ Kim	singer, actress, MC	26	1	3
SF5	09/02/2017	Giang Hồng Ngọc	singer	28	0	1
SF6	04/28/2018	Uyên Trang	singer	34	0	3
SF7	01/04/2017	Minh Hằng	singer, actress	30	2	2
SF8	11/25/2017	Hồng Mơ	singer	32	0	3

All the chosen videos were transcribed using ELAN software (version 5.9). Only segments that contain compliments and their verbal and nonverbal responses along with discourse contexts for the compliments were transcribed as data for analysis. Details about how the talk-show dataset was analyzed are presented in the next section.

3.7. Data Analysis

The corpus constructed from the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), as displayed in Table 3.8, contained 10 compliments between the female host and the Southern female guests but up to 19 compliments between the female host and the Northern female guests. As shown in Table 3.9, the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) provided a corpus of 24 man-to-man and 25 man-to-woman compliments.

The compliments collected in the present study were distinctive because one compliment may consist of more than one topic and may be directly or indirectly complimenting the guest. Simply categorizing the compliments according to topics such as appearance, performance, personality, and possessions (e.g., Holmes, 1988; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng, 2011; Rees-Miller, 2011) would be impossible to describe the current data accurately. To address this issue, the present study categorized the compliments as either direct or indirect. Example (1) illustrates a direct compliment that is a compliment in which the host is directly interacting with the guest, and the compliment is directly addressed to the guest. In Example (1), addressing the guest (SM1) as his real name (Huy) shows that the host is directly talking to the guest and the host is also looking straight towards the guest while talking. For direct compliments, the host and the guest are often on camera.

(1) Directly complimenting the guest

Host(MD): nhưng mà để đạt đến mức xuất hiện trong các bộ phim ăn khách hàng đầu, trong những show truyền hình hàng đầu, và kéo dài hàng năm trời như **Huy**, thì không phải ai cũng làm được.

(‘**Huy**, but not everyone can do as well as you who have been able to appear in top hit movies and TV shows for many years.’)

SM1: _____.



Figure 3.1. The host is looking straight towards the guest

(2) Indirectly complimenting the guest

Host (MD): Chẳng những sở hữu vẻ đẹp trai, hát hay, **chàng ca sỹ** này còn có một cơ ngơi đáng nể. Ý rằng không chỉ hát còn là ông chủ spa làm đẹp cho nam giới, mà rất đắt khách nữa từ người nổi tiếng cho đến người bình thường ai cũng đến đó.

(‘Not only possessing a handsome appearance and good voice does **this singer** also have respectable property. I mean he not only goes singing but he is also the boss of a male beauty spa which has attracted both celebrities and ordinaries.’)

SM2: _____.



Figure 3.2. The host is facing the camera

Indirect compliments were defined as compliments in which the host is not directly interacting with the guest, but turns his face to the camera in order to introduce the guest to the audience. As Example (2) illustrates, indirect compliments would be used to describe or introduce about the guest to the audience. The singular noun ‘this singer’ was in use to talk about the guest. For indirect compliment, we do not continuously see the guest, and so we sometimes cannot observe the guest’s reaction. The compliments that occur in the form of a rhetorical question that mostly serves as a means of displaying the host’ positive opinion on the guest was also counted as an indirect compliment. Using these rhetorical questions as in Example (3) below, the host was indirectly complimenting the guest.

(3) A compliment in form of a rhetorical question

Host (MD): Và cũng tiếc là ủa tại sao một giọng hát hay như thế, một cái dáng vóc rất là đẹp như thế mà đến bây giờ mình mới được biết.

(‘Regretfully, why such a good voice, such a beautiful figure that I haven’t known so far?’)

SF3: _____ .

(4) A compliment in form of a question that seeks information

Host (MD): Cho nên bây giờ, cuối cùng thì cùng một lúc cả ba việc như vậy thì làm thế nào để tốt cho cả ba giống như tên một bài hát ấy?

(‘So far in the end, all three things at the same time, how do you do all the three well like the name of a song?’)

SM1: _____ .

The compliments that occur in form of a question whose main function was to seek information from the guest, end the host’s conversational turn and give the conversational turn to the guest, as in Example (4), were not included in the coding because such compliments were not actual compliments. The main purpose of such questions was to seek the information from the guest, but not indirectly complimenting the guest. The next section presents detailed procedures for analyzing the data.



3.7.1. Procedures

The first step in analyzing the data was classifying the compliments into direct and indirect compliments. The second step was to investigate what strategies were employed in response to direct and indirect compliments. To address the CR methodological issues reviewed in section 2.2.2, the following categories and subcategories were developed based on observation (but not based on earlier conventional CR categories) in order to describe how the male and female guests in the two shows responded to direct and indirect compliments.






- A. CANNOT OBSERVE** -- This response category includes cases in which we cannot observe the guest’s reaction to the compliment as the guest is not on camera at the time the compliment occurs.
- B. ACKNOWLEDGMENT** -- As nonverbal responses were ambiguous, it would not be accurate to code them as an acceptance or non-acceptance. To describe the current data most appropriately and naturally, the nonverbal behaviors in the present study were classified into the category of acknowledgment in the sense that the guest has recognized or noticed the compliment. The present study is avoiding acknowledgement as an acceptance or non-acceptance. The sub-categories represent the strategies that the male and female guests employed to acknowledge the compliments, as in Table 3.10 below.





Table 3.10





Description of the strategies under the category of acknowledgment






No	Acknowledgment strategies	Examples	Visual illustration
1	Silence	SM6: “[im lặng]” (‘[silent]’)	
2	Smile	SF3: “[mỉm cười]” (‘[smile]’)	


3	Smile plus a Vietnamese polite token “Dạ” ‘Yes’	SM7: “Dạ [mỉm cười]” ([Yes [smile]’)	
4	Smile plus head nod	SM1: “[mỉm cười] [gật đầu]” ([smile] [nodding]’)	
5	Smile plus head down	SM2: “[mỉm cười] [hơi cúi đầu]” ([smile] [head down slightly]’)	
		SF3: “[Mỉm cười] [Hơi cúi đầu]” ([smile] [head down slightly]’)	
		SF6: “[Mỉm cười] [Hơi cúi đầu]” ([smile] [head down slightly]’)	

6	Smile plus head tilted to one side	<p>SM2: “[mỉm cười] [hơi nghiêng đầu sang một bên]”</p> <p>(‘[smile] [head slightly tilted to one side]’)</p>	
7	Smile plus head tilted to one side plus hand touching nose	<p>NF5: “[mỉm cười] [nghiêng đầu sang một bên] [tay sờ mũi]”</p> <p>(‘[smile] [head tilted to one side] [hand touching nose]’)</p>	
8	Smile plus hand touching chin	<p>SF3: “[tay sờ cằm] [mỉm cười]”</p> <p>(‘[hand touching chin] [smile]’)</p>	
9	Smile plus head down plus arms movement	<p>SF3: “[Mỉm cười] [Một tay sờ sờ vào tay còn lại][Hơi cúi đầu xuống]”</p> <p>(‘[smile] [one hand touching the other hand] [head down slightly]’)</p>	
		<p>SM2: “[mỉm cười] [hơi cúi đầu] [hai tay khoanh lại tựa xuống bàn]”</p> <p>(‘[smile] [head down slightly] [arms folded and put on desk]’)</p>	

		SM2: “[Mỉm cười] [rút đầu xuống] [chà chà tay]” (‘[smile] [head down slightly] [rub hands together]’)	
10	Smile plus arms movement plus faceup	SM5: “[mỉm cười] [hai tay chạm vào nhau] [chà chà hai bàn tay] [mặt hướng lên]” (‘[smile] [cup hands together] [rub hands together] [face up]’)	
11	Hand touching hair	NF1: “[tay sờ tóc]” (‘[hand touching hair]’)	
12	Laughter	SM4: “[Tiếng cười]” (‘[laughter]’) NF3: “[Tiếng cười nhẹ]” (‘[soft laughter]’)	<i>The guest is not on camera.</i>
13	Laughter plus a Vietnamese polite token “Dạ” ‘Yes’	SF2: “[Tiếng cười] Dạ” (‘[laughter] Yes’)	<i>The guest is not on camera.</i>
14	Eye gaze shift	SM3: “[mắt chột nhìn lên]” (‘[eyes start looking up]’)	

		SF2: “[nhìn chăm chăm MD]” ([stare at MD])	
15	Head nod	SM1: “[gật đầu]” ([nodding])	
16	Laughing	NF1: “[bật cười]” ([laughing])	
		SF4: “[bật cười]” ([laughing])	
		SM6: “[bật cười]” ([laughing])	

17	Laughing plus faceup plus chair rotation	SM3: “[bật cười] [ngửa mặt lên] [xoay ghế]” (‘[laughing] [face up] [rotate chair]’)	
18	Laughing plus arms movement	NF1: “[bật cười] [một tay bắt đầu sờ sờ tay còn lại]” (‘[laughing] [one hand starts touching the other hand]’)	
19	Laughing plus head down plus arms movement	SM8: “[bật cười ra tiếng] [hơi cúi đầu xuống] [Hai bàn tay chà chà vào nhau]” (‘[laughing] [head down slightly] [rub hands together]’)	
20	Laughing plus head down plus hand covering mouth plus a Vietnamese polite token “Dạ” ‘Yes’	SM8: “[Cười to] [Lấy tay che miệng] Dạ [Hơi cúi đầu xuống]” (‘[laughing] [hand covering mouth] Yes [head down slightly]’)	
21	Laughing plus a Vietnamese polite token “Dạ” ‘Yes’	SF5: “Dạ [bật cười]” (‘Yes [laughing]’)	

22	Vietnamese polite token “Dạ” ‘Yes’	SF4: “Dạ” (‘Yes’)	
----	------------------------------------	-------------------	--

C. APPRECIATION EXPRESSION -- This category consists of responses that show gratitude for the compliment, which appears in the form of a ‘thank-you’ token in combination with gestures. These strategies would usually be coded as an acceptance in most previous CR studies; however, as presented in section 3.4.1, one form (e.g., smiling thank-you) could receive different ways of interpretation depending on the speakers’ reported feelings about the compliment. In avoiding the common problem that one form would not perform more than one function and that one response token is given only a single semantic interpretation at a time, the present study coded these response strategies as an appreciation expression, not as an acceptance as many previous studies did. ‘Appreciation expression’ in the present study was not always meant as an acceptance.

SM7: [cười tươi] [gật đầu] Dạ cảm ơn anh Đức đã quá khen. Thật sự đối với một người nghệ sĩ giống như Phúc thì càng lâu, mình càng phải cố gắng hơn.

[smile] [nodding] Yes, thank you, Duc for complimenting me too much. Actually, for an artist like me, the longer the time is, the harder I need to try.

SF7: Xin cảm ơn anh rất là nhiều với những lời giới thiệu rất là có cánh ạ [bật cười] [hai tay chấp vào trước ngực] [cúi đầu xuống]

Thank you very much for your winged introductory words [laughing] [hands on chest] [head down slightly]

D. EVADE -- This category was very rare, only including four instances which were a combination of verbal responses and gestures. Verbally, the recipient continued the conversation (SF1), or minimized the force of the compliment (e.g., SM3).

SF1: “[im lặng] [một tay tựa trên chân] [một tay tựa trên ghế] Đối với em thì bản thân mình mới biết được là mình sẽ mạnh về cái gì [hất tóc ra sau] Em rất là hiểu tâm tư của Thầy Tạ Minh Tâm ...”

(‘[silent] [one arm on leg] [one arm leans against the chair] For me, I myself know my strong points [push hair back] I do understand the thought of Mr. Ta Minh Tam ...’

SM3: “Và hôm nay anh Đức thì hơi quá lời khi mà giới thiệu Thắng [lấy tay vuốt mũi] quá nhiều chức danh như vậy. Chức danh của Thắng cũng chỉ là gói gọn trong một chữ “người làm nghệ thuật” mà thôi.”

(‘And today, MD, you are slightly overstated when introducing me [hand touching nose] too many titles. My title can be summarized in a word, ‘a person doing arts.’

3.7.2. Coding Reliability

As described in section 3.6, the talk-show data was collected from the two talk shows in Vietnamese, “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) and “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’). Before coding the data, the video segments that contain compliments and their verbal as well as nonverbal responses together with discourse contexts for the compliments were transcribed using ELAN software (version 5.9), and then the Vietnamese ELAN transcripts were translated into English by the primary researcher. To improve the accuracy of the transcription process, a female native speaker of Vietnamese who is teaching Vietnamese language in Southern Vietnam (2nd transcriber) was invited to watch the transcribed video segments and check the accuracy of the Vietnamese transcripts. If there was a disagreement on any transcribed video segments, the two transcribers would work on them again until the two could reach a

consensus. To increase the translation accuracy, the primary researcher had a male native speaker of Vietnamese who was a senior English teacher at a university in Southern Vietnam check her translation.

In order to ensure the reliability of the data analysis, a female native speaker of Vietnamese who was also the 2nd transcriber as mentioned earlier on this section was invited to be a second rater. Fifty percent of the data from each group was randomly chosen and independently coded by the second rater. Due to regional constraints, Zoom meetings were conducted with the second rater to: (a) explain the purpose of the study, and (b) explain the necessary steps the second rater needed to take. The materials given to the second rater and discussed on Zoom meetings consisted of the following:

1. An explanation of the two talk shows which were chosen for data collection;
2. An explanation of what is defined as a compliment, a direct compliment, and an indirect compliment in the present study;
3. An explanation of what is defined as a compliment response as well as what can be recognized as a compliment response in the present study;
4. A list of possible response strategies with examples; this list indicated the strategies that the male and female guests employed in response to direct and indirect compliments;
5. ELAN transcripts and an explanation of ELAN transcripts;
6. An explanation of the steps the second rater needed to take in order to categorize the data;

The second rater was given two data sheets, one for coding the data from the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), and one for the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’). Every data sheet consisted of five columns: 1) The guests (e.g., SM1, SM2, SF1, SF2), 2) Direct compliments (e.g., Segment 1, Segment 5), 3) Response strategies to direct compliments, 4) Indirect compliments (e.g., Segment 2, Segment 3), 5) Response strategies to indirect compliments. The second rater needed to perform three steps:

1. To identify the compliments and highlight the compliment segments in given ELAN transcripts;
2. To categorize the compliments highlighted in Step 1 into either direct or indirect compliments, i.e., to fill out columns [2] and [4];
3. To categorize the strategies that the guests employed to respond to direct and indirect compliments; i.e., to fill out columns [3] and [5] by either choosing one of the response strategies provided in the list or providing her own ones in cases none of the given strategies were applied;

Then, the results of the second coding were analyzed to see whether or not the results confirmed the researcher’s initial categorization. The cases that did not confirm the researcher’s categorization were given to a third rater. For the talk show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), one out of 10 instances between the female host OTV and Northern female guests needed additional coding. For the talk show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’), none of the instances required additional coding.

3.8. Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 has provided the core information about two sets of data that were used in the present study. Part I of the chapter presented a detailed description of the participants, instruments, procedures, and an analysis framework for the sociolinguistic interview data. Special attention was also paid to the issue of coding reliability in the end of Part I. Part II of the chapter described the procedures used to collect and analyze the talk-show data. The next chapter, Chapter 4, will present the results of the sociolinguistic interview data.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW RESULTS

Chapter 4 presents the results of the sociolinguistic interview data. The main aim of the present study was investigating how genre and context impact region and gender in Vietnamese CRs, so this chapter presents the CRs according to region and gender with sociolinguistic interviews. The present chapter is organized around the first three research questions as presented in Chapter 3. It will first discuss regional variation in responding to compliments between four groups of participants, Southern vs. Northern Vietnamese men, and Southern vs. Northern Vietnamese women. The chapter then examines compliment responses across genders.

REGIONAL VARIATION

The first research question of the present study aimed at finding variation in CRs made by Southern and Northern Vietnamese men; this will be presented in the first four sections (from 4.1 to 4.4). The second research question was investigating variation in CRs made by Southern and Northern Vietnamese women; this will be discussed in sections 4.5 to 4.8. The CRs and regional variation are presented in terms of the eight compliment video scenarios as summarized in Table 3.5 in section 3.2.

4.1. Responses to Thank-you Compliment

Fig 4.1 does not indicate a dramatic difference between Southern males and Northern males. Approximately 90% of both the Southern males and the Northern males reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the thank-you compliment. The only difference between the two groups was that 10% of the Southern males expressed dissatisfaction while 10% of the Northern males described a lack of interest.

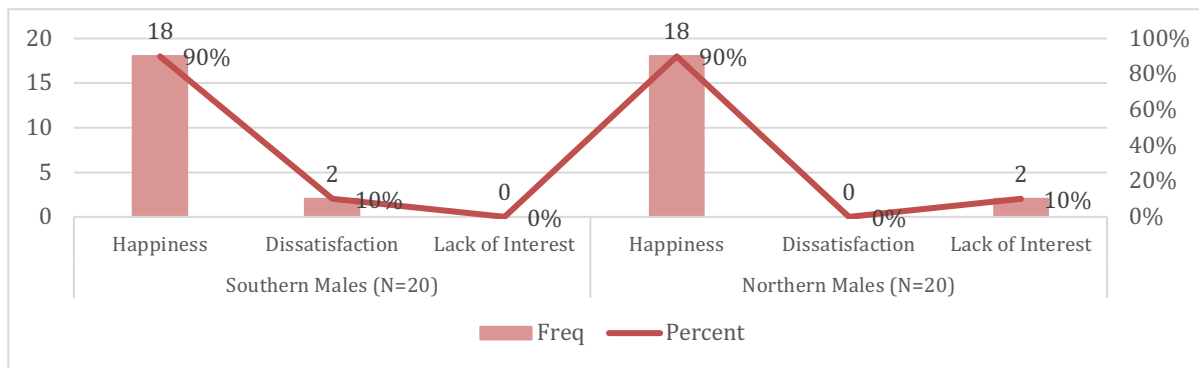


Figure 4.1. Feelings of thank-you compliment

Table 4.1

Responses to thank-you compliment

Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Modesty (90%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	18	90%
Dissatisfaction			
		2	10%
Lack of Interest (0%)			
<hr/>			
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Modesty (90%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	18	90%
Dissatisfaction (0%)			
Lack of Interest			
Pretend interest (10%)	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%
	- responded with a 'fake' smile	1	5%

It is worth noting that the Southern and the Northern males were very similar in employing strategies to express the feeling of happiness. As shown in Table 4.1, almost 90% of both the Southern and the Northern males expressed their happiness in a modest way by minimizing the force of the compliment. The Southern males employed the smiling scale-down (e.g., SM1) most frequently, accounting for 45% over 90%; the explaining scale-down (e.g., SM10) and the thanking scale-down (e.g., SM9) were used relatively frequently, occupying 25% and 20% respectively.

SM1: [Cười] Đối với anh là chuyện nhỏ thôi.
(‘[smile] To me, it’s just a small thing.’)

"Con gái khen em thật là vui."

(‘Being complimented by girls makes me very happy.’)

SM10: [Cười] Điều đó cũng đơn giản thôi. Nếu chịu khó tìm hiểu bạn sẽ sửa được.
(‘[smile] That is also simple. If you spend time learning about it, you will be able to fix it.’)

"Em thấy vui lắm khi được con gái khen, nhưng mà em muốn khiêm tốn để tạo ấn tượng tốt với con gái."

(‘I feel very happy when a girl compliments me, but I want to be humble to make a good impression upon girls.’)

SM9: [Cười tươi] Cảm ơn em. Chuyện nhỏ mà.
(‘[smile] Thank you. It’s just a small thing.’)

"Em thích lời khen này nhưng phải khiêm tốn mới được."

(‘I like the compliment but it’s good to be humble.’)

These comments show that these Southern males felt happy with the compliment although their responses aimed at downgrading the compliment. SM9 said that he liked the compliment, but he felt it was good to be modest. SM1 and SM10 reported that they were happy with the compliment made by girls. To make a good impression upon girls, SM10 appeared to be

humble when receiving a compliment from a girl. The smile embedded in these responses would probably convey positive feelings.

There was a small difference between the Southern and the Northern males in the use of strategies in order to minimize the force of the compliment. While the Southern males favored the smiling scale-down the most (at 45% over 90%), the Northern males preferred the explaining scale-down (e.g., NM1, at 55% over 90%) to the smiling scale-down (e.g., NM13, only at 35% over 90%). As commented, NM13 reported that he was happy when being complimented and the reason for his modesty was that if he could help people, he would help. Similarly, NM1 said that helping people was not something very special, so it was good to be humble. The smile included in these responses would mostly convey positive feelings.

NM1: [Cười] Không có gì. Đây là một việc người đàn ông có thể dễ dàng làm.
(‘[smile] It’s no problem. This is what a man can do easily.’)

“Nói chung được khen cũng vui, nhưng em thấy mình làm không có gì đặc biệt chỉ là giúp người ta thôi, nên khiêm tốn được thì khiêm tốn thôi.”

(‘In general, it’s good to receive a compliment, but I feel like I’m not doing anything special, just helping people, so it’s good to be humble.’)

NM13: [Cười] Không có gì đâu. Cũng bình thường thôi mà.
(‘[smile] No problem. It’s just a normal thing.’)

“Khen thì vui thôi. Đại khái là mình dễ dàng giúp được thì mình giúp.”

(‘Being complimented made me happy. General speaking, if I can help then I will help.’)

In general, both the Southern and the Northern males were happy with the compliment, but they were humble and responded to the compliment in a modest way.

Only a small number of participants in each region expressed negative feelings about the compliment. For the Southern males, 10 % (n=2) expressed dissatisfaction with the compliment. For the Northern males, 10% (n=2) described a lack of interest in the compliment. As manifested in the example below, SM5 responded to the compliment with a silent scale-down (silence plus

statements that aim to downgrade the compliment). As we saw above, the scale down response was associated with positive feelings for many of the participants. However, SM5's comment shows that he was not satisfied with the compliment.

SM5: [Im lặng] Không có gì đâu tôi nghĩ đó là việc tôi nên làm.
(‘[Silent] It’s no problem. I think that’s what I should do.’)

“Cô ấy khen quá ít. Em đã bỏ quá nhiều thời gian để sửa xe cho cô ấy. Lời khen của cô ấy chưa đủ công sức của em đã bỏ ra. Cô ấy vẫn chưa có lời cảm ơn cho em. Vẫn cảm thấy vui vì lời khen nhưng vẫn cảm thấy lời khen của cô ấy chưa đủ công sức em bỏ ra. Em giúp cô ấy mà cô ấy vẫn chưa có lời cảm ơn nào cho em.”

(‘She complimented me too little while I had spent plenty of time fixing her motorbike. Her compliment is not enough for my efforts. She still has no thanks for me. Though I felt happy with the compliment, just a compliment from her was not enough for me and for the efforts I had spent on fixing her motorbike. I have helped her but she didn’t have any thanks for me.’)

The comment justified the reason why SM5 was not satisfied with the compliment in this situation. According to SM5, he had spent plenty of time and efforts helping the girl fix her motorbike, so what he wants was a thank-you instead of a compliment. Simply giving a compliment was not enough for his time and efforts and so the compliment seems to be inappropriate and not welcomed in this context. The silence recorded in SM5's CR conveyed a negative feeling.

As we analyzed above, the smile included in many Northern responses may convey positive feelings about the compliment; however, the following example shows that NM19 chose to smile as a way to hide a negative feeling about the compliment.

NM19: Cười (‘[smile]’)

“Em không hứng thú với lời khen này vì em thấy mình làm không có gì đặc biệt chỉ là giúp người ta thôi.”

(‘I was not interested in the compliment because what I did was not special; I only helped people.’)

NM20: Cảm ơn em. (‘Thank you’)

“Cô ấy không nên khen em như thế, rất nhàm chán.”

(‘She shouldn’t compliment me like this; it’s very boring.’)

For NM19, helping people was not special enough to receive a compliment. For NM20, it was boring to receive a compliment in this scenario. To pretend to be interested in the compliment, NM20 chose to say thank you.

To sum up, most of the Southern and the Northern males used different forms of scale-down to express positive feelings about the thank-you compliment in a humble way; the Southern males employed the smiling scale-down more frequently while the Northern males favored the explaining scale-down. Only a small number of participants in each region expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

4.2. Responses to Encouragement Compliment

As displayed in Fig 4.2, there was a dramatic difference between the Southern and the Northern males in receiving the encouragement compliment. Fig 4.2 shows that 50% of the Southern males reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the compliment while as many as 80% of the Northern males reported the same feeling. The other 50% of the Southern males said that they had no feelings about the compliment, whereas only 10% of the Northern males had a similar feeling. The lack of interest category occupied a very small percentage, 0% of the Southern males in comparison to 10% of the Northern males.

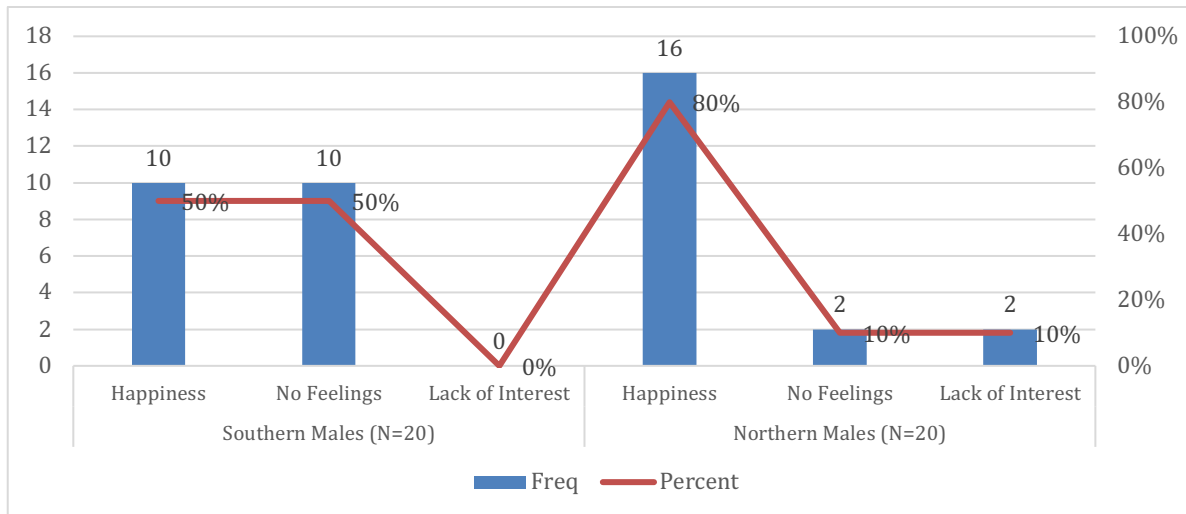


Figure 4.2. Feelings of encouragement compliment

Table 4.2

Responses to encouragement compliment

Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Find solace (50%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	6	30%
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	3	15%
	- silence	1	5%
No Feelings (50%)			
	- responded with nonverbal reactions	5	25%
	- made a promise to try better	3	15%
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%
	- reluctantly agreed with the complimenter	1	5%
Lack of Interest (0%)			
<hr/>			
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Find solace (80%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	8	40%
	- silence	8	40%
No Feelings (10%)			
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	1	5%
	- silence	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Pretend interest (10%)	- responded with a smiling thank-you	2	10%

As presented in Table 4.2, a half of the Southern males expressed positive feelings about the compliment as 50% of them reported that they found solace in the compliment. Around 30% responded to the compliment with different forms of thank-you. The formulaic thank-you (e.g., SM9, SM10) was used most frequently (15%); the promising thank-you (e.g., SM6) occurred at a lower percentage (10%); the happy thank-you (e.g., SM11) was employed very rarely (5%).

SM9: Cám ơn em [im lặng]

(‘Thank you [silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người quan tâm sẽ thấy vui hơn là khi ở một mình.”

(‘When I am sad, somebody who cares will help me feel happier than being alone.’)

SM10: Cám ơn em [Im lặng]

(‘Thank you [silent]’)

“Khi buồn người khác khen sẽ vui hơn.”

(‘When I am sad, if somebody compliments me, then I will feel a lot happier.’)

SM6: [Im lặng] Cám ơn em. Anh sẽ cố gắng hơn.

(‘[silent] Thank you. I’ll try harder.’)

“Em thấy vui hơn vì đang buồn có người khen nên thấy an ủi hơn.”

(‘I feel happier because when I am sad, a compliment makes me feel more comforted.’)

SM11: Nghe em nói vậy anh thấy vui lắm. Cám ơn em nhiều [Im lặng]

(‘I’m glad when you say that. Thank you [silent]’)

The comments show that these Southern males felt a lot happier and much more comforted when receiving the compliment in this context. Thus, 30% of them chose to say thank-you to the complimenter to signify that they found comfort in the compliment. Only 15% expressed some doubt about the compliment (e.g., SM5), while the other 5% (SM15) was silent.

SM5: Uh. Vậy hả? [Im lặng]

(‘Uhm really? [silent]’)

“Im lặng nhưng trong lòng vui hơn. Trong tâm trạng buồn có người động viên khen em, em vẫn cảm thấy được an ủi phần nào.”

(‘Being silent, but I feel more joyful in my heart. Being in a bad mood, somebody who encourages and compliments me will help me feel slightly comforted.’)

SM15: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người khen thấy vui hơn.”

(‘When I was sad, a compliment made me feel a lot happier.’)

Though SM5 expressed some doubt about the compliment, the comment indicates that the recipient was more joyful and comforted when being complimented in such a situation. For SM15, the compliment made him feel a lot happier. We see here that silence in a compliment response may have multiple meanings. For SM5 and SM15 silence was associated with positive feelings. This is in contrast to the example of SM5’s response in section 4.1 where silence was associated with negative feelings.

Table 4.2 especially indicates a higher rate of happiness responses made by the Northern males, scoring 80% compared to 50% made by the Southern males. While only 5% (n=1) of the Southern males chose to be silent as an indicator of happiness, Table 4.2 shows that as many as 40% (n=8) of the Northern males chose to be silent as a sign of happiness. The Northern males chose to be silent in this context for three major reasons. First, as NM5 and NM8 reported, receiving a compliment when they were in a bad mood may help them feel more optimistic. The compliment was welcomed in this situation and the silence was associated with a positive meaning, as a sign of happiness.

NM5: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người khen chia sẻ sẽ cảm thấy khá vui. Bình thường trong tình huống này thì em im lặng, nhưng nếu có câu chuyện cụ thể hơn thì em sẽ bắt đầu nói về câu chuyện đó.”

(‘When being in a bad mood, I felt quite happy if somebody complimented me. Normally, I’ll be silent in this situation, but if there is a more specific story, I’ll start talking about it.’)

NM8: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Được khen em cảm thấy lạc quan hơn.”
(‘Being complimented made me feel more optimistic.’)

Second, some Northern males (e.g., NM4, NM18, NM14) said that they felt good when receiving a compliment in this situation because the complimenter was able to see their strong points and highly appreciated their ability. The silence in the following responses may express two different meanings, as a sign of happiness and as a question about the sincerity of the compliment:

NM4: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Khi đang buồn có người khen thì thấy tốt hơn vì vẫn còn có người nhìn ra được điểm tốt của mình. Em sẽ nghĩ xem có đúng là mình tốt như vậy không?”

(‘When being in a bad mood, I felt better if somebody complimented me, because they were able to see my good points. I’m thinking if I am that good.’)

NM18: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Em sẽ nhìn vào cô ấy. Khi buồn có người an ủi, khen năng lực của mình thì em sẽ cảm thấy đỡ buồn hơn một chút.”

(‘I’ll look at her. When being in a bad mood, I felt better if somebody gave me a compliment on my ability.’)

NM14: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Nhìn cô ấy để xem lời cô ấy nói đúng không? Khi buồn có người an ủi khen động viên thì tâm trạng khá hơn chút. Em sẽ im lặng và nhìn vào cô ấy để dò xem những lời cô ấy nói có đúng không?”

(‘I want to look at her to see if her words are correct? I absolutely felt better if somebody complimented me. I was silent and looked at her to see if what she is saying is sincere.’)

Finally, some others (e.g., NM7, NM10) chose to be silent as a form of appreciation of the complimenter’s effort to comfort them when they were in a bad mood. As commented below, a compliment would make NM7 feel less unhappy and less lost because giving a compliment may indicate that the complimenter was caring about him. Similarly, NM10 reported that he should become happier with the compliment as it shows the effort that the complimenter has put in him.

NM7: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Em sẽ nhìn cô ấy. Khi buồn có người khen an ủi sẽ thấy đỡ buồn hơn, bớt lạc lõng hơn. Em suy nghĩ có lẽ cô ấy quan tâm đến mình cô ấy mới động viên an ủi mình.”

(‘I’ll look at her. When being in a bad mood, a compliment would make me feel less unhappy, less lost. I think she might care about me, so she gave me a compliment to comfort me.’)

NM10: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Em sẽ nhìn vào cô ấy để dò xét xem cô ấy nói đúng không? Khi mình đang buồn mà có một người bạn đến an ủi mình, dù cho mình không muốn vui đi nữa cũng nên trở nên vui vẻ hơn vì đó là công sức người ta đã bỏ ra. Và vì người bạn đó đã trân trọng mình nên mình phải trở nên vui hơn một chút.”

(‘I’ll look at her to see if what she is saying is correct? When I am in a bad mood, if a friend comes to comfort me, even if I don’t want to be happy I should become happier because that is the effort my friend has put in me. Because of that friend, I need to become happier.’)

In general, the compliment was welcomed in this situation, and the silence in the Northern males’ responses was generally associated with positive feelings, such as an indicator of happiness, as a question about the sincerity of the compliment, and as an appreciation of the complimenter.

The other 40% chose to express their happiness by responding to the compliment using different forms of thank-you, of which the formulaic thank-you was used relatively frequently (25%) while the promising thank-you occurred less commonly (15%). Responding to the compliment with the formulaic thank-you, the Northern males (e.g., NM9, NM11, NM13) reported that they felt a lot better about the compliment. Given that paying a compliment when people were in trouble was appropriate, NM9 reported that a compliment in this context would be a great source of motivation for the recipient. The CR in the form of a formulaic thank-you may be interpreted as a sign of happiness, letting the complimenter know that the recipient (e.g., NM9) was making a more positive change or that the recipient (e.g., NM11, NM13) promised to do better so that the complimenter would not be disappointed about him.

NM9: Cảm ơn. ('Thank you')

“Em sẽ nhìn thẳng vào cô ấy. Em nói cảm ơn ở đây để họ có thể cảm nhận được rằng em đang có chuyển biến tích cực hơn. Thật ra khi người ta gặp khó khăn, nếu có một người bạn hoặc một người thân an ủi động viên, thì đó là một nguồn động lực rất lớn giúp họ tiếp tục mục đích mà họ đang theo đuổi.”

(‘I’ll look at her. I want to say thank-you so she would know that I am making a more positive change. In fact, when people were in trouble, if a friend or a loved one comes to comfort them, then that will be a great source of motivation that may help them continue the goal they have been pursuing.’)

NM11: Cảm ơn. ('Thank you')

“Em sẽ nhìn thẳng vào cô ấy. Khi buồn có người khen an ủi thì tâm trạng sẽ thấy tốt hơn một tí. Em sẽ khẳng định em sẽ làm tốt hơn để cô ấy không thất vọng.”

(‘I’ll look at her. When I am in a bad mood, I’ll feel a lot better if somebody compliments me. I want to say that I will do better so that she won’t be disappointed about me.’)

NM13: Cảm ơn em [Im lặng]
('Thank you [silent]')

“Em im lặng nhìn cô ấy. Khi buồn có người khen an ủi thì tâm trạng sẽ tốt hơn. Em sẽ đáp lại một cách bình thường và sẽ tiếp tục cố gắng.”

(‘I’ll look at her silently. When I am in a bad mood, I’ll feel better if somebody compliments me. I’ll respond as usual and continue trying.’)

Responding to the compliment with a promising thank-you, the Northern males (e.g., NM6, NM12) reported that they felt happier and warmer with the compliment. As NM6 commented, having somebody to comfort him when he was in a bad mood made him happy no matter if the compliment was sincere, so he appreciated the complimenter and promised to try harder. For NM12, the compliment let him realize that everybody needed him and thus he appreciated the complimenter and promised to get back to work.

NM6: Cảm ơn. Anh sẽ cố gắng hơn.
('Thank you. I’ll try harder.’)

“Khi buồn có người khen an ủi thì chắc chắn thấy vui hơn. Chỉ cần có người an ủi là thấy vui chẳng cần biết họ có thật lòng không?”

(‘When being in a bad mood, I’ll feel a lot happier if somebody compliments me. Just having somebody to comfort me makes me happy no matter if they’re sincere or not.’)

NM12: Cảm ơn mọi người. Anh sẽ quay lại.
(‘Thank you, everybody. I’ll come back.’)

“Em sẽ nhìn vào mắt cô ấy khi nói. Khi buồn có người an ủi em sẽ cảm thấy ấm lòng. Thật sự mọi người cần em mới nói như vậy. Em sẽ cảm ơn mọi người và em sẽ quay trở lại công việc.”

(‘I’ll look at her eyes while speaking. When I am in a bad mood, receiving such a compliment makes me feel warmer. I know everybody says that because they need me. I will say thanks to everybody and get back to my work.’)

What made a considerable difference between two groups was an imbalance in the number of responses under the category of ‘No feelings.’ As shown in Table 4.2, half of the Southern males (50%) said that they had no feelings about the compliment, of which 25% employed nonverbal responses such as silence (10%), silence in pair with head nod (5%), smile in pair with silence (5%), silence with smile and head nod (5%). According to the following comments, the compliment in this situation was deemed inappropriate. SM17 was silent and then started smiling and nodding his head to show his thanks for the compliment while SM18 was silent to think about the compliment. Thus, the silence in these responses was associated with an appreciation (e.g., SM17) or allowed space for the thinking (e.g., SM18).

SM17: [Im lặng] [Mim cười] [Gật đầu]
(‘[silent] [smile] [nodding]’)

“Em mỉm cười gật đầu thể hiện sự cảm ơn chứ thật ra khen ở đây là không thích hợp.”

(‘I smiled and nodded my head to show my thanks, but actually a compliment in this situation was not appropriate.’)

SM18: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Em thấy khen ở đây không có ý nghĩa gì nhưng em vẫn im lặng để suy nghĩ về những gì cô ấy nói.”

(‘A compliment in this context doesn’t make any sense, but I want to be silent thinking about what she has just said.’)

Some others, for example, SM4 said that the compliment may not be appropriate as the recipient may be more disappointed if receiving the compliment in this situation. For SM14, the compliment in this situation cannot make her feel good or bad.

SM4: [Im lặng] ('[silent]')

“Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này vì em nghĩ rằng tình huống này càng khen em sẽ càng buồn thêm thôi.”

(‘I don’t have any feeling about this compliment because in this situation I’ll be more disappointed if I receive a compliment.’)

SM14: [Cười] [Im lặng]
('[smile] [silent]')

“Khi buồn có người khen cũng không thấy vui cũng không thấy buồn.”

(‘When I am in a bad mood, a compliment doesn’t make me feel good or bad.’)

Another 15% (e.g., SM19) made a promise to try better. For example, SM19 seems to agree with the complimenter (‘Uhm’) and promised to do better (“Tao sẽ cố gắng” ‘I’ll try harder’). He might be happy as he realized that the complimenter has really appreciated his talents; however, his comment shows that the compliment in this situation did not have any influence on his mood. The comment again confirms that SM19 had no feelings about the compliment in this situation.

SM19: Uh. Tao sẽ cố gắng.
('Uhm. I’ll try harder.’)

“Có lẽ thấy vui hơn vì họ biết quý trọng tài năng của mình. Khi có người an ủi mình, mình cảm thấy quý trọng người ấy thôi chứ thật sự mình thất bại trong cuộc sống lời khen an ủi ấy không có ảnh hưởng mấy đến tâm trạng của mình. Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen trong tình huống này.”

(‘I might be happy because she has appreciated my talents. When somebody gives me a compliment in order to comfort me, I will appreciate that person, but actually when I fail in life such a compliment doesn’t have any influence on my mood. I don’t have any feeling about the compliment in this situation.’)

Only 5% (n=1) of the Southern males responded with the formulaic thank-you (SM20) and the other 5% (n=1) reluctantly agreed with the complimenter (SM12). Even though SM20 said thank

you to the complimenter, his comment shows that he had no feelings about the compliment as he has not seen his real success.

SM20: Cảm ơn. ('Thank you')

“Em sẽ nhìn thẳng vào cô ấy. Vì em chưa thấy được hành động thiết thực mà em sẽ làm ra nên em chỉ nói cảm ơn với cô ấy. Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này.”

(‘I’ll look at her. Since I haven’t seen my real success, I just said thank you to her. I have no feelings for this compliment.’)

SM12: Uhm. Tôi biết mọi việc rồi sẽ qua [Im lặng]
('Uhm. I know everything will be ok [silent]')

“Khi buồn có người khen thì tâm trạng vẫn không khác hơn, tâm trạng bình thường. Lời khen ở đây không có tác dụng với em.”

(‘When being in a bad mood, a compliment cannot help me better. I feel normal. A compliment in this situation doesn’t work for me.’)

Similarly, SM12 reluctantly agreed with the compliment as he responded that (“Uhm. Tôi biết mọi việc rồi sẽ qua [Im lặng]” ‘Uhm. I know everything will be ok [silent]’). Nonetheless, his comment indicates that the compliment in this situation did not actually work for him. As he commented above, the compliment was unable to help him feel better.

A small number of participants in the North expressed ‘No feelings’ (10%) or negative feelings (10%) about the compliment. To illustrate, NM1 reported that he had no feeling about the compliment because he did not believe in the compliment that a man who was good at repairing motorbikes and had a nice personality could have a good future.

NM1: [Im lặng] Một người đàn ông vá xe giỏi và tốt bụng liệu có thể có một tương lai tốt hay không?
('[silent] Can a man who is good at repairing motorbikes and possesses a nice personality have a good future?')

“Em không tin một người đàn ông vá xe giỏi và tốt bụng sẽ có một tương lai tốt đẹp. Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen như thế.”

(‘I don’t believe that a man who is good at repairing motorbikes and possesses a nice personality will have a good future. Thus, I don’t have any feeling about the compliment.’)

For NM15, giving a compliment in this situation was not good and appropriate though the silence in NM15's response was reported as a form of appreciation.

NM15: [Im lặng] ('[silent]')

“Em sẽ im lặng nhìn vào mắt cô ấy nhằm ngụ ý cảm ơn. Khi đang buồn nghe khen thì tốt hơn một tí. Nhưng thật ra lời khen lúc này là không thích hợp. Em nghĩ không nên khen trong tình huống này.”

(‘I’ll be silent looking at her eyes to express my thanks. When we are sad, it’s good to receive a compliment. But in fact, a compliment at this moment is not appropriate. I think it’s not good to give a compliment in this situation.’)

NM3 and NM19 expressed a lack of interest in the compliment. The smile in NM3's response was a reluctant smile as he was not really happy with a compliment in this context; however, he pretended to be interested in the compliment using the smiling thank-you.

NM3: [Cười] Cảm ơn.
('[smile] Thank you.')

“Cười ở đây xem như đáp lại thành ý của người ta thôi, là cười ngượng chứ không thật sự vui. Khi buồn có người động viên vẫn thấy buồn như thường. Lời khen ở đây là không thích hợp.”

(‘A smile here is considered as a response to her sincere compliment. It is a reluctant smile when I don’t actually feel happy. Being in a bad mood, I still feel sad when receiving a compliment. The compliment is not appropriate in this context.’)

NM19: Cảm ơn em [Cười]
('Thank you [smile]')

“Tôi không thích lời khen nhưng tôi muốn cười và nhìn vào cô ấy để cô ấy thoải mái hơn vì mất công cô ấy đã an ủi em. Em biết cô ấy chỉ khen để an ủi em thôi nên em sẽ làm cho cô ấy thoải mái.”

(‘I don’t like the compliment but I want to smile and look at her to make her feel more comfortable because it took her time and effort to comfort me. I know the purpose of her compliment is to comfort me, so I will make her feel comfortable.’)

For NM19, he pretended to be interested in the compliment with the smiling thank-you in order to make the complimenter feel comfortable as he realized that it has taken time and effort for the complimenter to comfort him. The smile in NM19's response could be interpreted as a reluctant smile that aimed at making the complimenter feel comfortable.

To conclude, there was a dramatic difference between males in two regions in responding to the encouragement compliment. A half of the Southern males expressed positive feelings about the compliment while another half expressed ‘No feelings’. In contrast, most of the males in the North expressed positive feelings about the compliment; very small number of the Northern males expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

4.3. Responses to Sport session-ending Compliment

Although the two groups expressed positive feelings about the compliment, Fig 4.3 demonstrates a considerable difference between the males in two regions. As many as 80% of the Southern males reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment while only 55% of the Northern males reported a similar feeling. Moreover, only a small number of the Southern males (20%) reported ‘No feelings’ about the compliment, whereas nearly half of the Northern males (45%) said that they had no feelings about the compliment.

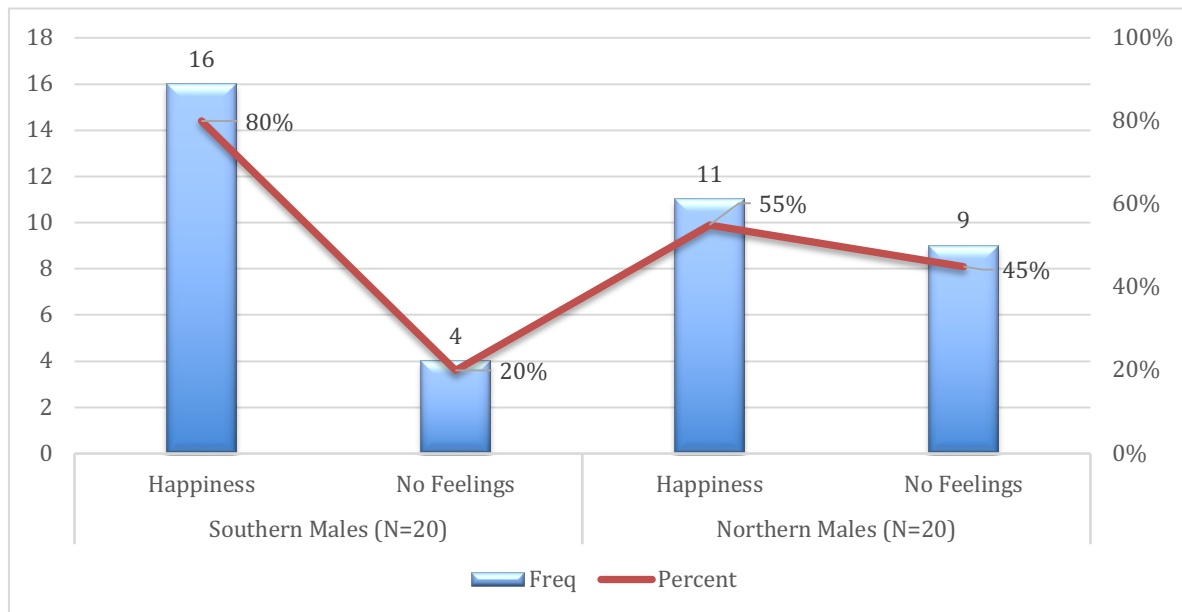


Figure 4.3. Feelings of sport session-ending compliment

Table 4.3
Responses to sport session-ending compliment

Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (35%)	- signified pleasure	4	20%
	- created mutual pleasure	3	15%
Modesty (45%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	4	20%
	- shifted the praise to the complimenter	5	25%
No Feelings (20%)			
	- silence	2	10%
	- smile	1	5%
	- closed the conversation	1	5%
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (35%)	- signified pleasure	5	25%
	- created mutual pleasure	2	10%
Modesty (20%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
	- shifted the praise to the complimenter	3	15%
No Feelings (45%)			
	- silence	3	15%
	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
	- reluctantly agreed with the complimenter	2	10%
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%
	- closed the conversation	1	5%

Under the happiness category, Table 4.3 shows that the two groups were more likely to respond to the compliment with pleasure, both at a rate of 35%, using two main strategies: signifying pleasure and creating mutual pleasure. Twenty percent of the Southern males tended to signify their pleasure in different forms of thank you, of which the promising thank-you (e.g., SM4) occupied 10% while the smiling thank-you (e.g., SM9) and the formulaic thank-you (e.g., SM18) was not in use frequently (5% each).

SM4: [Cười] Cảm ơn anh đã khen. Em sẽ cố gắng luyện tập nhiều hơn.
 ('[smile] Thank you for your compliment. I'll try to practice much more.')

“Em thấy vui với lời khen. Nó giúp em cố gắng nhiều hơn nữa.”

('I feel happy with the compliment. It helps me try harder.')

SM9: Ok. Cám ơn anh [Cười]
(‘Ok. Thank you [smile]’)

“Trong lòng vui hơn vì có người khen nên cảm thấy có động lực hơn. Trong lòng sẽ thấy vui vì làm xong việc gì mà có người khen sẽ cảm thấy có động lực, sẽ vui hơn.”

(‘I feel happier and much more motivated when somebody compliments me. In my heart, I feel happy because I have done something that is worthy of a compliment, I feel motivated and happier.’)

SM18: Ok. Cám ơn anh đã khen.
(‘Ok. Thank you for your compliment.’)

“Trong lòng vui hơn vì có người khen.”

(‘In my heart, I feel happier because somebody is complimenting me.’)

According to the comments, the Southern males (e.g., SM4, SM9, SM18) reported that they felt happy with the compliment for two main reasons. First, the recipients viewed the compliment as a source of motivation that may encourage them for something good they have done. The second reason seems to be simpler. The recipients reported that they were happy simply because they had received a compliment. These comments clearly indicate that the compliment in this situation was seen as a positive speech act by these Southern males, which as Holmes (1988) defined, “explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer” (p. 446).

In addition, 15% of the Southern males would like to create mutual pleasure with a smiling ‘Return’ (10%, e.g., SM3), or a silent ‘Return’ (5%, e.g., SM8).

SM3: [Cười] Mà cũng vậy.
(‘[smile] You too.’)

“Em thấy vui với lời khen và muốn khen lại để bạn ấy cũng vui như em.”

(‘I feel happy with the compliment and I want to return her a compliment to make her happy too.’)

SM8: Anh cũng tốt lắm. Hôm sau sẽ trở lại đánh tiếp.
(‘You are also very good. Let’s come back to continue tomorrow.’)

“Em thấy vui và khen lại để động viên nhau cùng vui cùng nhau tiến bộ.”

(‘I feel happy and so I want to return a compliment to encourage each other, for fun and progress together.’)

The comments show that SM3 and SM8 were happy with the compliment. The reason they returned a compliment was to make the complimenter happy and to encourage each other for their progress. In general, 15% of the Southern males had pleasure with the compliment and so would like to make the complimenter happy in return.

For the Northern males, 25% signified pleasure with different forms of thank-you, of which 15% used the promising thank-you (e.g., NM7, NM9) and 10% employed the smiling thank-you (e.g., NM10). These Northern males said that they were happy in receiving the compliment. The compliment in this situation may help them feel motivated for future practice.

NM7: Cảm ơn. Lần sau em sẽ cố gắng tốt hơn nữa.
(‘Thank you. Next time I will try to do a lot better.’)

“Em thấy rất là vui khi được khen thế.”

(‘I feel very happy when receiving such a compliment.’)

NM9: Cảm ơn anh. Em sẽ tiếp tục luyện tập tốt hơn.
(‘Thank you. I’ll continue to practice better.’)

“Em rất là vui. Vì em mới bắt đầu chơi môn thể thao mới mà nhận được lời khen, em sẽ thấy vui và cảm thấy có động lực để luyện tập hơn.”

(‘I feel very happy. I’ve just started playing a new sport, so getting a compliment makes me feel happy and motivated to practice much more.’)

NM10: Cảm ơn vì lời khen của cậu [Cười]
(‘Thank you for your compliment [smile]’)

“Em thấy vui khi bạn ấy khen em.” (‘I feel happy when that friend compliments me.’)

Ten percent (e.g., NM12) created mutual pleasure by including a similar compliment:

NM12: Đẳng ấy hôm nay đánh cũng tốt phết thể nhỉ [Cười]
(‘Today you also hit quite well too.’)

“Có đi có lại, họ khen mình thì mình khen họ lại.”

(‘You scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours. If somebody compliments me, then I will compliment them in return.’)

For NM12, if somebody did him a favor, he would return it. Thus, he responded to the compliment with a similar compliment.

What made a big difference between two groups under the category of happiness was an imbalance in the number of modesty responses. Despite expressing positive feelings about the compliment, as many as 45% of the males in the South said that they must appear to be humble while only 20% of the males in the North appeared humble. Twenty percent of the Southern males chose to minimize the force of the compliment using thanking scale down (15%, e.g., SM12) or smiling scale down (5%, e.g., SM10). Only 5% of the males in the North chose to minimize the force of the compliment, with a thanking scale-down (e.g., NM3).

SM12: Cảm ơn. Cũng phải luyện tập nhiều lắm mới được như vậy.
(‘Thank you. It also takes a lot of practice to be that good.’)

“Em muốn tỏ ra khiêm tốn chút.”

(‘I want to appear humble.’)

NM3: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Tôi đã cố gắng rất nhiều.
(‘[smile] Thank you. I’ve tried a lot.’)

“Em thật sự rất vui nhưng khiêm tốn là tốt nhất.”

(‘I am really very happy but being humble is the best.’)

SM10: [Cười] Thật ra mình cũng bình thường thôi. Không có tiến bộ gì hết.
(‘[smile] Actually I’m very normal. There’s no progress at all.’)

“Kiểu có vui nhưng em muốn khiêm tốn chút ấy mà.”

(‘I feel happy but I want to be humble a little bit.’)

Despite downgrading the compliment, the comments show that the Southern males (SM12, SM10) and the Northern male (NM3) were happy with the compliment. However, they said that

being humble was the best, so they responded to the compliment with different strategies of scale-down.

Some others (SM, 25% vs. NM, 15%) shifted the praise to the complimenter to express their happiness in a modest way. The following comments indicate that SM11 and NM4 felt happy when being complimented but they would like to be humble in the response.

SM11: [Im lặng] Tất cả là nhờ anh đó.
(‘[Silent] All is thanks to you.’)

“Em vui nhưng muốn tỏ ra khiêm tốn một chút.”

(‘I am happy but I want to appear humble a little bit.’)

NM4: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh. Là do em có một người thầy dạy tốt.
(‘[silent] Thank you. It’s because I have a good teacher.’)

“Được khen thấy vui và sẽ cố gắng đạt được mục đích tốt hơn. Tuy nhiên em vẫn muốn khiêm tốn khi trả lời.”

(‘I feel happy when being complimented and I will strive to achieve better goals. However, I still want to be humble in my response.’)

What marked a second important difference between the males in two regions was the number of responses under the category of ‘No feelings’. As manifested in Table 4.3, this number was only 20% for the Southern males but a much higher 45% for the Northern males. The Northern males used different strategies to imply that they had no feelings about the compliment while their Southern counterparts mainly responded with a smile (at 5%, SM16), silence (at 10%, e.g., SM15) or closed the conversation (at 5%, SM20).

SM16: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em thấy lời khen này chỉ nhằm động viên nhau. Em cũng không có cảm giác gì nhiều với lời khen này nên em nghĩ không cần phải trả lời. Chỉ cười thôi là đủ rồi.”

(‘I think the purpose of this compliment is to encourage each other. I don’t have any feeling about the compliment, so I don’t need to respond to it. Just smiling is enough.’)

SM15: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Im lặng vì em không biết phải trả lời thế nào. Thật ra em không có cảm giác gì với lời

khen này. Im lặng xem như kết thúc buổi tập”

(‘I am silent because I don’t know how to respond to it. Actually, I have no feeling about this compliment so I was silent to end the session.’)

SM20: Ok [Im lặng] Chúng ta kết thúc. Bây giờ chúng ta chơi cũng lâu rồi.
(‘Ok [silent] Let’s stop. We have been playing for a long time.’)

“Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này nên chỉ nói vậy để kết thúc buổi tập.”

(‘I had no feelings about this compliment so I said so to end the session.’)

The above comments show that the Southern males (e.g., SM16, SM15, SM20) had no feeling about the compliment in this situation. Thus, SM20 closed the conversation while SM15 chose to be silent as he did not know how to respond to such a compliment. SM16 said that the compliment in this context served as an encouragement, so it was not necessary for him to respond to the compliment. This was the reason why SM16 chose to smile in reaction to the compliment. The silence and smile recorded in these Southern males’ CRs may express a negative feeling, in the sense that the recipient did not know how to respond to the compliment and that the recipient wanted to say something to end the session.

Almost half of the males in the North (45%) reported ‘No feelings’ about the compliment because the participants in the North were extremely concerned about the appropriateness of the compliment in the context. Fifteen percent chose to be silent (e.g., NM8, NM20) as the compliment in this situation was deemed inappropriate.

NM8: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Bạn thân nên không cần trả lời. Theo em lời khen cho một người bạn thân là không cần thiết.”

(‘To me, we don’t need to respond to a compliment given by a close friend. Also, complimenting a close friend is not necessary.’)

NM20: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Bình thường hai thằng con trai luyện tập với nhau nếu có khen thì nên im thôi, không nên nói gì.”

(‘Normally when two boys are playing sports together, if one of them wants to compliment the other, he shouldn’t say the compliment out.’)

NM8 chose to be silent as to his thoughts; it was not necessary for him to respond to a compliment given by a close friend. Giving a compliment to a close friend was not welcomed either. For NM20, giving a compliment in a sport setting in which two boys are playing sports together seemed not to be very appropriate. In his opinion, the complimenter should not say the compliment out. This explained why NM20 chose to be silent. The silence in their response was associated with a negative feeling because it was reported that the compliment was not appropriate and so it was not necessary for the recipient to respond to the compliment. Being silent would be probably the best option in this situation.

In addition, 10% minimized the force of the compliment with a silent scale-down (5%, NM13) or a smiling scale-down (5%, NM14). The comments show that the compliment was considered not appropriate in this context. Though NM13 downgraded the compliment, his comment indicates that it was not necessary for him to say thank-you or something else other than a silent scale-down simply because the complimenter was his close friend. It is likely that for some Northern males (e.g., NM8, NM13), giving and receiving a compliment from a close friend was not welcomed.

NM13: [Im lặng] Cũng bình thường thôi mà.
(‘[silent] That is normal.’)

“Không cần cảm ơn mấy. Vì bạn thân thì cũng không cần biểu hiện nhiều.”

(‘I don’t need to say thank you. Because the complimenter is my close friend, I don’t need to say too much.’)

NM14: [Cười] Bình thường mà.
(‘[smile] Just normal.’)

“Đây chỉ là lời động viên cho mình tiến bộ. Đây không thật sự là lời khen để mình phải trả lời lại. Lời khen này không thích hợp không đáng để trả lời.”

(‘This is an encouragement for me to make progress. This is not actually a compliment, so I don’t have to respond to it. This compliment is not appropriate and so not worthy of a response.’)

For NM14, the compliment in this situation served more as an encouragement which was supposed not to be a real compliment. Even though NM14 downgraded the compliment with a smiling scale-down strategy, his comment reveals that such a compliment was seen as not appropriate and so not worthy of a response.

Moreover, 10% reluctantly agreed with the complimenter. NM6 said that giving and receiving a compliment between close friends was not necessary and so the compliment in this situation seemed to be inappropriate. For NM17, this situation was very normal and thus he had no feelings about the compliment. That was why he simply responded to it with “Vâng anh” (‘Yes, brother’).

NM6: Uh. Ok. (‘Uh Ok’)

“Không cần cảm ơn vì bạn bè thân thiết thì không cần cảm ơn. Bạn thân thiết thì không cần khen nhau. Em thấy lời khen ở đây là không cần thiết.”

(‘I don’t need to say thank you because we are close friends. Close friends don’t need to compliment each other. I think the compliment in this context is not necessary.’)

NM17: Vâng anh. (‘Yes, brother’)

“Tình huống này cũng bình thường quá nên em chỉ trả lời đơn giản thôi, chả có cảm giác gì.”

(‘The situation is very normal, so I just respond to it simply. I have no feelings.’)

Finally, 5% responded with a formulaic thank-you (NM16) and 5% closed the conversation.

NM16: Cảm ơn. (‘Thank you.’)

“Em sẽ đi thu dọn đồ đạc để kết thúc buổi tập. Theo em, trong thể thao khi mà kết thúc một buổi tập, thì lời khen mang giá trị như là một lời kết cho buổi tập, một lời khích lệ, một lời xã giao chứ không phải là một lời khen thật sự nên em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này.”

(‘I’ll go to collect my stuff to end this practice session. To me, in a sports setting when we want to end a practice session, a compliment only works as an end to the session, an

encouragement, a social strategy but not as a real compliment, so I don't have any feeling about this compliment.')

For NM16, because the compliment in this situation may serve as an end to the session, an encouragement or a social strategy but not as a real compliment, he simply said thank-you as an indicator that he had no feeling about this compliment.

In general, most of the males in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this scenario though they were humbler in the response. In contrast, a smaller number of the males in the North expressed positive feelings about the compliment but they favored responses that expressed pleasure rather than modesty. As the Northern males were concerned about the appropriateness of the compliment in the context, almost half of the males in the North reported 'No feelings' about the compliment while this number was very small in the Southern data.

4.4. Responses to Joking Compliment

Though both groups expressed positive feelings about the compliment, Fig 4.4 indicates a big difference between the males in two regions. The number of participants reporting a feeling of happiness was 85% in the South but only 60% in the North. The CRs describing a lack of interest were relatively small in number, at a rate of 15% for the Southern males and 20% for the Northern males. 'No feelings' and 'Embarrassment' were not common (both at 10%) and only reported by the Northern participants. This is to say, 15% of the males in the South but a much higher 40% of the males in the North might see the joking compliment as a negative act.

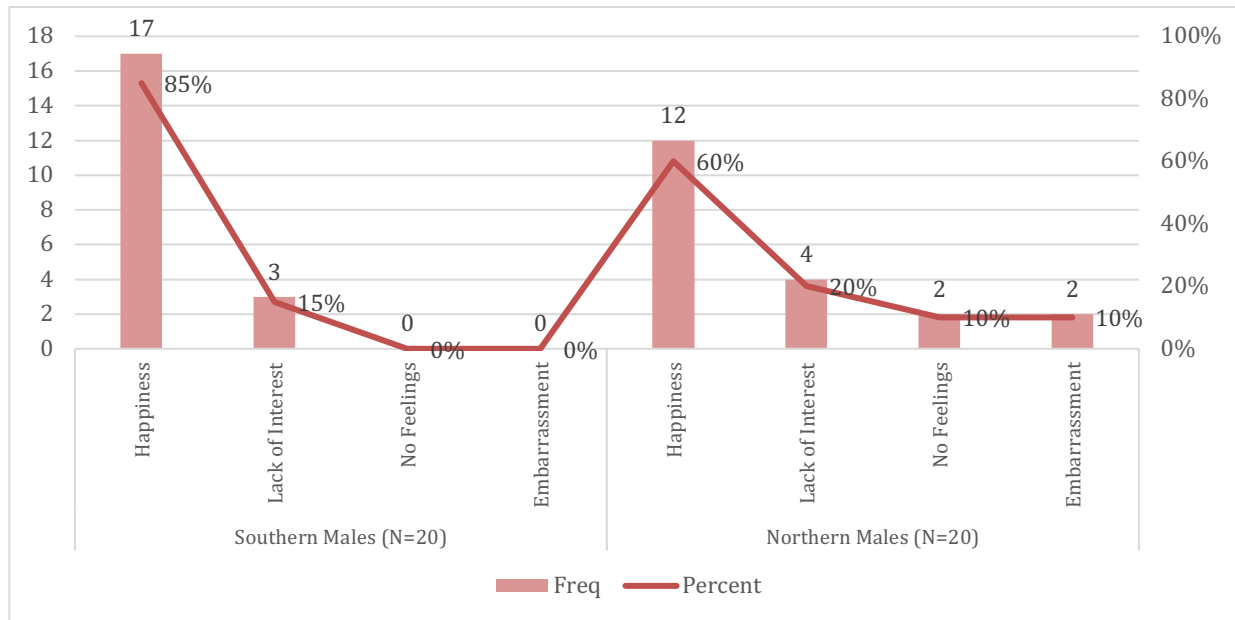


Figure 4.4. Feelings of joking compliment

As we can see in Table 4.4, the two groups preferred pleasure responses to modesty responses; for the Southern males, the difference would not be so dramatic (45% vs. 40% respectively) but for the Northern males, the difference was very dramatic (50% vs. 10% respectively). In order to show pleasure, 25% of the Southern males responded to the compliment humorously, with a smiling joke (20%, e.g., SM5, SM20) or a silent joke (5%, SM11); 20% chose to smile (e.g., SM18).

SM5: [Cười] Trời ơi, tôi khó khăn lắm mới mua được đóa hoa này cho cô ấy.
 (‘[smile] Oh my god. I had difficulty buying this bunch of flowers for her.’)

“Thấy vui vì không khí mọi người trong phòng dành cho mình, cảm thấy có sự tương tác với mọi người. Do đó em cười và giỡn lại với người ta.”

(‘I feel happy thanks to the atmosphere in the office. I feel I have an interaction with everybody in the room, so I smile and make a joke with them.’)

SM20: [Cười] Đâu có gì đâu. Em muốn nhiều cô gái theo đuổi thì cứ làm như anh là được.
 (‘[smile] It’s nothing. If you want many girls chasing after you, then just do what I am doing.’)

“Em tự hào khi đồng nghiệp khen mình.”

(‘I feel proud when a colleague compliments me.’)

Table 4.4
Responses to joking compliment

Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (45%)	- responded to the compliment humorously	5	25%
	- smile	4	20%
Modesty (40%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	7	35%
	- shifted the praise to those who are present in the conversation	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (10%)	- explicitly negated the compliment	2	10%
Pretend interest (5%)	- responded with a 'fake' smile	1	5%
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (50%)	- signified pleasure	3	15%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	3	15%
	- smile	2	10%
	- created mutual pleasure	1	5%
	- responded to the compliment humorously	1	5%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (5%)	- explicitly negated the compliment	1	5%
Pretend interest (15%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	2	10%
	- responded with a 'fake' smile	1	5%
No Feelings (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Embarrassment	- smile	2	10%

SM11: [Im lặng] Các cậu nên học hỏi nhiều đi nha chứ không là không có vợ được đâu.
 ('[silent] You guys should learn much more, otherwise you guys cannot find a wife.')

SM18: [Cười tươi] ('smile sweetly')

"Thấy vui khi được khen."

('I feel happy when being complimented.')

According to the comments, these Southern males had a sense of pleasure when receiving the compliment in this situation. SM5 said that he was happy thanks to the atmosphere in the room, so he responded to the compliment with a smile together with a joke. For SM20, he took great pride in the compliment given by one of his colleagues. SM18 reported that he was happy every time he was complimented. Based on the comments, we can see here that these Southern males viewed the compliment in this scenario as a positive speech act and so they were happy to receive such a positive compliment. The smile in these CRs was associated with a feeling of pleasure.

In order to show pleasure upon receiving the compliment, the Northern males employed five different response strategies. Signifying pleasure and agreeing with the compliment with pride were used most frequently (both at 15%), of which 10% signified pleasure with a formulaic thank you (e.g., NM7) and 5% with a smiling thank-you (e.g., NM2).

NM7: Cám ơn mọi người. ('Thanks everybody')

“Trong lòng sẽ thấy vui vì em đã làm một điều mọi người cảm thấy thích.”

(‘I feel happy in my heart because I have done one thing that everybody likes.’)

NM2: [Cười] Cám ơn.
(‘[smile] Thank you’)

“Em thấy vui.”

(‘I feel happy.’)

The comments show that NM7 and NM2 felt happy when receiving the compliment. For NM7, a compliment may be understood as something good he has done. It is apparent that NM2 and NM7 viewed the compliment in this situation as a positive speech act that made them feel good.

Almost 15% agreed with the compliment with pride. According to the following comments, these Northern males would love to hear compliments. NM12 especially felt slightly complacent (i.e., too proud of himself) when receiving the compliment, and he smiled to let

everybody know that he was feeling happy. The smile included in the following CRs was associated with a positive feeling, as a sense of pleasure.

NM1: [Cười] Dĩ nhiên rồi.
(‘[smile] Of course’)

“Em vui khi được mọi người khen.”

(‘I am happy when everybody compliments me.’)

NM10: [Cười tươi] Tất nhiên mà. Anh của em mà lì.
(‘[smile sweetly] Of course. That’s your brother.’)

“Thấy vui vì những lời khen này. Vì mọi người rất thích được nghe lời khen.”

(‘I am happy with the compliment because people would love to hear compliments.’)

NM12: [Cười] Tớ mà nhỉ.
(‘[smile] That is me.’)

“Em sẽ cảm giác tự mãn một tí. Cười để mọi người biết em đang vui vẻ.”

(‘I feel a little complacent. I smile to let everybody know that I am feeling happy.’)

Ten percent chose to smile (e.g., NM8, NM4); 5% created mutual pleasure; 5% responded to the compliment humorously, with a smiling joke (NM14). These Northern males reported that they were happy with the compliment.

NM8: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Mình đã đang vui nên chỉ cười thôi, không nói gì cả.”

(‘I am happy, so I just smile and won’t say anything else.’)

NM4: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Vui quá chỉ cười thôi.”

(‘I am so happy, so I just smile.’)

NM14: Mày cứ đùa [Cười]
(‘You are joking [smile]’)

“Khi được khen vậy cũng có thấy vui.”

(‘Being complimented also makes me happy.’)

A very small number of the males in the North wanted to be humble in the response while a larger number of the males in the South were concerned about modesty. As manifested in Table 4.4, only 10% of the Northern males minimized the force of the compliment to express their happiness in a modest way, whereas as many as 40% of the Southern males would be humble, of which 35% minimized the force of the compliment (e.g., SM7) and 5% shifted the praise to those who are present in the conversation.

SM7: [Cười] Đàn ông ai cũng sẽ vậy thôi. Ngoài kia còn nhiều người lý tưởng hơn anh nữa.
(‘[smile] All men will do the same. There remain more ideal people than me out there.’)

“Vui thì có vui nhưng cũng đừng để người ta thấy được mình vui.”

(‘I am happy but I don’t want to let people know that I am happy.’)

SM7 used a smiling scale-down strategy to downgrade the compliment. SM7’s comment shows that he was happy with the compliment, but he did not want to let people know that he was feeling happy, so he appeared humble with a smiling scale-down.

Very small percentage of the males in the South (10%) but a much higher 40% of the males in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As depicted in Table 4.4, 10% of the Southern males explicitly negated the compliment and 5% chose a ‘fake’ smile as a way to show a lack of interest in the compliment. As we can see in the following examples, SM17 and SM10 explicitly negated the compliment since to their thoughts, the compliment in this context was insincere and unnecessary. SM16 chose a ‘fake’ smile as he assumed that the compliment was not sincere. These Southern males viewed the compliment as a negative speech act and the smile in these CRs was associated with a negative feeling.

SM17: [Gãi đầu] Mày khùng hả.
(‘[head scratch] Are you crazy?’)

“Em không thích vì lời khen này không thật lòng.”

(‘I don’t like the compliment because it is not sincere.’)

SM10: [Cười] Không có gì phải khen. Đó là trách nhiệm của người đàn ông. Đó là việc người đàn ông cần phải làm.

(‘[smile] There’s nothing worthy of a compliment here. That’s the responsibility of a man. That’s what a man needs to do.’)

SM16: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Vì em nghĩ lời khen không thật lòng nên em nhìn người khen rồi cười một cái thôi.”

(‘I think the compliment is not sincere, so I simply look at the complimenter and smile slightly.’)

Given that the compliment in this situation served as a social strategy that may lack sincerity, the Northern males expressed negative feelings about the compliment in a number of ways. In order to show a lack of interest, 5% explicitly negated the compliment; 15% pretended to be interested in the compliment, with an emotionless return thank-you (10%, NM9) or a smile (5%, NM15).

NM9: Cám ơn. Em cũng tốt như anh thôi.

(‘Thank you. You will also be as good as me.’)

“Thật ra thì em không có hứng thú với lời khen xã giao kiểu này lắm. Lời khen ở đây chỉ xã giao, không thật lắm nên em không cảm thấy vui thật sự, không cảm thấy hạnh phúc thật sự.”

(‘Actually, I’m not very interested in such a social compliment. This compliment is a social strategy, not sincere so I don’t really feel happy at all.’)

NM15: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Thật ra đây là lời khen sáo rỗng kiểu xã giao không thật lòng nên em chỉ cười thôi rồi tiếp tục câu chuyện.”

(‘Actually, this is an empty compliment that works as a social strategy, not a sincere compliment, so I just smile and may continue the conversation.’)

Ten percent reported ‘No feelings’ and 10% described ‘Embarrassment’ about the compliment. To illustrate, NM18 minimized the force of the compliment with a smiling scale-down to show that NM18 had no feeling about the compliment because to his thoughts, the compliment in this situation would not exist in real life .

NM18: [Cười] Chắc là bạn hơi khen quá lời rồi.
(‘[smile] You must be overstating.’)

“Em không có cảm giác gì. Tình huống này có hơi không thật. Hơi diễn quá. Ngoài đời sẽ không như thế này.”

(‘I don’t have any special feelings. This situation sounds unreal, acting too much. It won’t be like this in real life.’)

NM11: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em sẽ không làm để được khen như thế này được. Em chưa bao giờ rơi vào tình huống thế này.”

(‘I won’t let myself be complimented like this. I have never been in such a situation before.’)

NM11, for example, reported that he has never been in a similar situation before and his smile may indicate that he was feeling embarrassed. This recipient also emphasized that he would not let a similar situation happen to him in real life. In general, these Northern males viewed the compliment in this situation as a negative speech act and the smile in their CRs was associated with negative feelings.

To sum up, most of the males in two regions expressed positive feelings about the compliment. The males in the South liked both, responses with pleasure and with modesty; whereas, the males in the North were less humble in their responses. Only a small number of the males in the South but a much higher number of the males in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment in this scenario.

4.5. Responses to Congratulation Compliment

As manifested in Fig 4.5, 90% of the females in the South reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the congratulation compliment while this number was only 40% in the North. Only a small number of the females in the South (10%) reported a lack of interest while in the North, this number was a much higher (60%).

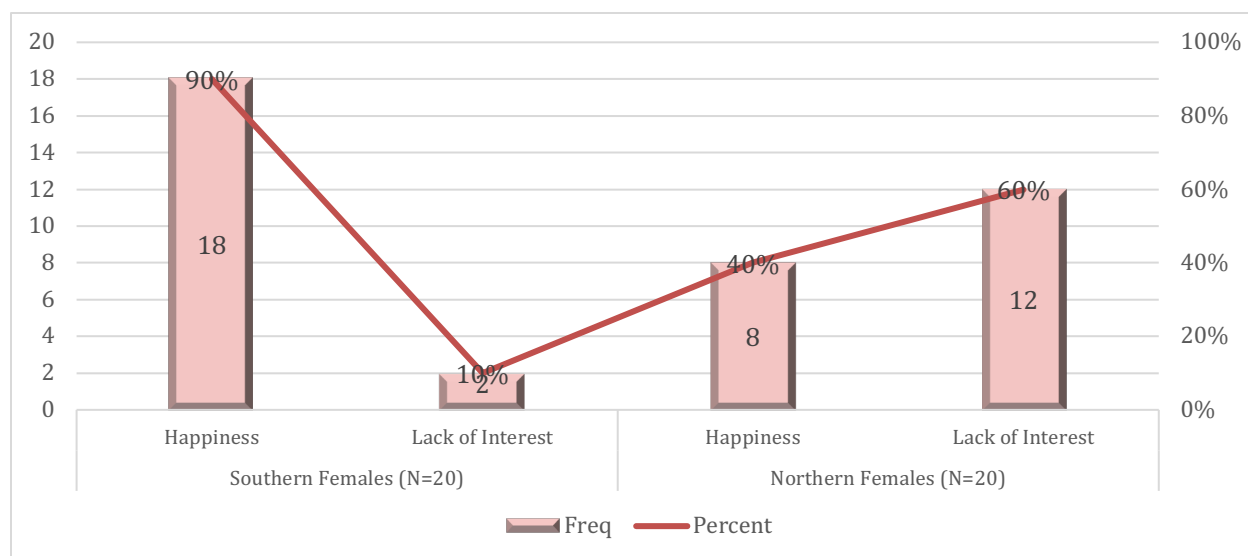


Figure 4.5. Feelings of congratulation compliment

Table 4.5

Responses to congratulation compliment

Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (85%)	- signified pleasure	6	30%
	- created mutual pleasure	6	30%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	5	25%
Modesty (5%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (10%)	- Respond with a courteous thank-you	2	10%
Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (25%)	- created mutual pleasure	4	20%
	- signified pleasure	1	5%
Modesty (15%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	3	15%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (10%)	- ignored the compliment	1	5%
	- changed the topic	1	5%
Pretend interest (50%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	6	30%
	- gave an explanation	3	15%
	- responded with "uh ah"	1	5%

Most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this scenario. They were not humble in their responses. As shown in Table 4.5, pleasure responses accounted for 85% while modesty responses scored only 5% of the total. As we can see in the following example, the Southern modesty response was highly complicated, beginning with a ‘smile’ along with “Trời ơi” (‘Oh my God’) and ending with a thank-you.

SF15: [Cười] Trời ơi! Chị quá khen. Hôm nay là ngày vui của em mà chị. Cảm ơn chị đã đến chung vui.

(‘[Smile] Oh my God! You are overpraising. Today is my happy day. Thank you, sister, for coming to share the happiness.’).

“Miệng nói vậy nhưng trong lòng thấy vui.”

(‘The mouth is saying that but inside is happy.’)

“Trời ơi” (‘Oh my God’) was a very common emotional expression in Southern Vietnamese, which usually demonstrates a feeling of surprise and happiness. Though SF15 minimized the force of the compliment, the comment and the inclusion of a ‘smile’, “Trời ơi” and a thank-you show that SF15 was happy.

Generally, most of the females in the South (85%) chose to show their pleasure in a number of ways. Approximately 30% signified their pleasure with a smiling thank-you.

SF2: Dạ. Em cảm ơn chị [Cười]

(‘Yes, thank you, sister [Smile]’)

“Thấy vui trong lòng.” (‘Feel happy in heart.’)

SF3: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị nha.

(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister.’)

“Thấy vui khi được khen.” (‘Feel happy when being complimented.’)

The comments show that these Southern females were happy with the compliment despite not explicitly expressing their gladness. As an alternative, they chose to smile and said thank-you to the complimenter in order to signify that they were pleased with the compliment.

Another 30% reported that they were happy and willing to create mutual pleasure, of which the smiling return thank-you (e.g., SF9) was used most frequently (20%) in addition to the smiling ‘Return’ (e.g., SF13) at a rate of 10%.

SF9: [Cười] Em cảm ơn chị. Chị cũng đẹp mà.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. You are beautiful, too.’)

“Em thấy vui và muốn khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui.”

(‘I feel happy and would like to compliment her in return to make her happy too.’)

SF13: [Cười] Nhưng em đâu có xinh bằng chị.
(‘[Smile] But I am not as pretty as you are.’)

“Được khen thì em cũng thấy vui. Em sẽ khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui.”

(‘When being complimented, I feel happy. I’ll pay her a return compliment to make her happy too.’)

The other 25% agreed with the compliment with pride to show that they were happy. To illustrate, SF18 began her response with “Trời ơi” (‘Oh my God’) and ended with a ‘smile’, showing that she was happy and surprised at the compliment. The recipient agreed that she must be beautiful on her shop opening day.

SF18: Trời ơi! Hôm nay là ngày trọng đại mà chị. Em gái của chị dĩ nhiên phải đẹp chứ [Cười]
(‘Oh my God. Today is a big day. Your sister must be definitely beautiful [Smile]’)

SF20: [Cười haha] Chứ sao. Đã lên chủ rồi mà.
(‘[Laughing] That’s right. I am now a shop owner.’)

“Vui về chấp nhận ý là nói giờ em đã là bà chủ một cửa hàng.”

(‘Happy to accept, I mean I am now the owner of a shop.’)

Starting the response with ‘laughing’, SF20 happily asserted that the compliment was correct. It appears likely that this recipient paid more attention to the accomplishment compliment (“Hoành tráng quá” ‘Very glorious’) which was part of the congratulation compliment. The two responses

show that the two Southern females were happy with the congratulation compliment on the shop opening day. In general, most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment and found pleasure in receiving the compliment.

On the contrary, over a half of the Northern participants expressed negative feelings about the compliment. Only 10% of the females in the South reported not being interested in the congratulation compliment, whereas as many as 60% of the females in the North reported a negative feeling. As shown in Table 4.5, 10% of the Northern recipients signaled a lack of interest by ignoring the compliment (5%) or changing the topic (5%):

NF19: Mới khai trương nên cần chị ủng hộ em nhiều hơn. Mời chị vào trong.”
(‘Just opened, so I need you to support me more. Please come in.’)

NF20: Sao hôm nay không đi cùng bạn trai à?
(‘Why don’t you go with your boyfriend today?’)

“Em sẽ chuyển sang chủ đề khác như sao hôm nay không đi cùng bạn trai, hay ai đó để tránh trả lời lời khen này. Vì em cũng không thích lời khen kiểu này lắm nhưng lại không thể phủ nhận nó trước mặt chị ấy được.”

(‘I will switch to another topic like ‘why don’t you go with your boyfriend or with someone else today?’ to avoid responding to the compliment. Although I don’t like this kind of compliment, I cannot directly deny it in front of her.’)

The other 50% chose to disguise their lack of interest as a matter of courtesy. As we can see in Table 4.5, 30% pretended to be interested in the compliment using different forms of thank-you, of which the emotionless return thank-you (e.g., NF10) was in use most commonly (20%) and the courteous thank-you (e.g., NF2) occupied 10%.

NF10: Cám ơn. Chị cũng xinh vậy.
(‘Thank you. You are pretty too, sister.’)

“Vì đây là buổi lễ khai trương nên khi có khách mời đến họ nhìn mình thấy thiện cảm, ấn tượng nên khen thì ít nhất mình cũng phải đáp lại và khen lại ạ chứ thật ra em cũng không thích lời khen này.”

(‘As this is an opening ceremony, when the guests come to see me and feel good and impressed by my appearance, at least I have to reply and return them a similar compliment. I honestly don’t like this compliment.’)

NF2: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị. Mời chị vào trong.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Please come in.’)

“Em không thích nhưng muốn tỏ ra thân thiện khách khí.”

(‘I’m not interested but want to appear friendly and polite.’)

Nearly 15% (e.g., NF14) gave an explanation and 5% reluctantly responded with “uh ah”, since the recipient (NF12) perceived the compliment to be insincere.

NF14: Hôm nay ngày trọng đại của mình, mình phải chỉnh chu chứ. Với lại có nhiều khách mời mà nên mình cần phải đẹp chứ.
(‘Today is my big day, I have to look good. Further, there are many guests, so I need to look beautiful.’)

“Đây là lời khen nói dối, kiểu khéo léo nịnh bợ nên em không thích.”

(‘This compliment is a lie, a kind of flattery, so I don’t like it.’)

NF12: Uh Ah.

“Uh ah cho qua chuyện vì em biết đây chỉ là khen xã giao không thật lòng.”

(‘Uh ah to let it go as I know this is only a congratulation compliment, not sincere at all.’)

The congratulation compliment on the shop opening day was viewed as a social strategy. The compliment was perceived to be insincere, and so unable to attract the interest of the Northern participants. For social purposes, over a half of the females in the North must feign interest in the compliment.

Less than half of the Northern participants expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As demonstrated in Table 4.5, the females in the North would also prefer pleasure responses (25%) to modesty responses (15%). In terms of pleasure responses, 20% created

mutual pleasure in the form of a smiling return thank you (15%, e.g., NF5) or a smiling return (5%, e.g., NF15); 5% (NF3) signified pleasure with the smiling thank-you.

NF5: [Cười] Hôm nay chị trông cũng rất đẹp. Cảm ơn chị đã đến dự ngày khai trương.
(‘[Smile] Today you look very beautiful too. Thank you for your coming!’)

“Em thấy vui, khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui, và cảm ơn chị ấy.”

(‘I am happy, paying a return compliment to make her happy too, and saying thank-you to her.’)

NF15: [Cười] Chị cũng đẹp thế.
(‘[Smile] Sister, you are also that beautiful.’)

“Thấy vui khi được khen.”

(‘Feel happy when being complimented.’)

NF3: [Cười] Cảm ơn lời khen của chị.
(‘[Smile] Thank you for your compliment.’)

It is apparent that Leech’s (1983) modesty notion did not have a big influence on either Southern or Northern responses to this compliment situation. The number of responses that showed the spirit of modesty was extremely rare in Southern data, occupying 5% as opposed to 15% in Northern data. The Northern modesty response was quite simple, including a ‘smile’ and an expression saying that the complimenter was overstating, for example:

NF17: Chị cứ quá khen ạ [Cười]
(‘You are always overpraising me [Smile]’)

“Vui nhưng phải tỏ ra khiêm tốn.” (‘Be happy but must appear humble.’)

To sum up, the females in the two regions viewed the compliment in this scenario very differently. Most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment while over a half of the females in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

4.6. Responses to Flattery Compliment

As shown in Fig 4.6, 70% of the females in the North and as many as 100% of the females in the South reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the flattery compliment. None of the participants in the South expressed negative feelings about the compliment, whereas 30% of the recipients in the North described a lack of interest.

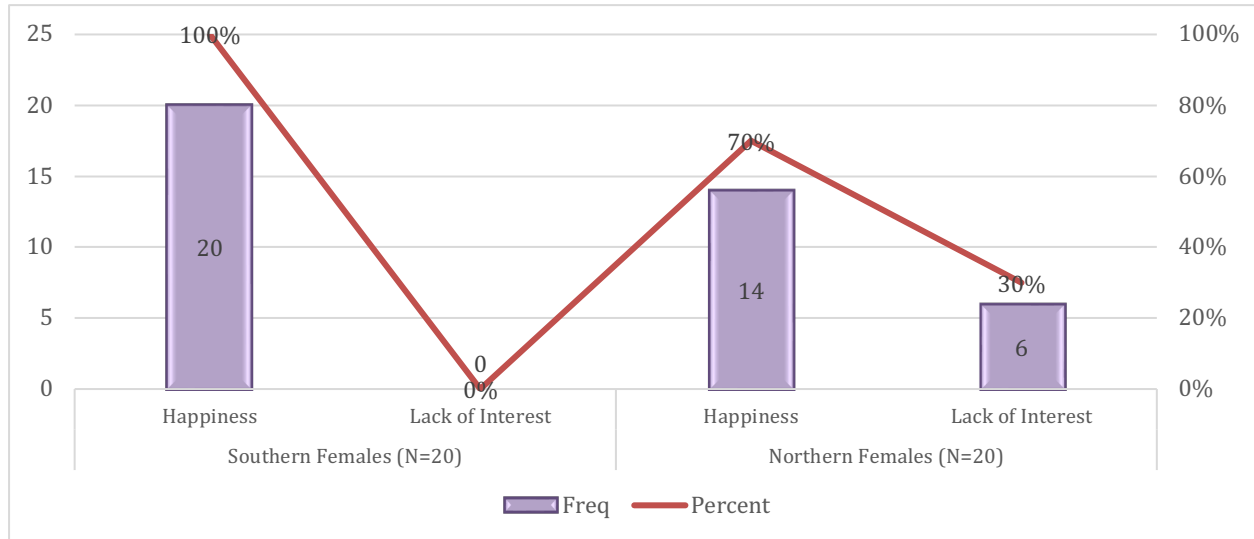


Figure 4.6. Feelings of flattery compliment

Though most of the females in two regions expressed positive feelings about the flattery compliment, there still exist small differences in their choice of response strategies. As we can see in Table 4.6, the females in the South were especially concerned about the notion of modesty in their responses (55%, Modesty vs. 45% Pleasure), whereas the females in the North were not very humble as their pleasure responses (60%) were much higher than modesty responses (10%). No matter how happy the Southern females reported they felt inside their heart, they said that they must appear to be humble as the compliment was insincere. This result marked the first and foremost difference between two groups in this compliment scenario.

Table 4.6

Responses to flattery compliment

Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (45%)	- signified pleasure	4	20%
	- responded to the compliment humorously	4	20%
	- smile	1	5%
Modesty (55%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	6	30%
	- shifted the compliment to the third party	3	15%
	- disagreed with the complimenter	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (0%)			
Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (60%)	- signified pleasure	4	20%
	- responded to the compliment humorously	4	20%
	- smile	3	15%
	- created mutual pleasure	1	5%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (20%)	- closed the conversation	2	10%
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	1	5%
	- explicitly negated the compliment	1	5%
Pretend interest (10%)	- responded with a 'fake' smile	2	10%

As presented in Table 4.6, over a half of the Southern females wanted to express their happiness in a modest way. Nearly 30% (e.g., SF10) minimized the force of the compliment; 15% (e.g., SF18) shifted the compliment to the third party not present in the conversation; 10% (e.g., SF15) disagreed with the complimenter as a sign of modesty.

SF10: [Cười] Cảm ơn em. Chị thấy chị cũng bình thường.
(‘[Smile] Thank you. I feel I am normal.’)

“Ngoài miệng nói vậy nhưng thấy vui trong lòng.”

(‘My mouth is saying that, but my heart is very happy.’)

SF18: [Cười] [Gãi gãi đầu] Đâu có chị thấy trong phòng có nhiều người giỏi và đẹp hơn chị mà.

(‘[Smile] [head scratch] I’m not. I see there are many other people in the sales department who are more talented and beautiful than me.’)

SF15: [Haha] Em đừng nói vậy. Chị thấy em cũng xinh mà. Có thua kém gì chị đâu [Cười mỉm] (‘[Laughing] You shouldn’t say that. I see you are pretty too, not less than me [smile slightly]’)

“Trong lòng thay vui.” (‘Feel happy inside.’)

SF15 began her response with ‘laughing’ and ended with a ‘slight smile’. Though this recipient disagreed with the complimenter “Em đừng nói vậy” (‘You shouldn’t say that’), her response included ‘laughing’, ‘smile’ and ‘Return’. The smile, as commented, may represent a feeling of happiness, so this disagreement was apparently not meant to be a disagreement.

The females in the North would rather responses with pleasure than with modesty. As we can see in Table 4.6, 45% of the females in the South chose responses with pleasure but a much higher 60% of the females in the North chose to express their pleasure explicitly. For the Northern females, 20% signified pleasure with a smiling thank-you (e.g., NF2); 15% chose to smile (e.g., NF16, NF17).

NF2: Cám ơn em. (‘Thank you, sister.’)

“Em thấy vui khi được khen, em không nghĩ là họ khen chỉ để nịnh nọt, mà là khen đúng về em.”

(‘I feel happy when being complimented. I don’t think they compliment me just to flatter me, but they are saying right about me.’)

NF16: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Ai cũng thế khi mình được khen thì ai cũng vui hết.”

(‘Everybody is happy when being complimented.’)

NF17: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Thấy vui khi được cô lễ tân khen nhiều như vậy.”
(‘Feel happy when the receptionist compliments me that much.’)

The Northern females felt happy for many reasons. NF2 was happy due to the thought that the complimenter was saying something right about her. NF17 felt happy when receiving a lot of compliments and NF16 was often happy when being complimented.

The other 20% responded to the compliment humorously, in the form of a smiling joke (5%, NF11), a closing joke (5%, NF10), or a silent joke (10%, NF12). The comments show that NF11 felt proud and satisfied while NF10 was happy upon receiving the compliment. The responses creating mutual pleasure were very small in number (5%).

NF11: [Cười] Đi phẫu thuật thẩm mỹ đấy.
(‘[Smile] I go do plastic surgery.’)

“Vui. Cười đắc ý sáng khoái. Thấy vui và đắc ý với lời khen.”

(‘I feel happy. Smile proudly and satisfactorily. I feel happy and satisfied with the compliment].

NF10: [Cười tươi] Con bé này mà khéo miệng. Em làm việc đi.
(‘[Smile sweetly] This little girl, your mouth is very smooth. Continue your work.’)

“Thấy vui trong lòng vì được khen.”

(‘Feel happy inside when being complimented.’)

NF12: Em được cái nói ngọt. Đạo này em có hay uống nước mía không mà nói ngọt thế? [Cười]
(‘Your mouth is too sweet. Have you recently drunk sugarcane juice so your mouth is that sweet? [smile]’)

For the Southern females, 20% also signified pleasure with a smiling thank-you (e.g. SF1); 5% chose to smile (SF20). The comments show that the Southern females (SF1, SF20) were happy with the compliment even though they realized that the complimenter was flattering.

SF1: [Cười] Cảm ơn em.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister.’)
“Biết bạn này nịnh nhưng vẫn vui.” (‘I know this girl is flattering me, but I am still happy.’)

SF20: [Cười nhẹ] (‘[Smile slightly]’)
“Thay vui trong lòng.” (‘Feel happy inside.’)

The other 20% responded to the compliment humorously by explicitly saying that the complimenter was flattering, in the form of a smiling joke (10%, e.g., SF6), a thankful joke (5%, SF5), or a closing joke (5%, SF8). The comments show that these Southern females were happy with the flattery compliment, irrespective of whether the complimenter was flattering and the compliment was not sincere.

SF6: [Cười] Có mới nói à nhe. Đừng có đưa tôi lên quá.
(‘[Smile] Please say something true. Don’t butter me up.’)

“Em biết cô lễ tân đang nịnh nọt, nhưng em vẫn thấy vui vì lời khen và em sẽ trả lời lại một cách vui đùa.”

(‘I know the receptionist is flattering, but I’m still happy with the compliment, and I will respond humorously.’)

SF5: [Cười] Cảm ơn em. Cô khéo nịnh quá. Có muốn chuyển sang phòng kinh doanh của chị làm không?

(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. You’re good at flattering. Do you want to move to my sales department?’)

SF8: [Cười] Bé này biết cách nịnh người khác. Thôi em làm việc đi. Chị đi công việc xíu.
(‘[Smile] This little girl, you know how to flatter people. Go continue your work. I must go to work.’)

“Cảm thấy cũng vui vì lời khen dù biết là lời khen không thật.”

(‘I feel happy with the compliment even though I know the compliment is not sincere.’)

What made a second major difference between two groups was that zero percent of the females in the South but a much higher 30% of the females in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As manifested in Table 4.6, 20% of the Northern females showed a lack of interest in the compliment in a number of ways; 5% negated the compliment due to its flattery purpose (NF9); 5% expressed some doubt about the compliment (NF19); 10% closed the conversation (e.g., NF20).

NF9: Đẹp cái gì. Xấu lắm. Không đẹp lâu.
(‘Beautiful what? Very ugly. Not beautiful.’)

“Kiểu phản bác phủ nhận lại lời khen. Cô này có vẻ thích được người ta khen. Em cũng thích được khen nhưng tùy lúc. Khen kiểu nịnh bợ em không thích lắm.”

(‘In the sense of denying the compliment. It seems this girl likes to be complimented. I’d also like to be complimented, but depending on what occasion. I don’t like such a flattery compliment.’)

NF19: [Cười] Có thật không vậy?
(‘[Smile] Is that true?’)

“Thường thường những người đứng đầu họ sẽ nhận được những lời khen thế này. Những lời khen thế này thường là một nửa sự thật, một nửa xu nịnh kiểu nịnh bợ người ta lên. Em cũng sẽ cười. Thường nụ cười sẽ bắt đầu cho một lời cảm ơn. Kiểu vừa cười vừa nói nửa đùa nửa thật vì người ta cũng không phải là thật lòng với mình.”

(‘Normally leaders would receive such compliments. Such compliments are usually half the truth and half the flattery like ‘to butter someone up’. I will also smile. To me, a smile works as a thank-you, in the sense of ‘half joking half honest’ because they are not honest with me, either.’)

NF20: [Im lặng] Chị phải lên làm việc rồi.
(‘[Silent] I must go to work.’)

“Tìm cách lảng tránh lời khen sáo rỗng đó. Trong tình huống này, cô lễ tân khá nịnh nọt. Em thì ko hưởng ứng lời khen kiểu nịnh nọt này lắm nên em sẽ im lặng, hoặc nói sang chuyện khác để tránh đối mặt cái lời khen kiểu thế này.”

(‘Find a way to avoid the empty compliment. In this situation, the receptionist is quite flattering. Since I don’t support such a flattering compliment, I will keep silent or switch to another topic to avoid facing this kind of compliment.’)

Given that the flattery compliment was not sincere, and its purpose was to butter someone up, NF19 used a ‘half-joking and half-honest’ strategy. This recipient chose to express some doubt about the compliment, whereas NF20 closed the conversation to avoid facing such an empty compliment. There was only 10% responding with a ‘smile’ to pretend that they were interested in the compliment.

NF14: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Cười tỏ ra vui vẻ bên ngoài nhưng trong lòng không thích đâu vì biết họ đang khen để nịnh nọt thôi. Lời khen không thật nên không thích. Em không thích khen kiểu nịnh nọt như vậy.”

(‘Smile to appear happy outside but inside I don’t like it, because I know they are complimenting to flatter me. The compliment is not sincere, so I don’t like it. I don’t like such flattery compliments.’)

NF15: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Vì biết cô này chỉ là đang khen xã giao, nịnh một chút thôi nên em không thích.”

(‘As I know this woman is complimenting me as a social strategy, just flattering me a little bit so I am not interested.’)

Despite responding to the compliment with a ‘smile’, the comments show that the two females (NF14, NF15) did not value this flattery compliment due to its flattery purpose and insincerity. The ‘smile’ in their responses might be considered a ‘fake’ smile, helping to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment.

To conclude, all the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this scenario though over a half of them appeared humble in the responses. Despite the fact that many females in the North expressed positive feelings about the compliment, some of them still expressed negative feelings about it. Only a small number of the Northern females wanted to be humble in the responses.

4.7. Responses to Admiration Compliment

As depicted in Fig 4.7, 80% of the females in the South and as many as 90% of the females in the North reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the admiration compliment. Only a small percentage of the participants in the two regions reported 'No feelings' and 'Lack of interest'.

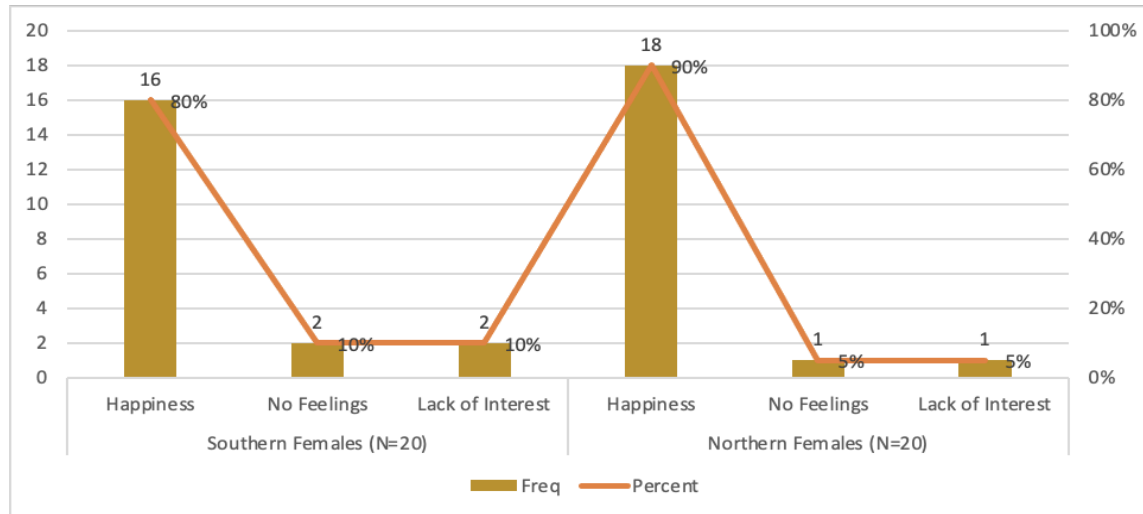


Figure 4.7. Feelings of admiration compliment

As we can see in Table 4.7, even though the females in the two regions expressed positive feelings about the compliment, the two groups differed greatly in the choice of response strategies. At the macro level, as many as 80% of the females in the South said that they were happy but slightly shy when receiving the compliment in this scenario while for the females in the North, this number was only 55%. At the micro level, the Southern females used the strategy 'Appreciating the complimenter' more frequently, occupying 60% as opposed to 20% of 'Ignoring the compliment'. The Northern females, in contrast, used 'Ignoring the compliment' (35%) more often than 'Appreciating the complimenter' (20%).

Table 4.7

Responses to admiration compliment

Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (0%)			
Shyness (80%)	- appreciated the complimenter	12	60%
	- ignored the compliment	4	20%
Modesty (0%)			
No Feelings (10%)			
	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (10%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	2	10%
Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (30%)	- signified pleasure	6	30%
Shyness (55%)	- ignored the compliment	7	35%
	- appreciated the complimenter	4	20%
Modesty (5%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
No Feelings (5%)			
	- head nod	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (5%)	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%

With regard to shyness responses, the Southern females favored 'Appreciating the complimenter' (60%) to 'Ignoring the compliment' (20%). In appreciation for the complimenter, 45% of them responded with the smiling thank you (e.g., SF12) and 15% used the formulaic thank-you (e.g., SF3). For instance, SF3 said thank you to the complimenter, and her thank-you was combined with silence. The comment shows that SF3 felt happy and slightly shy when she

received the compliment in this situation. The silence in her response was associated with the feeling of shyness when receiving the compliment from the man in this context.

SF3: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh.
(‘[silent] Thank you.’)

“Em thấy vui nhưng hơi thẹn thùng tí.”

(‘I’m happy but a bit shy.’)

SF12: [Cười nhẹ] Cảm ơn anh. Em sẽ đàn theo lời anh yêu cầu.
(‘[smile slightly] Thank you. I’ll play a song upon your request.’)

“Có vui nhưng em hơi thẹn với lời khen.”

(‘I’m happy but I feel a bit shy with the compliment.’)

SF12 also said thank-you to the complimenter. Her thank-you was in pair with a smile and a statement that accepted the complimenter's suggestion about playing one more song. The comment shows that she felt happy but slightly shy when she received the compliment. The slight smile embedded in her response was also associated with the feeling of shyness when receiving the man’s compliment in this context.

Almost 20% chose to ignore the compliment with a slight smile in combination with statements that accepted the complimenter's suggestion about playing one more song. To illustrate, SF17 chose to smile as a response to the compliment, and then SF17 agreed with the man’s suggestion about playing one more song “Dạ được” (‘Yes, I can’). For SF13, she also smiled and agreed with the man’s suggestion “Dạ được chứ. Nếu mà anh muốn thưởng thức thì em sẽ đàn tiếp.” (‘Yes I can. If you’d like to enjoy, I’ll continue playing.’).

SF17: [Cười mỉm] Dạ được.
(‘[smile slightly] Yes, I can.’)

“Em cảm thấy thẹn thùng với lời khen.”

(‘I feel shy with the compliment.’)

SF13: [Cười mỉm] Dạ được chứ. Nếu mà anh muốn thưởng thức thì em sẽ đàn tiếp.
(‘[smile slightly] Yes, I can. If you’d like to enjoy, I’ll continue playing.’)

“Em cảm thấy vui nhưng cũng thấy ngại ngại.”

(‘I feel happy but also shy.’)

Based on the comments, though these two Southern females were happy, they were slightly shy when receiving the compliment from the man in this situation.

The Northern females, in contrast, used ‘Ignoring the compliment’ (35%) more often than ‘Appreciating the complimenter’ (20%). To ignore the compliment, 30% chose to smile slightly and then agreed with the man’s suggestion about playing one more song (e.g., NF8); 5% was silent and then indirectly rejected the man’s suggestion about playing one more song (e.g., NF3).

The recipients did not verbally acknowledge the compliment.

NF8: [Mím cười] Nếu anh muốn em có thể.
(‘[smile slightly] If you’d love to, I can.’)

“Em hơi thẹn thùng và bất ngờ với lời khen này.”

(‘I’m a bit shy and surprised by this compliment.’)

NF3: Anh muốn em đàn bài gì? Em biết mỗi bài này [Im lặng]
(‘What song do you want me to play? I only know this song [silent]’)

“Em hơi thẹn với lời khen của anh ấy.”

(‘I’m a bit shy with his compliment.’)

The comments indicate that NF8 and NF3 were slightly shy and surprised when receiving the compliment in this situation. Though NF8 smiled slightly and agreed with the complimenter’s suggestion about playing one more song, she did not verbally acknowledge the compliment. Similarly, NF3 chose to be silent after indirectly rejecting the complimenter’s suggestion. It is likely that NF8 and NF3 chose to ignore the compliment.

Some Northern females (20%, e.g., NF12, NF20) employed the smiling thank-you to show their appreciation for the complimenter. As we can see in the following examples, NF12 said thank-you to the complimenter and rejected his suggestion about playing one more song right at the moment. The comment indicates that NF12 wanted to accept the compliment, but she would not like to continue playing another song immediately after the complimenter's suggestion. In her opinion, it would not be good to agree with the man's suggestion immediately. As she reported, she wanted to 'make a price' in front of boys.

NF12: Cám ơn anh. Hẹn anh vào một dịp khác [mim cười]
(‘Thank you. I'll play the other time [smile slightly]’)

“Em sẽ cảm ơn trước. Nếu có thời gian thì em sẽ nhận lời đàn tiếp. Em chấp nhận lời khen nhưng em không đàn tiếp liền mà sẽ hẹn vào một dịp khác. Vì chấp nhận liền có vẻ không tốt lắm, phải làm giá một tí trước con trai.”

(‘I would say thank you first. If I had time, I would agree to play one more song. I accept the compliment but I don't want to continue playing right at that moment. I want to continue the other time. It's not good to agree immediately. I want to 'make a price' in front of boys.’)

NF20: [Cười mim] Cám ơn.
([smile slightly] Thank you.’)

“Em hơi thẹn với lời khen của anh ấy. Tuy nhiên em vẫn nhìn thẳng vào anh ấy để ngụ ý cảm ơn vì lời khen.”

(‘I feel slightly shy with his compliment, but I still want to look at him directly to show my thanks for the compliment.’)

NF20 also smiled slightly and said thank-you to the complimenter. The comment states that NF20 felt slightly shy when receiving the compliment but she wanted to show her thanks for the compliment. Her slight smile would most probably represent a feeling of happiness and shyness.

Another major difference between the two groups was the imbalance between pleasure and modesty responses under the category of happiness. As presented in Table 4.7, while zero percent of the females in the South but as many as 30% of the females in the North said that they were happy with the compliment, and so would like to let the complimenter know their feeling. They could signify their pleasure in the form of a smiling thank-you (20%, e.g., NF15, NF16) or a formulaic thank-you (10%, e.g., NF11).

NF15: Cảm ơn anh. Nếu anh muốn thì tôi có thể đàn lại thêm một lần nữa [Cười]
(‘Thank you. If you'd love to, then I can play it one more time [smile]’)

“Anh này kiêu thích cô này. Có người thích mình mình phải vui. Nếu em là cô ấy em có thể nhận lời khen của anh ấy, nói cảm ơn và chấp nhận đàn thêm một bài nữa.”

(‘It seems to me that the man likes the girl. I feel happy when somebody likes me. If I were her, I would accept the compliment, say thank you, and agree to play one more song.’)

NF16: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Anh muốn em đàn bài gì?
([smile] Thank you. What song do you want me to play?)

“Thấy vui trong lòng.”

(‘I feel happy in my heart.’)

NF11: Cảm ơn anh vì đã khen. Em sẽ đàn thêm bài nữa.
(‘Thank you for your compliment. I'll play one more song.’)

“Em sẽ nhận lời khen này vì người đã nói thế, biết thưởng thức tài năng của mình nên mình phải vui.”

(‘I will accept this compliment because he said so. That means he knew and enjoyed my talents, so I am very happy.’)

Both NF15 and NF16 said thank-you to the complimenter and agreed to continue playing one more song. Their thank-you was especially in pair with a smile. For NF15, the man (i.e., the complimenter) liked the girl and so using a smiling thank-you NF15 was most likely to accept the compliment. NF15 said that she felt happy when somebody liked her. NF16 also reported

that she felt happy in her heart when she received the compliment from the man. Thus, her smiling thank-you may represent her sense of pleasure when she received the compliment in this situation. Similarly, NF11 said thank-you to the complimenter and agreed to play one more song. Though NF11's response did not contain a smile, the comment reveals that NF11 would accept the compliment as the man enjoyed her talents. She said that she was happy when the man knew and enjoyed her talents.

To sum up, although most of the females in the two regions expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this scenario, the two groups differed in the choice of response strategies. In the South, the females liked shyness responses that may appreciate the complimenter. In the North, over a half of the females favored shyness responses that may ignore the compliment; some of them would like to signify their pleasure to let people know that they were feeling happy.

4.8. Responses to Flirty Compliment

As Fig 4.8 illustrates, there was not a difference among the females in two regions. As many as 100% of the Southern and the Northern females reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the flirty compliment. At the macro level, as we can see in Table 4.8, most of the Southern and the Northern females reported a feeling of shyness (80% and 90% respectively). A very small percentage of the participants in the two regions chose to respond with pleasure and modesty.

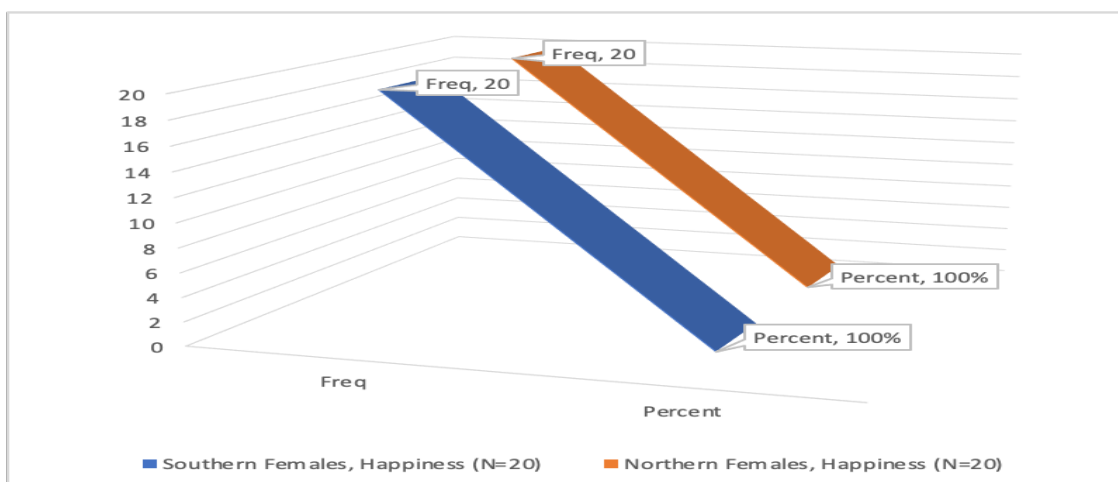


Figure 4.8. Feelings of flirty compliment

Table 4.8

Responses to flirty compliment

Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (10%)	- signified pleasure	2	10%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Shyness (80%)	- smile	8	40%
	- made a joke	6	30%
	- stopped the complimenter	1	5%
	- appreciated the complimenter	1	5%
Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (5%)	- agreed with the compliment with pride	1	5%
Modesty (5%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
Shyness (90%)	- smile	8	40%
	- explicitly negated the compliment	4	20%
	- appreciated the complimenter	4	20%
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	1	5%
	- silence	1	5%

At the micro level, the two groups were similar in using ‘smile’ as the most frequent strategy (both at 40%). For the Southern females, ‘smile’ was associated with positive feelings. To illustrate, SF10 and SF18 responded to the compliment with a slight smile. The comment shows that SF10 was very happy upon receiving the compliment; however, she was shy and so she decided not to say anything in addition to smiling.

SF10: [Cười nhẹ] (‘[smile slightly]’)

“Em hơi ngại ngùng một chút. Trong lòng rất sướng nhưng không nói ra.”

(‘I am a little shy. In my heart I feel very happy but I don’t say it out.’)

SF18: [Cười nhẹ] (‘[smile slightly]’)

“Em thấy thẹn nên chỉ nhìn anh ấy cười thẹn thùng chứ không nói gì.”

(‘I feel shy so I just look at him and smile. I don’t want to say anything.’)

For the Northern females, ‘smile’ was also associated with positive feelings. To illustrate, for NF15, the girl (i.e., the complimentee) might like the man (i.e., the complimenter). NF15 said that she felt happy when the man compliments her. In addition to the ‘smile’, NF15 reported that she would look down a bit, and then would glance up to see the man and then look down again to show that she was feeling shy when receiving the compliment from the man.

NF15: [Cười nhẹ] (‘[smile slightly]’)

“Em thấy vui khi anh ấy khen em. Vì em thấy cô gái này có vẻ thích anh này. Nếu em trong hoàn cảnh này em sẽ cúi mặt xuống một chút vì ngại, sau đó liếc lên nhìn lên anh ấy một chút rồi lại cúi xuống.”

(‘I felt happy when he complimented me. I think this girl might like this man. If I were in this situation I would look down a bit due to shyness, then I would glance up to see him a bit and then look down again.’)

NF13: [Cười nhẹ] (‘[smile slightly]’)

“Em thích được anh ấy khen mặc dù em thấy ngại ngùng khi anh ấy khen em. Em sẽ nhìn sang chỗ khác để che dấu sự ngại ngùng của mình.”

(‘I liked being complimented by this man even though I felt shy when he complimented me. I’ll look away to hide my shyness.’)

NF13 also responded to the compliment with a slight smile. The comment says that she liked to receive a compliment from the man even though she might feel shy. NF13 also said that she wanted to look away to hide her shyness. Like the ‘smile’ analyzed in the Southern examples, the smile in the Northern responses could serve as a strategy that would help these Northern females hide their real positive feelings.

At the micro level, the females in the South differed from the females in the North in making a joke, the strategy showing that some Southern females (30%) were feeling shy.

SF4: Anh đang muốn của em? [Cười nhẹ]
(‘Do you want to flirt with me? [smile slightly]’)

“Em thấy vui và thẹn thùng với lời khen.”

(‘I feel happy and shy with the compliment.’)

SF13: [Cười mỉm] Nếu đó là những gì anh đang suy nghĩ thì em sẽ nấu cho anh ăn dài dài.
(‘[smile slightly] If that is what you are thinking about, then I’ll cook for you in a long time.’)

“Em vui và hơi thẹn vì được khen.”

(‘I was happy and slightly shy when being complimented.’)

SF16: [Cười mỉm] Anh khéo nịnh. Thấy ghét.
(‘[smile slightly] You’re good at flattering. I hate you.’)

“Em thấy vui và ngại ngùng vì được khen. Em biết anh ấy đang nịnh để em vui.”

(‘I felt happy and shy when being complimented. I know he was flattering to make me happy.’)

According to the comments, some females in the South (e.g., SF4, SF13, SF16) were very happy and shy upon receiving the compliment from the man in this scenario. Though SF16 knew that the man (i.e., the complimenter) was flattering to make her happy, the comment clearly indicates that she was still feeling happy when being complimented by the man.

Moreover, Table 4.8 shows that the females in the North differed from the females in the South in that some females in the North (20%) tended to explicitly negate the compliment while zero percent of the females in the South used this strategy. To illustrate, NF11 reported that she was happy when somebody complimented her. The reason she was feeling shy was due to the thought that she did not cook very well. This may explain why she chose to negate the compliment explicitly even though she was happy in receiving the compliment.

NF11: Em không nấu ăn ngon lắm đâu. Không cần phải khen em đâu.
(‘I don’t cook very well. You don’t need to compliment me.’)

“Khi người ta khen thì em vui nhưng em nghĩ em không nấu ăn ngon lắm, nên người ta khen em cảm thấy ngại ngùng.”

(‘When somebody complimented me, I felt happy. But I think I didn’t cook very well, so I felt shy when being complimented.’)

NF3: [Cười] Em chả nấu ăn ngon mấy. Lần sau anh lại đến ăn cơm nữa.
(‘[smile] I don’t cook very well. Next time you can come to eat dinner again.’)

“Tỏ ra e thẹn, ngại ngùng nhưng vui mừng vì được người ta khen. Em sẽ nhìn anh ấy tí rồi quay sang chỗ khác trong trường hợp em thích anh này. Em nghĩ vì anh này thích cô này nên anh này mới khen cô này nấu ăn ngon. Anh này chỉ khen vì thích cô này thôi, vì muốn lấy lòng cô ấy. Cũng có thể cô này nấu ăn ngon thật, lạ miệng thật.”

(‘I wanted to appear shy and embarrassed but in fact, I was very happy when being complimented. If I like this man, I’ll glance at him a bit and then turn away. I think because this man likes the girl, he complimented that the girl cooked very well. He complimented her because he liked her and wanted to win her affection. She might also cook well and her food might be a new taste to him.’)

NF3 also explicitly negated the compliment. According to the comment, NF3 chose to explicitly negate the compliment because she would like to appear shy and embarrassed. In fact, she was feeling very happy. For NF3, the man complimented the girl since the man liked the girl and wanted to win the girl's affection. The fact that the girl might cook well and her food might be a new taste to the man was only a minor reason for his compliment.

Another difference between the two groups at the micro level was that only five percent of the females in the South but a much higher 20% of the females in the North expressed appreciation for the complimenter. The Northern females expressed their appreciation in the form of a smiling thank you (10%, e.g., NF20), a courteous thank-you (5%, NF17), and a modest thank you (5%, NF14).

NF20: [Cười nhẹ] cảm ơn.
(‘[smile slightly] Thank you.’)

“Em vui nhưng hơi thẹn.”

(‘I was happy but still a bit shy.’)

NF17: Cảm ơn anh [Cười] Anh ăn nhiều vào một chút.
(‘Thank you [smile] You should eat more.’)

“Vui, nhưng trong tình huống này em sẽ nhìn vào mâm cơm không dám nhìn lên vì ngại.”

(‘Feeling happy, but in this situation I will look at the rice tray. I dare not look up because I’m shy.’)

NF14: [Mim cười] Cảm ơn anh nhưng mà em vẫn còn kém lắm.
(‘[smile] Thank you, brother but I am very bad.’)

“Vui nhưng em sẽ nhìn chỗ khác vì ngại.”

(‘Feeling happy but I will look somewhere else because I’m shy.’)

These Northern females said that they felt happy and slightly shy when receiving the compliment from the man. NF17 also added that she would look at the rice tray, not looking up because she was feeling shy. NF14 wanted to look somewhere else as she was shy. Generally, these Northern females were happy with the compliment and showed their thanks to the complimenter. The smile included in these responses was associated with positive feelings.

To sum up, both the Southern and the Northern females expressed positive feelings about the compliment. Despite being happy with the compliment, the females in the two regions reported being slightly shy when receiving the compliment from the man in this scenario. There also exist some small differences in the choice of micro strategies between the two groups.

4.9. Region Summary

The results of the sociolinguistic interviews showed considerable differences in regional variation and the degree of variation varied greatly depending on the compliment scenarios. Perceiving thank-you and joking compliments as positive, the males in both regions differed slightly in the choice of CR strategies. For the thank-you compliment, the Southern males employed the smiling scale-down more frequently while the Northern males favored the explaining scale-down. For the joking compliment, the males in the South favored responses with pleasure and modesty, whereas the males in the North were less humble in their responses.

As regards encouragement and sport-session ending compliments, we found large regional variations. Only a half of the males in the South expressed positive feelings about the encouragement compliment while for the males in the North, this number was much higher. A large number of the males in the South viewed the sport session-ending compliment as a positive

act. The males in the North were concerned about the appropriateness of the compliment in this situation, and so nearly a half of them expressed negative feelings about this compliment.

Perceiving admiration and flirtily compliments as positive, the females in both regions differed slightly in the choice of CR strategies. In response to the admiration compliment, the females in the South favored shyness responses that appreciated the complimenter while their Northern counterparts liked shyness responses that ignored the compliment. In response to the flirty compliment, the females in both regions reported being slightly shy when receiving the compliment. However, we still found some small differences in the choice of micro strategies employed by the two groups.

With respect to congratulation and flattery compliments, we found large differences in regional variation. The females in the South expressed positive feelings about the congratulation compliment while over a half of the females in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment. Though perceiving the flattery compliment as positive, the females in the South appeared humble in their responses. A vast number of the females in the North expressed positive feelings about the compliment, but some of them still expressed negative feelings about it. Only a small number of the Northern females wanted to be humble in the responses.

To sum up, the results of the sociolinguistic interviews showed dramatic differences in CRs across regions. The degree of variation varied greatly depending on the compliment scenarios. The next section examines compliment responses across genders.

GENDER VARIATION

The third research question of the present study was investigating CRs and gender variation in Vietnamese. Based on an initial actual data analysis, none of gender differences were found in responses to thank-you compliment and to flirty compliment. Thus, an analysis of CRs and gender variation in these two compliment situations was not included in the present section. The section mainly focused on a comparison of CRs between two genders, Southern males vs. Southern females, and Northern males vs. Northern females, according to the other six compliment scenarios as described in Table 3.5 in section 3.2.

4.10. Responses to Encouragement Compliment

Regarding this compliment scenario, an initial actual data analysis did not indicate any difference between males and females in the North, so this section merely focuses on analyzing CRs and gender variation in the South.

As shown in Fig 4.9, there was a dramatic difference between the Southern males and the Southern females. Only a half of the males (50%) but a much higher 90% of the females reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. A very small percentage of the females (10%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment while as many as 50% of the males reported 'No feelings.'

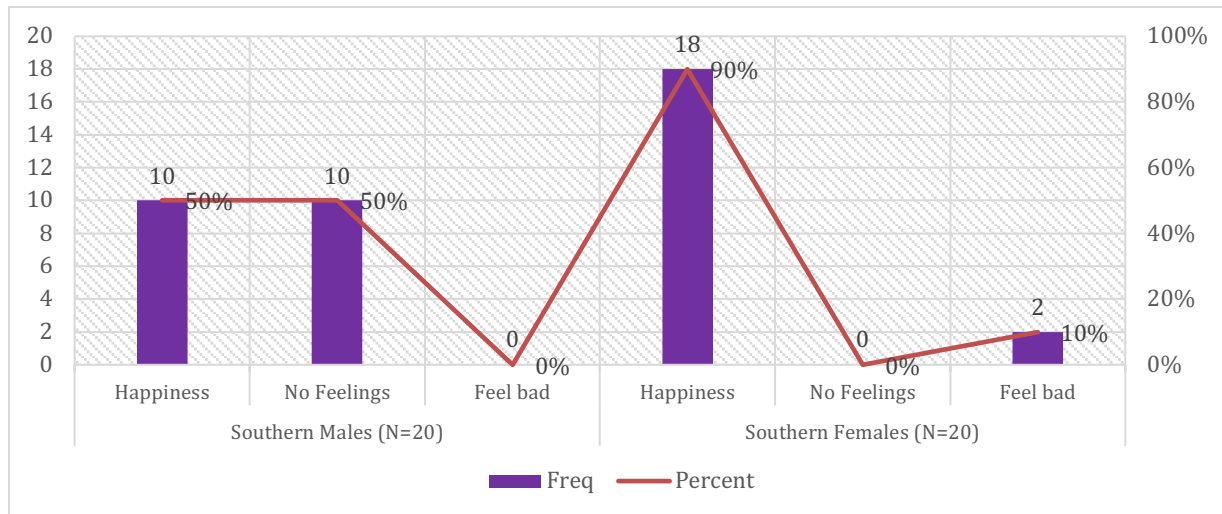


Figure 4.9. Feelings of encouragement compliment across genders in the South

Table 4.9

Responses to encouragement compliment across genders in the South

Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Find solace (50%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	6	30%
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	3	15%
	- silence	1	5%
No Feelings (50%)			
	- responded with nonverbal reactions	5	25%
	- made a promise to try better	3	15%
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%
	- reluctantly agreed with the complimenter	1	5%
Feel bad (0%)			
Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Modesty (10%)	- disagreed with the complimenter	2	10%
Find solace (80%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	10	50%
	- silence	4	20%
	- made a promise to try better	1	5%
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	1	5%
No Feelings (0%)			
Feel bad (10%)			
	- implicitly negated the compliment	2	10%

As Table 4.9 demonstrates, a half of the males in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment as 50% reported that they found solace in the compliment. Around 30% responded to the compliment in different forms of thank-you. The formulaic thank-you (e.g., SM9, SM10) was used most frequently (15%); the promising thank-you (e.g., SM6) occurred at a lower frequency (10%); the happy thank-you (e.g., SM11) was employed very rarely (5%).

SM9: Cám ơn em [im lặng]

(‘Thank you [silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người quan tâm sẽ thấy vui hơn là khi ở một mình.”

(‘When I am sad, somebody who cares will help me feel happier than being alone.’)

SM10: Cám ơn em [Im lặng]

(‘Thank you [silent]’)

“Khi buồn người khác khen sẽ vui hơn.”

(‘When I am sad, if somebody compliments me, then I will feel a lot happier.’)

SM6: [Im lặng] Cám ơn em. Anh sẽ cố gắng hơn.

(‘[silent] Thank you. I’ll try harder.’)

“Em thấy vui hơn vì đang buồn có người khen nên thấy an ủi hơn.”

(‘I feel happier because when I am sad, a compliment makes me feel more comforted.’)

SM11: Nghe em nói vậy anh thấy vui lắm. Cám ơn em nhiều [Im lặng]

(‘I’m glad when you say that. Thank you [silent]’)

The comments show that these Southern males felt a lot happier and much more comforted when receiving the compliment in this context. Thus, 30% of them chose to say thank-you to the complimenter to signify that they found comfort in the compliment. Only 15% expressed some doubt about the compliment (e.g., SM5), while the other 5% (SM15) chose to be silent.

SM5: Uh. Vậy hả? [Im lặng]

(‘Uhm really? [silent]’)

“Im lặng nhưng trong lòng vui hơn. Trong tâm trạng buồn có người động viên khen em, em vẫn cảm thấy được an ủi phần nào.”

(‘Being silent, but I felt more joyful in my heart. Being in a bad mood, somebody who encourages and compliments me will help me feel slightly comforted.’)

SM15: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người khen thấy vui hơn.”

(‘When I was sad, a compliment made me feel a lot happier.’)

Though SM5 expressed some doubt about the compliment, the comment indicates that SM5 was more joyful and comforted when being complimented in such a situation. For SM15, the compliment made him feel a lot happier.

As many as 90% of the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment. Approximately 80% reported that they found solace in the compliment and 10% said that they were happy but appeared humble. As we can see in Table 4.9, 50% responded to the compliment in different forms of thank-you. The formulaic thank-you (e.g., SF17) was in use most frequently (25%); the promising thank-you (e.g., SF14) and the happy thank-you (e.g., SF19) were used very occasionally (10%); the smiling thank-you (SF11) only occupied 5%. The comments show that these Southern females felt happy when they received the compliment in this situation.

SF17: Cám ơn. (‘Thank you’)

“Khi buồn có người khen em thấy vui hơn, có động lực hơn.”

(‘When I am sad, a compliment will make me feel happier and more motivated.’)

SF14: Cám ơn. Cám ơn vì đã động viên. Mình sẽ cố gắng vượt qua.

(‘Thank you. Thanks for your encouragement. I’ll try to get over it.’)

“Khi buồn có người khác khen sẽ vui hơn.”

(‘When I am sad, a compliment will make me feel a lot happier.’)

SF19: Cám ơn. Tôi đã ổn hơn vì lời khen động viên của bạn.

(‘Thank you. I got better thanks to your compliment.’)

“Em sẽ cúi đầu xuống và nhìn qua cô ấy nói. Khi buồn có người khen em thấy vui hơn.”

(‘I’ll lower my head and look over at her to say. When I’m sad, a compliment makes me happier.’)

SF11: [Cười] Cảm ơn bạn đã động viên.
(‘[smile] Thank you for your encouragement.’)

“Khi buồn có người khen sẽ thấy vui hơn.”

(‘When I am sad, a compliment will make me feel a lot happier.’)

The ‘silence’ strategy was not used commonly by the males (only 5%) but was used more frequently by the females (20%). The females chose to be silent for two major reasons. To illustrate, SF13 was silent to think about the compliment; SF12 was silent to see whether the compliment was sincere.

SF13: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Tình huống này em sẽ im lặng để suy nghĩ về lời khen của cô ấy. Khi buồn có người khen em sẽ vui hơn.”

(‘In this situation, I will be silent to think about her compliment. When I’m sad, a compliment makes me happier.’)

SF12: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người an ủi sẽ thấy đỡ buồn hơn vì thấy có người quan tâm, bản thân còn có ích cho xã hội. Em sẽ quay trở lại làm việc với tâm trạng vui hơn. Em im lặng để xem lời khen này có thật lòng không, chứ không phải chỉ là lời động viên hoa lệ. Vì con người ta khi tuyệt vọng sẽ cần niềm tin ở người đối diện.”

(‘When I was sad, I felt less unhappy if somebody comforted me, because I could see that somebody was caring about me and that I was still useful to society. I’ll get back to my work in a happier mood. I was silent to see whether her compliment was sincere or just a fancy word of encouragement. Because when people were in depression, they would need faith in the people opposite.’)

The silence in these responses was associated with positive feelings, showing that the recipients was feeling happy and thinking about the compliment.

Only a small number of the females expressed negative feelings about the compliment while another half of the males reported ‘No feelings’. As shown in Table 4.9, 10% of the females said that the compliment in this situation made them feel bad. As a result, these females (SF6, SF7) implicitly negated the compliment.

SF6: Chắc mọi người chỉ đang an ủi mình thôi [Im lặng]
(‘Everybody is possibly comforting me [silent]’)

“Sẽ cảm thấy buồn hơn vì khi em buồn em chỉ muốn tự mình vượt qua. Không muốn ai làm phiền. Càng nói mình chỉ càng thấy buồn hơn thôi.”

(‘I felt more upset because when I was in a bad mood, I always wanted to overcome it by myself. The more she talked, the more I felt upset.’)

SF7: Thật hả? Nhưng mà thôi em đừng khen nữa. Anh biết anh đang ở đâu.
(‘Really? But you shouldn’t compliment me. I know where I am.’)

“Khi buồn được khen thì em sẽ cảm thấy nửa vui nửa buồn vì lúc đó em đang trong cảm xúc lẫn lộn, chưa biết hướng đi tương lai của em thế nào; tương lai của em sẽ đi về đâu.”

(‘When I was in a bad mood, the compliment made me feel half happy and half sad because I don’t know what my future direction is? and where my future is going on?’)

According to the comments, the compliment was not welcomed in this situation since the compliment may make the recipient feel upset. As SF6 commented, she wanted to overcome the situation by herself. SF7 might not believe in the compliment as she was not sure about her future upon receiving the compliment.

According to another half of the males in the South, the compliment in this situation was not appropriate. As shown in Table 4.9, 50% of the males said that they had no feelings about the compliment, of which 25% employed nonverbal responses such as silence (10%), silence in pair with head nod (5%), smile in pair with silence (5%), silence with smile and head nod (5%).

According to the following comments, the compliment in this situation was deemed inappropriate. SM17 was silent and then started smiling and nodding his head to show his thanks

for the compliment while SM18 was silent thinking about the compliment. Thus, the silence in these responses was associated with an appreciation (e.g., SM17) or allowed space for the thinking (e.g., SM18).

SM17: [Im lặng] [Mím cười] [Gật đầu]
(‘[silent] [smile] [nodding]’)

“Em mỉm cười gật đầu thể hiện sự cảm ơn chứ thật ra khen ở đây là không thích hợp.”

(‘I smiled and nodded my head to show my thanks, but actually a compliment in this situation was not appropriate.’)

SM18: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Em thấy khen ở đây không có ý nghĩa gì nhưng em vẫn im lặng để suy nghĩ về những gì cô ấy nói.”

(‘A compliment in this context doesn’t make any sense, but I want to be silent thinking about what she has just said.’)

Some others, for example, SM4 said that the compliment may not be appropriate as the recipient may be more disappointed if receiving a compliment in this situation. For SM14, the compliment in this situation cannot make her feel good or bad.

SM4: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này vì em nghĩ rằng tình huống này càng khen em sẽ càng buồn thêm thôi.”

(‘I don’t have any feeling about this compliment because in this situation I’ll be more disappointed if I receive a compliment.’)

SM14: [Cười] [Im lặng]
(‘[smile] [silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người khen cũng không thấy vui cũng không thấy buồn.”

(‘When I am in a bad mood, a compliment doesn’t make me feel good or bad.’)

Another 15% made a promise to try better. For example, SM19 seems to agree with the complimenter (‘Uhm’) and promised to do better (“Tao sẽ cố gắng” ‘I’ll try harder’). He might be happy as he realized that the complimenter has really appreciated his talents; however, his

comment shows that the compliment in this situation did not have any influence on his mood.

The comment again confirms that SM19 had no feelings about the compliment in this situation.

SM19: Uh. Tao sẽ cố gắng.
(‘Uhm. I’ll try harder.’)

“Có lẽ thấy vui hơn vì họ biết quý trọng tài năng của mình. Khi có người an ủi mình, mình cảm thấy quý trọng người ấy thôi chứ thật sự mình thất bại trong cuộc sống lời khen an ủi ấy không có ảnh hưởng mấy đến tâm trạng của mình. Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen trong tình huống này.”

(‘I might be happy because she has appreciated my talents. When somebody gives me a compliment in order to comfort me, I will appreciate that person, but actually when I fail in life such a compliment doesn’t have any influence on my mood. I don’t have any feeling about the compliment in this situation.’)

Only 5% (n=1) of the males responded with the formulaic thank-you (SM20) and the other 5% (n=1) reluctantly agreed with the complimenter (SM12). Even though SM20 said thank you to the complimenter, his comment shows that he had no feelings about the compliment as he has not seen his real success.

SM20: Cảm ơn. (‘Thank you’)

“Em sẽ nhìn thẳng vào cô ấy. Vì em chưa thấy được hành động thiết thực mà em sẽ làm ra nên em chỉ nói cảm ơn với cô ấy. Em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này.”

(‘I’ll look at her. Since I haven’t seen my real success, I just said thank you to her. I have no feelings for this compliment.’)

SM12: Uhm. Tôi biết mọi việc rồi sẽ qua [Im lặng]
(‘Uhm. I know everything will be ok [silent]’)

“Khi buồn có người khen thì tâm trạng vẫn không khá hơn, tâm trạng bình thường. Lời khen ở đây không có tác dụng với em.”

(‘When being in a bad mood, a compliment cannot help me better. I feel normal. A compliment in this situation doesn’t work for me.’)

Similarly, SM12 reluctantly agreed with the compliment as he responded that (“Uhm. Tôi biết mọi việc rồi sẽ qua [Im lặng]” ‘Uhm. I know everything will be ok [silent]’). Nonetheless, his comment indicates that the compliment in this situation did not actually work for him. As he commented above, the compliment was unable to help him feel better.

To sum up, most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment. For the males, the compliment in this scenario could be a positive and a negative act. A half of the males expressed positive feelings while another half reported ‘No feelings’ about the compliment in this scenario.

4.11. Responses to Sport session-ending Compliment

An initial actual analysis of responses to the compliment in this scenario did not indicate any difference between males and females in the South. The main focus of the present section was examining CRs and gender variation in the North.

There were some similarities and differences between males and females in the North. As depicted in Fig 4.10, 55% of the males and 60% of the females reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. The difference was that 40% of the females expressed a lack of interest in the compliment while 45% of the males reported ‘No feelings’.

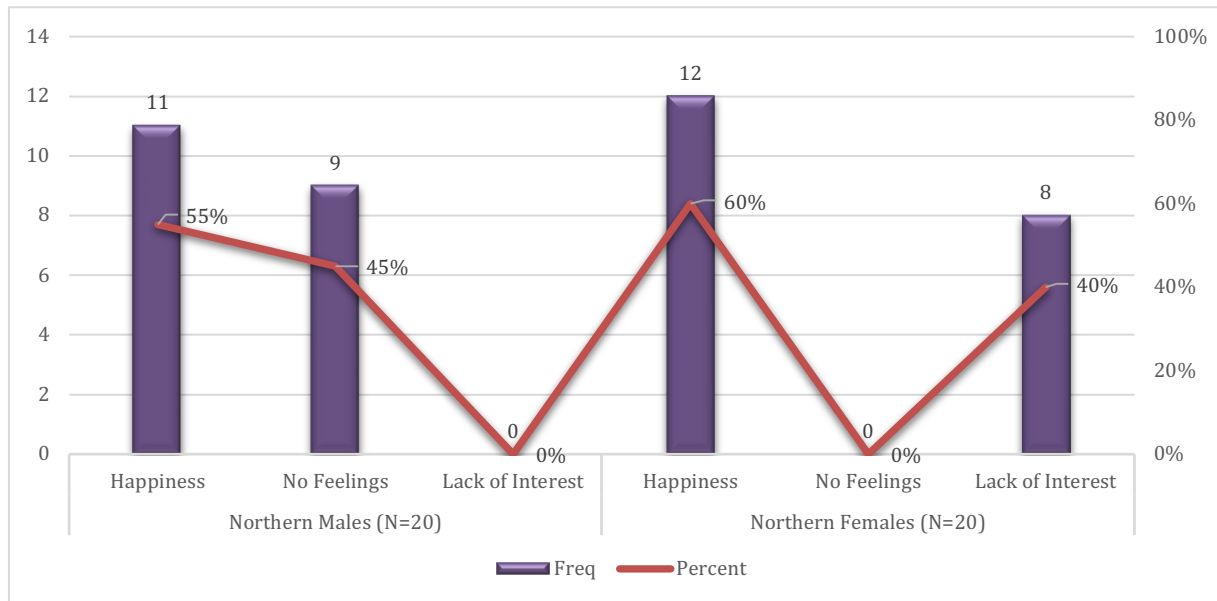


Figure 4.10. Feelings of sport session-ending compliment across genders in the North

Table 4.10

Responses to Sport session-ending compliment across genders in the North

Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (35%)	- signified pleasure	5	25%
	- created mutual pleasure	2	10%
Modesty (20%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
	- shifted the praise to the complimenter	3	15%
No Feelings (45%)			
	- silence	3	15%
	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
	- reluctantly agreed with the complimenter	2	10%
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%
	- closed the conversation	1	5%
Lack of Interest (0%)			
Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (25%)	- created mutual pleasure	3	15%
	- signified pleasure	1	5%
	- silence	1	5%
Modesty (35%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	5	25%
	- shifted the praise to the complimenter	1	5%
	- disagreed with the complimenter	1	5%
No Feelings (0%)			
Lack of Interest			
Lack Interest (20%)	- switched to another topic	3	15%
	- explicitly negated the compliment	1	5%
Pretend Interest (20%)	- responded with a 'fake' smile	3	15%
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%

Despite positive feelings about the compliment, the males and the females differed slightly in the choice of response strategies. For the males, pleasure responses were given precedence over modesty responses. As Table 4.10 demonstrates, 25% of the males signified pleasure in different forms of thank-you, of which 15% used the promising thank-you (e.g., NM7, NM9) and 10% employed the smiling thank-you (e.g., NM10). These Northern males said that they were happy when receiving the compliment. The compliment in this situation may help

them feel motivated for future practice.

NM7: Cảm ơn. Lần sau em sẽ cố gắng tốt hơn nữa.
(‘Thank you. Next time I will try to do a lot better.’)

“Em thấy rất là vui khi được khen thế.”

(‘I feel very happy when receiving such a compliment.’)

NM9: Cảm ơn anh. Em sẽ tiếp tục luyện tập tốt hơn.
(‘Thank you. I’ll continue to practice better.’)

“Em rất là vui. Vì em mới bắt đầu chơi môn thể thao mới mà nhận được lời khen, em sẽ thấy vui và cảm thấy có động lực để luyện tập hơn.”

(‘I feel very happy. I’ve just started playing a new sport, so getting a compliment makes me feel happy and motivated to practice much more.’)

NM10: Cảm ơn vì lời khen của cậu [Cười]
(‘Thank you for your compliment [smile]’)

“Em thấy vui khi bạn ấy khen em.” (‘I feel happy when that friend compliments me.’)

Ten percent (e.g., NM12) created mutual pleasure by including a similar compliment:

NM12: Đành ấy hôm nay đánh cũng tốt phết thể nhỉ [Cười]
(‘Today you also hit quite well too.’)

“Có đi có lại, họ khen mình thì mình khen họ lại.”

(‘You scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours. If somebody compliments me, then I will compliment them in return.’)

For NM12, if somebody did him a favor, he would return it. Thus, he responded to the compliment with a similar compliment.

Only a small number of the males appeared humble in their responses. In order to express their sense of happiness in a modest way, 15% shifted the praise to the complimenter (e.g., NM4) and 5% minimized the force of the compliment with a thanking scale-down (NM3).

NM4: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh. Là do em có một người thầy dạy tốt.
(‘[silent] Thank you. It’s because I have a good teacher.’)

“Được khen thấy vui và sẽ cố gắng đạt được mục đích tốt hơn. Tuy nhiên em vẫn muốn khiêm tốn khi trả lời.”

(‘I feel happy when being complimented and I will strive to achieve better goals. However, I still want to be humble in my response.’)

NM3: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Tôi đã cố gắng rất nhiều.
(‘[smile] Thank you. I’ve tried a lot.’)

“Em thật sự rất vui nhưng khiêm tốn là tốt nhất.”

(‘I am really very happy but being humble is the best.’)

Despite downgrading the compliment, the comments show that the two Northern males were feeling happy when they received the compliment. However, they said that being humble was the best, so they shifted the praise to the complimenter or minimized the force of the compliment.

The females would rather responses with modesty (35%) than with pleasure (25%). In spite of having a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment, the females wanted to be humble by minimizing the force of the compliment using a smiling scale-down (e.g., NF1, NF10). This was the most frequently used strategy (25%). As we can see in the examples below, NF1 and NF10 were happy with the compliment as they viewed the compliment in this situation as an encouragement. To be modest they said that their achievement was thanks to regular practice for a long time.

NF1: [Cười] Có thể là do tập luyện thôi.
(‘[smile] It may be thanks to my regular practice.’)

NF10: Ok [Cười] Đây là một quá trình tập luyện đấy cậu ạ.
(‘Ok [smile] You know, this is a long practice process.’)

“Cảm thấy vui vì lời khen này như là một lời động viên.”

(‘I was happy because this compliment is an encouragement.’)

In addition, 5% shifted the praise to the complimenter (NF9) and 5% disagreed with the complimenter (NF15). NF9 shifted the praise to the complimenter as to her thoughts, it was necessary to appreciate those who helped her. She said that the compliment made her feel happy

and motivated. She viewed the compliment as a positive act as it lets her know that she was able to grow and make real progress.

NF9: [Im lặng] Nhờ sự giúp đỡ của anh em mới tiến bộ.
(‘[silent] Thanks to your help, I’ve made progress.’)

“Ít nhất là phải kể công người ta đã giúp mình. Tiếp theo là vui và thấy có động lực cố gắng phát triển. Ít nhất là lời khen cho thấy mình có thể phát triển và tiến bộ hơn.”

(‘At least I need to credit the people who helped me. Next, I feel happy and motivated to try to develop. The compliment at least lets me know that I was able to grow and make real progress.’)

NF15: Uh. Không có gì. Mình cảm giác mình chưa tốt lắm, mình vẫn bình thường, chưa thể bằng người ta.
(‘Uh It is nothing. I feel I’m not very good. I’m still normal, not as good as others.’)

“Người ta khen mình như vậy thì sẽ giúp mình chăm chỉ, mình sẽ chăm tập hơn để mỗi ngày mình khá dần dần lên.”

(‘A compliment like this will help me work hard. I will practice harder so I get better day by day.’)

Though NF15 disagreed with the complimenter, the comment shows that NF15 viewed the compliment as a positive speech act which may help her practice harder to get better day by day. In general, the compliment was seen as a positive act by the two Northern females.

A smaller number of the females chose to respond to the compliment with pleasure. As shown in Table 4.9, 5% signified pleasure in the form of a smiling thank-you (NF19); 15% created mutual pleasure using a smiling ‘Return’ (e.g., NF2, NF16); 5% chose to be silent (NF8).

NF19: [Cười] Cám ơn anh đã dạy cho tôi một buổi huấn luyện tuyệt vời. Vậy mình đi nghỉ.
(‘[smile] Thank you for giving me a great training session. So we can stop now.’)

“Cảm thấy vui vì lời khen này như là một lời động viên.”

(‘I felt happy as I saw this compliment as an encouragement.’)

NF2: [Cười] Mà cũng tốt lắm.
(‘[smile] You’re very good too.’)

NF16: [Cười] Cậu cũng đánh tốt mà.
(‘[smile] You played very well too.’)

“Thấy vui.” (‘I feel happy.’)

NF8: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Thấy vui trong lòng và thấy có động lực tập tiếp.”

(‘In my heart I feel happy and motivated to continue practicing.’)

According to the comments, these females felt happy and motivated when they received the compliment. They generally viewed the compliment as an encouragement that may motivate them to continue practicing.

Around 40% of the females expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As Table 4.10 demonstrates, 20% reported not being interested in the compliment, and chose to show a lack of interest using two main strategies: 15% switching to another topic (e.g., NF12, NF17) and 5% explicitly negating the compliment (NF11). NF12 viewed the compliment as an encouragement which may help friends practice better, so she ignored the compliment by switching to another topic like “[im lặng] Đi ăn thôi” (‘[silent] Let’s go eat something’). For NF17, such a compliment was a very natural thing whose main purpose was to end a sports practice session, so it was not necessary for her to respond to the compliment. Thus, she chose to move on to another topic.

NF12: [Im lặng] Đi ăn thôi.
(‘[silent] Let’s go eat something.’)

“Không đề cập đến lời khen mà rủ bạn ấy đi ăn luôn. Đây chỉ là một lời động viên giúp bạn mình cố gắng luyện tập hơn nên em sẽ không đề cập đến lời khen mà sẽ chuyển sang một đề tài khác ví dụ như rủ nhau đi ăn hay đi một đâu đó.”

(‘I don’t mention the compliment but I ask him to eat out with me. This is simply an encouragement which helps friends practice harder, so I won’t mention the compliment. I will switch to another topic, for example, asking him to go eat out or go somewhere else.’)

NF17: Xong rồi thì mình đi ăn.
(‘If done, let’s go eat something.’)

“Khen kiểu này là một chuyện rất tự nhiên nên em nghĩ không cần trực tiếp đáp trả lời khen. Câu khen này chỉ dùng để kết thúc buổi tập, nên em sẽ không đáp trả lại mà sẽ nói sang đề tài khác.”

(‘A compliment like this is a very natural thing, so I think it is not necessary to respond to the compliment. This compliment was only used to end a sport practice session, so I won’t respond to the compliment. I will move on to another topic.’)

NF11: Tốt cái gì? Chẳng có gì.
(‘Good for what? It is nothing.’)

“Theo kiểu bạn bè xã giao, em sẽ phản đối lại lời khen. Theo kiểu từ chối lời khen.”

(‘As a social strategy between friends, I’ll deny the compliment. I’ll reject the compliment.’)

To show a lack of interest, NF11 explicitly negated the compliment. As she commented, the compliment in this situation may serve as a social strategy between friends. Thus, she said she would deny and reject the compliment. Approximately 20% reported not being interested in the compliment, but they pretended to be interested in it as a matter of courtesy. Almost 15% responded with a ‘fake’ smile (e.g., NF6) and 5% employed a formulaic thank-you (NF4).

NF6: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em không thích lời khen này lắm. Em cũng thấy bình thường vì đây chỉ là lời khen xã giao thôi.”

(‘I’m not very interested in the compliment. I think it’s very normal because this compliment is a social strategy.’)

NF4 Cảm ơn. (‘Thank you.’)

“Đây không thật sự là lời khen. Em không cảm thấy hứng thú lắm.”

(‘This is not really a compliment. I don’t feel interested in it.’)

NF6 and NF4 said that they were not interested in the compliment as to their thoughts, the compliment in this situation mainly served as a social strategy which was not a real compliment. However, as a matter of courtesy, they feigned to be interested by smiling or saying thank-you to the complimenter.

Almost a half of the males (45%) reported ‘No feelings’ about the compliment because the participants in the North were extremely concerned about the appropriateness of the

compliment in the context. Fifteen percent chose to be silent (e.g., NM8, NM20) as the compliment in this situation was deemed inappropriate.

NM8: [Im lặng] ('[silent]')

“Bạn thân nên không cần trả lời. Theo em lời khen cho một người bạn thân là không cần thiết.”

(‘To me, we don’t need to respond to a compliment given by a close friend. Also, complimenting a close friend is not necessary.’)

NM20: [Im lặng] ('[silent]')

“Bình thường hai thằng con trai luyện tập với nhau nếu có khen thì nên im thôi, không nên nói gì.”

(‘Normally when two boys are playing sports together, if one of them wants to compliment the other, he shouldn’t say the compliment out.’)

NM8 chose to be silent as to his thoughts; it was not necessary for him to respond to a compliment given by a close friend. Giving a compliment to a close friend was not welcomed either. For NM20, giving a compliment in a sport setting in which two boys are playing sports together seemed not to be very appropriate. In his opinion, the complimenter should not say the compliment out. This explained why NM20 chose to be silent. The silence in their response was associated with a negative feeling because it was reported that the compliment was not appropriate and so it was not necessary for the recipient to respond to the compliment. Being silent would be probably the best option in this situation.

In addition, 10% minimized the force of the compliment with a silent scale-down (5%, NM13) or a smiling scale-down (5%, NM14). The comments show that the compliment was considered not appropriate in this context. Though NM13 downgraded the compliment, his comment indicates that it was not necessary for him to say thank-you or something else other than a silent scale-down simply because the complimenter was his close friend. It is likely that

for some Northern males (e.g., NM8, NM13), giving and receiving a compliment from a close friend was not welcomed.

NM13: [Im lặng] Cũng bình thường thôi mà.
(‘[silent] That is normal.’)

“Không cần cảm ơn mấy. Vì bạn thân thì cũng không cần biểu hiện nhiều.”

(‘I don’t need to say thank you. Because the complimenter is my close friend, I don’t need to say too much.’)

NM14: [Cười] Bình thường mà.
(‘[smile] Just normal.’)

“Đây chỉ là lời động viên cho mình tiến bộ. Đây không thật sự là lời khen để mình phải trả lời lại. Lời khen này không thích hợp không đáng để trả lời.”

(‘This is an encouragement for me to make progress. This is not actually a compliment, so I don’t have to respond to it. This compliment is not appropriate and so not worthy of a response.’)

For NM14, the compliment in this situation served more as an encouragement which was supposed not to be a real compliment. Even though NM14 downgraded the compliment with a smiling scale-down strategy, his comment reveals that such a compliment was seen as not appropriate and so not worthy of a response.

Moreover, 10% reluctantly agreed with the complimenter. NM6 said that giving and receiving a compliment between close friends was not necessary and so the compliment in this situation seemed to be inappropriate. For NM17, this situation was very normal and thus he had no feelings about the compliment. That was why he simply responded to it with “Vâng anh” (‘Yes, brother’).

NM6: Uh. Ok. (‘Uh Ok’)

“Không cần cảm ơn vì bạn bè thân thiết thì không cần cảm ơn. Bạn thân thiết thì không cần khen nhau. Em thấy lời khen ở đây là không cần thiết.”

(‘I don’t need to say thank you because we are close friends. Close friends don’t need to compliment each other. I think the compliment in this context is not necessary.’)

NM17: Vâng anh. ('Yes, brother')

“Tình huống này cũng bình thường quá nên em chỉ trả lời đơn giản thôi, chả có cảm giác gì.”

(‘The situation is very normal, so I just respond to it simply. I have no feelings.’)

Finally, 5% responded with a formulaic thank-you (NM16) and 5% closed the conversation.

NM16: Cảm ơn. ('Thank you.')

“Em sẽ đi thu dọn đồ đạc để kết thúc buổi tập. Theo em, trong thể thao khi mà kết thúc một buổi tập, thì lời khen mang giá trị như là một lời kết cho buổi tập, một lời khích lệ, một lời xã giao chứ không phải là một lời khen thật sự nên em không có cảm giác gì với lời khen này.”

(‘I’ll go to collect my stuff to end this practice session. To me, in a sports setting when we want to end a practice session, a compliment only works as an end to the session, an encouragement, a social strategy but not as a real compliment, so I don’t have any feeling about this compliment.’)

For NM16, because the compliment in this situation may serve as an end to the session, an encouragement or a social strategy but not as a real compliment, he simply said thank-you as an indicator that he had no feeling about this compliment.

To conclude, over a half of the males and females expressed positive feelings about the compliment. The males favored responses showing pleasure; the females wanted to express their pleasure in a modest way. Many females in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment, whereas nearly a half of the males reported no feelings about the compliment. For many males, the compliment in this situation was not appropriate in the Northern region.

4.12. Responses to Joking Compliment

With regard to this compliment scenario, an initial actual data analysis did not draw a distinction between males and females in the South. Thus, this section presents CRs and gender variation in the North.

As depicted in Fig 4.11, 60% of the males but a much higher 85% of the females reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. Only a small number of the females (15%) expressed a lack of interest in the compliment, but for the males, this number was 20%; ‘No feelings’ and ‘Embarrassment’ accounted for 10% of the total. Saying differently, 60% of the males viewed the compliment as a positive act while the other 40% perceived it as a negative act. In contrast, most of the females may perceive the compliment as a positive speech act as 85% of them reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment.

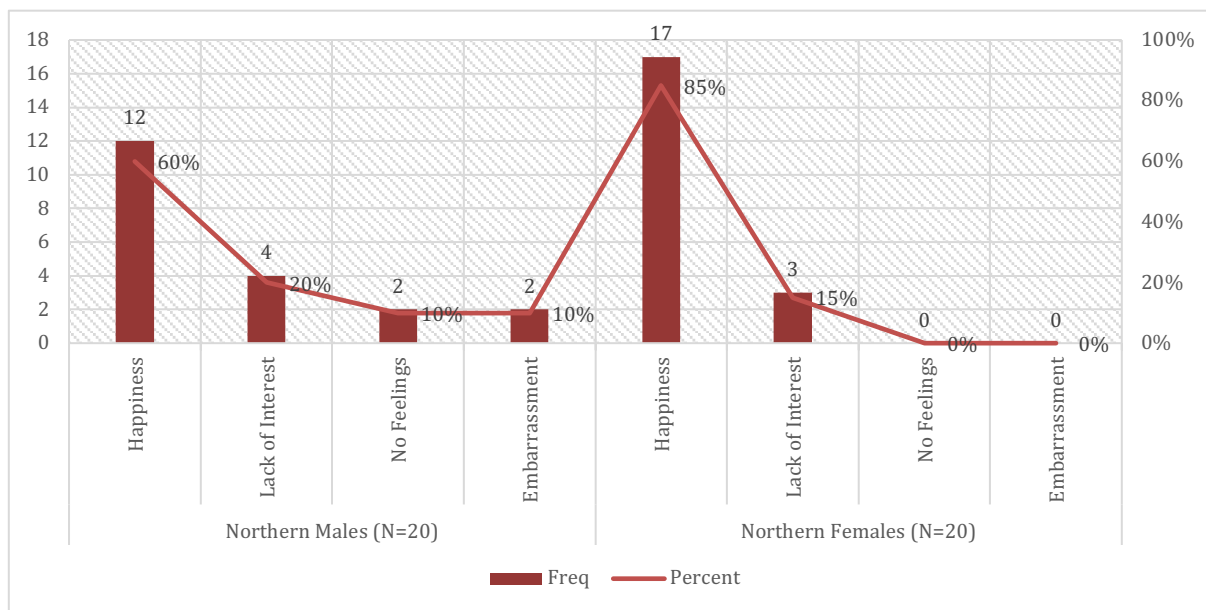


Figure 4.11. Feelings of joking compliment across genders in the North

As we can see in Table 4.11, both the males and the females preferred pleasure responses to modesty responses (NM, 50% vs. 10%; NF, 65% vs. 20% respectively). It is clear that Leech’s (1983) modesty notion did not have a major impact on responses to the compliment in this situation. What made an important difference between two genders was the choice of response strategies. As shown in Table 4.11, as many as 40% of the females agreed with the compliment with pride while only 15% of the males used this strategy to show their pleasure. ‘Smile’ was used relatively frequently by the females (25%) but very occasionally by the males (10%).

Table 4.11
Responses to joking compliment across genders in the North

Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (50%)	- signified pleasure	3	15%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	3	15%
	- smile	2	10%
	- created mutual pleasure	1	5%
	- responded to the compliment humorously	1	5%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (5%)	- explicitly negated the compliment	1	5%
Pretend interest (15%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	2	10%
	- responded with a 'fake' smile	1	5%
No Feelings (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Embarrassment	- smile	2	10%
Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (65%)	- agreed with the compliment with pride	8	40%
	- smile	5	25%
Modesty (20%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	4	20%
Lack of Interest			
Pretend interest (15%)	- responded with a 'fake' smile	2	10%
	- agreed with the complimenter	1	5%
No Feelings (0%)			
Embarrassment (0%)			

As presented in Table 4.11, 40% of the females agreed with the compliment with pride as an indicator that they found pleasure in receiving the compliment. According to the following comments, the females perceived the compliment in this situation as a positive act. For instance,

NF10 said that she was happy since the compliment was good. NF11 also reported a comfortable feeling upon receiving the compliment.

NF10: [Cười] Các cậu cố gắng mà làm được như tôi để làm người phụ nữ mình vui.”
([smile] You guys try to be able to do as much as I did to make your woman happy.)

“Cảm thấy vui với lời khen đó, vì lời khen tốt mà nên phải vui thôi.”

(‘I feel happy with the compliment. Because the compliment is good, I should be happy.’)

NF11: [Cười] Đương nhiên anh mày mà. Hình mẫu lý tưởng của mày là đúng rồi đó.
([smile] Of course, I am your brother. Seeing me as your idol is correct.)

“Khi được khen như vậy em cảm thấy vui. Tâm trạng thấy thoải mái.”

(‘Receiving a compliment made me feel happy. I feel very comfortable.’)

NF15: [Cười] Anh là mẫu người mà ai cũng muốn được như anh chứ không phải một người.
([smile] I am the person that not only you but everybody wants to be.)

“Khi được khen như thế em thật sự rất vui vì em nghĩ người ta cũng muốn được như mình. Khi đây mình vui, mình hơi kiêu toả sáng một chút. Mình vui là bởi vì mọi người nhìn mình, mọi người cũng mong muốn được như mình. Nên em sẽ chấp nhận lời khen và đáp lại một cách tích cực.”

(‘When being complimented like this, I am very happy because I think many people want to be like me. At that moment, I’ll be happy and kind of shining a bit. I’m happy because I know people are looking at me and want to be like me. So I will accept the compliment and respond to it positively.’)

NF15 was especially happy because the compliment lets her know that many people wished to be like her, as she said “Mình vui là bởi vì mọi người nhìn mình, mọi người cũng mong muốn được như mình.” (‘I’m happy because I know people are looking at me and want to be like me.’) Since she perceived the compliment as a positive act, she would like to respond to it positively.

The other 25% of the females were happy and chose to smile as a response. Based on the comments, their smile may represent a happy feeling in their heart upon receiving a compliment.

To illustrate, NF16 said that she was extremely happy when she received the compliment.

Though NF8 did not say anything else other than a smile, her comment reveals that inside her heart she was very happy.

NF16: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Được mọi người khen thì em thấy vui rất vui.”

(‘Being complimented made me happy, very happy.’)

NF8: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Thấy sung sướng khi được khen. Không nói gì thêm nhưng trong lòng thấy sung sướng.”

(‘I was very happy when being complimented. I don’t say anything else but inside my heart I am very happy.’)

These two strategies were not employed frequently by the males. In order to show pleasure, the males employed five different response strategies. Signifying pleasure and agreeing with the compliment with pride were used most frequently (both at 15%), of which 10% signified pleasure with a formulaic thank you (e.g., NM7) and 5% with a smiling thank-you (e.g., NM2).

NM7: Cảm ơn mọi người. (‘Thanks everybody’)

“Trong lòng sẽ thấy vui vì em đã làm một điều mọi người cảm thấy thích.”

(‘I feel happy in my heart because I have done one thing that everybody likes.’)

NM2: [Cười] Cảm ơn.
(‘[smile] Thank you’)

“Em thấy vui.”

(‘I feel happy.’)

The comments show that NM7 and NM2 felt happy when receiving the compliment. For NM7, the compliment may be understood as something good he has done. It is apparent that NM2 and NM7 viewed the compliment in this situation as a positive speech act that made them feel good.

Almost 15% agreed with the compliment with pride. According to the following comments, these Northern males would love to hear compliments. NM12 especially felt slightly complacent (i.e., too proud of himself) when receiving the compliment, and he smiled to let everybody know that he was feeling happy. The smile included in the following CRs was associated with a positive feeling, as a sense of pleasure.

NM1: [Cười] Dĩ nhiên rồi.
(‘[smile] Of course’)

“Em vui khi được mọi người khen.”

(‘I am happy when everybody compliments me.’)

NM10: [Cười tươi] Tất nhiên mà. Anh của em mà lì.
(‘[smile sweetly] Of course. That’s your brother.’)

“Thấy vui vì những lời khen này. Vì mọi người rất thích được nghe lời khen.”

(‘I am happy with the compliment because people would love to hear compliments.’)

NM12: [Cười] Tớ mà nhĩ.
(‘[smile] That is me.’)

“Em sẽ cảm giác tự mãn một tí. Cười để mọi người biết em đang vui vẻ.”

(‘I feel a little complacent. I smile to let everybody know that I am feeling happy.’)

Ten percent chose to smile (e.g., NM8, NM4); 5% created mutual pleasure; 5% responded to the compliment humorously, with a smiling joke (NM14). These Northern males reported that they were happy with the compliment.

NM8: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Mình đã đang vui nên chỉ cười thôi, không nói gì cả.”

(‘I am happy, so I just smile and won’t say anything else.’)

NM4: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Vui quá chỉ cười thôi.”

(‘I am so happy, so I just smile.’)

NM14: Mày cứ đùa [Cười]
(‘You are joking [smile]’)

“Khi được khen vậy cũng có thấy vui.”

(‘Being complimented also makes me happy.’)

Only a very small number of the females expressed negative feelings about the compliment. Given that the compliment in this situation may serve as a social strategy that may lack sincerity, 15% of the females feigned to be interested in the compliment through a ‘fake’ smile (10%) or by agreeing with the complimenter (5%). As NF2 commented, with a smile she pretended to have a friendly face.

NF2: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Vẽ mặt vờ tỏ ra thân thiện thôi.”

(‘I just pretend to have a friendly face.’)

NF6: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em không thích được khen kiểu xã giao và nịnh sếp thôi nên em nghĩ chỉ cười xã giao lại là đủ rồi.”

(‘I don’t like being complimented as a means of social strategy and flattery, so I think it is enough for me to politely smile in return.’)

NF9: Tôi biết mà [Cười]
(‘I know [smile]’)

“Tình huống lời khen này không thật. Đây chỉ là lời khen xã giao, không thật lòng thôi. Vì chỉ là xã giao nên em cũng nói lại những câu kiểu xã giao để thể hiện tấm lòng thôi.”

(‘This compliment scenario is not real. This is just a polite compliment, not sincere at all. Since this is just a social strategy, I will also respond to it in a polite manner to show my heart.’)

NF6 and NF9 were not interested in the compliment, which might be seen as a polite compliment or a social strategy. As a result, NF6 chose to smile at it as a polite response while NF9 smiled and agreed with the complimenter.

Many males in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As shown in Table 4.11, 20% of the males reported not being interested in the compliment. In order to show a lack of interest, 5% explicitly negated the compliment; 15% pretended to be interested in the compliment, with an emotionless return thank-you (10%, NM9) or a smile (5%, NM15).

NM9: Cám ơn. Em cũng tốt như anh thôi.
(‘Thank you. You will also be as good as me.’)

“Thật ra thì em không có hứng thú với lời khen xã giao kiểu này lắm. Lời khen ở đây chỉ xã giao, không thật lắm nên em không cảm thấy vui thật sự, không cảm thấy hạnh phúc thật sự.”

(‘Actually, I’m not very interested in such a social compliment. This compliment is a social strategy, not sincere so I don’t really feel happy at all.’)

NM15: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Thật ra đây là lời khen sáo rỗng kiểu xã giao không thật lòng nên em chỉ cười thôi rồi tiếp tục câu chuyện.”

(‘Actually, this is an empty compliment that works as a social strategy, not a sincere compliment, so I just smile and may continue the conversation.’)

Ten percent reported ‘No feelings’ and 10% described ‘Embarrassment’ about the compliment. To illustrate, NM18 minimized the force of the compliment with a smiling scale-down to show that NM18 had no feeling about the compliment because to his thoughts, the compliment in this situation would not exist in real life.

NM18: [Cười] Chắc là bạn hơi khen quá lời rồi.
(‘[smile] You must be overstating.’)

“Em không có cảm giác gì. Tình huống này có hơi không thật. Hơi diễn quá. Ngoài đời sẽ không như thế này.”

(‘I don’t have any special feelings. This situation sounds unreal, acting too much. It won’t be like this in real life.’)

NM11: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em sẽ không làm để được khen như thế này được. Em chưa bao giờ rơi vào tình huống thế này.”

(‘I won’t let myself be complimented like this. I have never been in such a situation before.’)

NM11 reported that he has never been in a similar situation before and his smile may indicate that he was feeling embarrassed. This recipient also emphasized that he would not let a similar situation happen to him in real life. In general, these Northern males viewed the compliment in this situation as a negative speech act and the smile in their CRs was associated with negative feelings.

To sum up, even though both the males and the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment, for the females this was greater in number. Only a small number of the females expressed negative feelings about the compliment, whereas for the males, this number was 40%.

4.13. Responses to Congratulation Compliment

Concerning this compliment scenario, an initial actual data analysis showed certain differences between males and females in two regions. Thus, this section presents CRs and gender variation between four groups of participants: SF vs. SM and NF vs. NM. The section begins with an analysis of CRs made by males and females in the South. A comparison of CRs made by males and females in the North comes next.

As Fig 4.12 illustrates, 65% of the males but a much higher 90% of the females in the South reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. Only a small number of the females expressed a lack of interest in the compliment, while this number was 35% for the males. This is to say, the Southern females generally viewed the congratulation compliment more as a positive speech act, whereas 35% of the Southern males perceived it as a negative act.

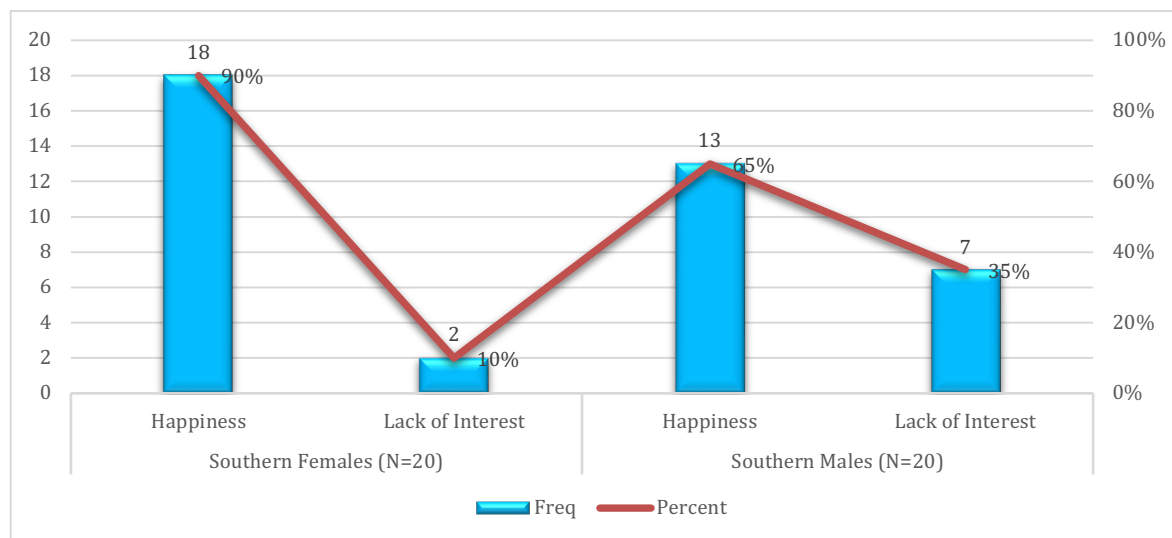


Figure 4.12. Feelings of congratulation compliment across genders in the South

Table 4.12

Responses to congratulation compliment across genders in the South

Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (85%)	- signified pleasure	6	30%
	- created mutual pleasure	6	30%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	5	25%
Modesty (5%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (10%)	- Respond with a courteous thank-you	2	10%
Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (55%)	- signified pleasure	8	40%
	- created mutual pleasure	2	10%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	1	5%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (25%)	- explicitly negated the compliment	4	20%
	- silence	1	5%
Pretend interest (10%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	2	10%

Most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this scenario. They were not humble in their responses. As shown in Table 4.12, pleasure responses accounted for 85% while modesty responses scored only 5% of the total. As we can see in the following example, the Southern modesty response was highly complicated, beginning with a ‘smile’ along with “Trời ơi” (‘Oh my God’) and ending with a thank-you.

SF15: [Cười] Trời ơi! Chị quá khen. Hôm nay là ngày vui của em mà chị. Cảm ơn chị đã đến chung vui.

(‘[Smile] Oh my God! You are overpraising. Today is my happy day. Thank you, sister, for coming to share the happiness.’).

“Miệng nói vậy nhưng trong lòng thấy vui.”

(‘The mouth is saying that but inside is happy.’)

“Trời ơi” (‘Oh my God’) was a very common emotional expression in Southern Vietnamese, which usually demonstrates a feeling of surprise and happiness. Though SF15 minimized the force of the compliment, the comment and the inclusion of a ‘smile’, “Trời ơi” and a thank-you show that SF15 was happy.

Generally, most of the females in the South (85%) chose to show their pleasure in a number of ways. Approximately 30% signified their pleasure with a smiling thank-you.

SF2: Dạ. Em cảm ơn chị [Cười]

(‘Yes, thank you, sister [Smile]’)

“Thấy vui trong lòng.” (‘Feel happy in heart.’)

SF3: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị nha.

(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister.’)

“Thấy vui khi được khen.” (‘Feel happy when being complimented.’)

The comments show that these Southern females were happy with the compliment despite not explicitly expressing their gladness. As an alternative, they chose to smile and said thank-you to the complimenter in order to signify that they were pleased with the compliment.

Another 30% reported that they were happy and willing to create mutual pleasure, of which the smiling return thank-you (e.g., SF9) was used most frequently (20%) in addition to the smiling ‘Return’ (e.g., SF13) at a rate of 10%.

SF9: [Cười] Em cảm ơn chị. Chị cũng đẹp mà.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. You are beautiful, too.’)

“Em thấy vui và muốn khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui.”

(‘I feel happy and would like to compliment her in return to make her happy too.’)

SF13: [Cười] Nhưng em đâu có xinh bằng chị.
(‘[Smile] But I am not as pretty as you are.’)

“Được khen thì em cũng thấy vui. Em sẽ khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui.”

(‘When being complimented, I feel happy. I’ll pay her a return compliment to make her happy too.’)

The other 25% agreed with the compliment with pride to show that they were happy. To illustrate, SF18 began her response with “Trời ơi” (‘Oh my God’) and ended with a ‘smile’, showing that she was happy and surprised at the compliment. The recipient agreed that she must be beautiful on her shop opening day.

SF18: Trời ơi! Hôm nay là ngày trọng đại mà chị. Em gái của chị dĩ nhiên phải đẹp chứ [Cười]
(‘Oh my God. Today is a big day. Your sister must be definitely beautiful [Smile]’)

SF20: [Cười haha] Chứ sao. Đã lên chủ rồi mà.
(‘[Laughing] That’s right. I am now a shop owner.’)

“Vui về chấp nhận ý là nói giờ em đã là bà chủ một cửa hàng.”

(‘Happy to accept, I mean I am now the owner of a shop.’)

Starting the response with ‘laughing’, SF20 happily asserted that the compliment was correct. It appears likely that this recipient paid more attention to the accomplishment compliment (“Hoành tráng quá” ‘Very glorious’) which was part of the congratulation compliment. The two responses

show that the two Southern females were happy with the congratulation compliment on the shop opening day. In general, most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment and found pleasure in receiving the compliment.

For the Southern males, as many as 65% expressed positive feelings about the compliment. The responses that show pleasure was greater in number (55%) while the responses that show modesty was very small in number (10%). As manifested in Table 4.12, 40% of the males signified pleasure in different forms of thank-you. The courteous thank you (e.g., SM18) and the explaining thank-you (e.g., SM5) were used at a relatively high frequency (both at 15%), whereas the smiling thank-you (e.g., SM6) and the formulaic thank-you (e.g., SM1) was not used commonly (both at 5%).

SM18: [Cười] Em cảm ơn chị. Lần sau nhớ đến quán em ủng hộ nha.

(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Next time remember to come to my shop to support me.’)

“Mình khai trương có người khen thì mình phải vui rồi.”

(‘On my grand opening, I should be happy upon receiving a compliment.’)

SM5: [Cười] Trời ơi. Cảm ơn chị nha. Em mất khá nhiều thời gian để trang điểm ấy.

(‘[smile] Oh my god. Thank you, sister. It took me a long time to put on makeup.’)

“Người khen mình thì mình thấy vui thôi.”

(‘I feel happy when somebody compliments me.’)

SM6: [Cười] Cảm ơn chị đã khen em. Cảm ơn chị đã đến dự lễ khai trương của em.

(‘[Smile] Thank you for your compliment, sister. Thanks for your coming to my grand opening’)

“Em thấy vui và nhiệt tình đáp lại.”

(‘I feel happy and enthusiastically respond to the compliment.’)

SM1: Cảm ơn. (‘Thank you’)

“Em thấy vui khi cô ấy khen em.” (‘I feel happy when she compliments me.’)

According to the comments, these Southern males were happy upon receiving the compliment for many reasons. For example, SM18 and SM6 said that they were happy to receive a compliment on the shop's opening day. Thus, SM6 said he would like to respond to the compliment enthusiastically. SM5 would be happy every time he received a compliment as if the compliment was always seen as a positive act to him. SM1 was slightly different from the others as he said that he was happy when that woman complimented him. It appears likely that SM1 would prefer a compliment from the woman.

One thing worth of mention was that nearly 35% of the males expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As Table 4.12 illustrates, 25% of the males showed a lack of interest by choosing to be silent (5%) or explicitly negating the compliment (20%). To illustrate, SM15 chose to be silent as he did not really care about the compliment. From his point of view, this was a perfunctory compliment that was given because it was expected in this context. The silence in his response was associated with a negative feeling.

SM15: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Lời khen chỉ sơ qua nên không quan tâm lắm.”

(‘This is a perfunctory compliment, so I don’t really care about it.’)

Some others (e.g., SM13, SM16) explicitly negated the compliment. To illustrate, SM13 said that he was tired of dealing with such a compliment and SM16 reported that he was not interested in the compliment.

SM13: [Cười] Đừng nói vậy. Thành công là do cố gắng của mọi người chứ không phải là một cá nhân.

(‘[smile] Don’t say that. Success is thanks to the efforts of everybody, not of an individual.’)

“Em mệt mỏi phải ứng phó với lời khen thế này.”

(‘I’m tired of dealing with a compliment like this.’)

SM16: [Im lặng] Có gì đâu. Kinh doanh thôi mà.
(‘[silent] It is nothing. I’m just doing business.’)

“Em không có hứng thú với lời khen này.”

(‘I’m not interested in this compliment.’)

Ten percent pretended to be interested in the compliment, in the form of a smiling thank you (5%, SM10) or a formulaic thank-you (5%, SM7).

SM10: [Cười] Cám ơn.
(‘[smile] Thank you.’)

“Không có cảm giác hứng thú khen như này.”

(‘I don’t have an interest in the compliment like this.’)

SM7: Cám ơn [Im lặng]
(‘Thank you [silent]’)

“Em không có hứng thú với lời khen kiểu này.”

(‘I’m not interested in compliments like this.’)

The comments show that SM10 and SM7 were not interested in the compliment in this context. However, unlike SM13 and SM16 who explicitly negated the compliment, SM10 and SM7 chose to say thank you to the complimenter as if they were interested in the compliment.

To sum up, most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment. For the males, this number was smaller because some expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

The next page presents CRs and gender variation in the North.

There was a big difference in CRs between males and females in the North. As we can see in Fig 4.13, as many as 80% of the males reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment while for the females, this number was only 40%. A small number of the males (20%) but a much higher 60% of the females reported a lack of interest in the compliment.

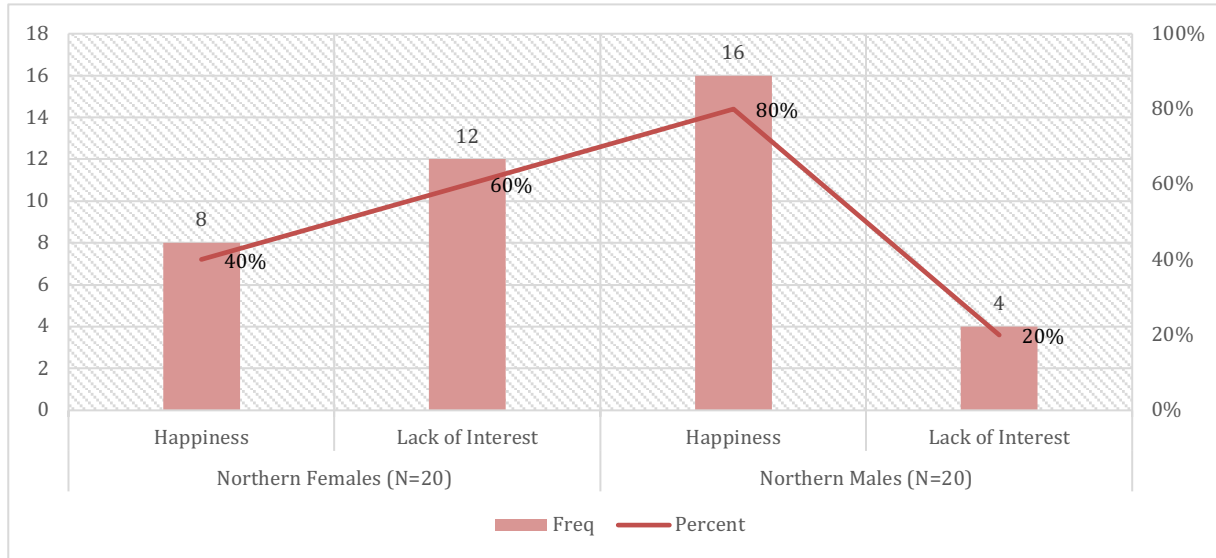


Figure 4.13. Feelings of congratulation compliment across genders in the North

Only a small number of the males expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As shown in Table 4.13, 20% of the males feigned to be interested in the compliment using two main strategies: Returning a similar compliment (15%, e.g., NM16) and using a formulaic thank-you (5%, NM10).

NM16: [Cười] Hôm nay chị cũng đẹp lắm. Hai chị em mình cùng xinh xắn.
 (‘[smile] Today you are also very beautiful. Both of us are lovely.’)

“Theo miền Bắc em nghĩ đây chỉ là một lời chào, không phải là một lời khen. Tất nhiên em sẽ đáp trả lại họ bằng một lời chào tương tự như thế.”

(‘In the Northern region, I think this is only a greeting, not a compliment. I will certainly return them a similar greeting.’)

Table 4.13

Responses to Congratulation Compliment across genders in the North

Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (25%)	- created mutual pleasure	4	20%
	- signified pleasure	1	5%
Modesty (15%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	3	15%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (10%)	- ignored the compliment	1	5%
	- changed the topic	1	5%
Pretend interest (50%)	- responded with different forms of thank-you	6	30%
	- gave an explanation	3	15%
	- responded with "uh ah"	1	5%
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (70%)	- signified pleasure	5	25%
	- created mutual pleasure	4	20%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	4	20%
	- responded to the compliment humorously	1	5%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (20%)	- returned a similar compliment	3	15%
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%

NM10: Cảm ơn vì những lời khen của chị.

(‘Thank you for your compliment.’)

“Em không thích lắm nhưng khi có người khen mình, mình chấp nhận lời khen là một cách để thể hiện sự tôn trọng đối với người khen mình. Ít nhất mình nên nói cảm ơn để cho thấy rằng mình tôn trọng họ. Nếu mình phủ nhận lời khen của họ chẳng khác nào gián tiếp nói rằng họ đang nói dối, những lời khen đó của họ là không có thật. Họ sẽ cảm thấy buồn vì sự phủ nhận của mình.”

(‘I don’t really like it, but when somebody compliments me, I’ll accept it as a way to show my respect to the complimenter. I think at least I should say thank you to show that I respect them. If I deny their compliment, it’s like indirectly saying that they are lying and the compliments are not sincere. They will be sad about my rejection.’)

Despite not being interested in the compliment, NM16 smiled and returned the complimenter a similar compliment. As NM16 explained, the compliment in this situation was more often perceived as a greeting act, not as a real compliment in the North. Thus, he would respond to it with a similar greeting. For NM10, he did not really like the compliment but he would accept it as a way to show his respect to the complimenter. As he commented, rejecting the compliment was the same as he was indirectly saying that the complimenter was lying and the compliment was insincere. In order for the complimenter not to be sad, he chose to say thank you as if he were interested in it.

For the females, a larger number (60%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment. Table 4.13 indicates that 10% of the females signaled a lack of interest by ignoring the compliment (5%) or changing the topic (5%):

NF19: Mới khai trương nên cần chị ủng hộ em nhiều hơn. Mời chị vào trong."
(‘Just opened, so I need you to support me more. Please come in.’)

NF20: Sao hôm nay không đi cùng bạn trai à?
(‘Why don’t you go with your boyfriend today?’)

“Em sẽ chuyển sang chủ đề khác như sao hôm nay không đi cùng bạn trai, hay ai đó để tránh trả lời lời khen này. Vì em cũng không thích lời khen kiểu này lắm nhưng lại không thể phủ nhận nó trước mặt chị ấy được.”

(‘I will switch to another topic like ‘why don’t you go with your boyfriend or with someone else today?’ to avoid responding to the compliment. Although I don’t like this kind of compliment, I cannot directly deny it in front of her.’)

The other 50% chose to disguise their lack of interest as a matter of courtesy. As we can see in Table 4.13, 30% pretended to be interested in the compliment in different forms of thank-you, of which the emotionless return thank-you (e.g., NF10) was in use most commonly (20%) and the courteous thank-you (e.g., NF2) occupied 10%.

NF10: Cảm ơn. Chị cũng xinh vậy.
(‘Thank you. You are pretty too, sister.’)

“Vì đây là buổi lễ khai trương nên khi có khách mời đến họ nhìn mình thấy thiện cảm, ấn tượng nên khen thì ít nhất mình cũng phải đáp lại và khen lại ạ chứ thật ra em cũng không thích lời khen này.”

(‘As this is an opening ceremony, when the guests come to see me and feel good and impressed by my appearance, at least I have to reply and return them a similar compliment. I honestly don’t like this compliment.’)

NF2: [Cười] Cám ơn chị. Mời chị vào trong.
(‘[Smile] Thank you, sister. Please come in.’)

“Em không thích nhưng muốn tỏ ra thân thiện khách khí.”

(‘I’m not interested but want to appear friendly and polite.’)

Nearly 15% (e.g., NF14) gave an explanation and 5% reluctantly responded with “uh ah”, since the recipient (NF12) perceived the compliment to be insincere.

NF14: Hôm nay ngày trọng đại của mình, mình phải chỉnh chu chứ. Với lại có nhiều khách mời mà nên mình cần phải đẹp chứ.

(‘Today is my big day, I have to look good. Further, there are many guests, so I need to look beautiful.’)

“Đây là lời khen nói dối, kiểu khéo léo nịnh bợ nên em không thích.”

(‘This compliment is a lie, a kind of flattery, so I don’t like it.’)

NF12: Uh Ah.

“Uh ah cho qua chuyện vì em biết đây chỉ là khen xã giao không thật lòng.”

(‘Uh ah to let it go as I know this is only a congratulation compliment, not sincere at all.’)

The congratulation compliment on the shop opening day was viewed as a social strategy. The compliment was perceived to be insincere, and so unable to attract the interest of the Northern participants. For social purposes, over a half of the females in the North must feign interest in the compliment.

What made a second considerable difference between two genders was that most of the males expressed positive feelings about the compliment (80%) while for the females, this number was only 40%. The responses that show pleasure (70%) greatly outnumbered the ones that show modesty (10%). As presented in Table 4.13, 25% of the males signified pleasure, in the form of a courteous thank-you (15%, e.g., NM4) or a formulaic thank-you (10%, e.g., NM11).

NM4: Cảm ơn chị. Mời chị vô.

(‘Thank you, sister. Please come on in.’)

“Em thấy vui khi cô ấy khen em dịp khai trương cửa hàng.”

(‘I felt happy when she complimented me on my shop’s opening day.’)

NM11: Cảm ơn. (‘Thank you.’)

“Em sẽ cảm thấy vui vẻ khi được khen đẹp, em sẽ cảm ơn và thấy tự hào về mình. Em cũng sẽ khen lại cô ấy. Nhưng mà con trai thì không đũa nào khen nhau đẹp cả.”

(‘I’ll feel happy when I am complimented for being beautiful. I’ll say thank you and feel proud of myself. I also want to compliment her in return, but men don’t compliment each other on being beautiful.’)

As NM4 commented, he was happy when he received the compliment on the first day he opened a new shop. In order to signify his pleasure, he said thank you to the complimenter and invited her in. For NM11, receiving the compliment on his ‘beautiful’ appearance made him happy. He said that he was so proud of himself thanks to the compliment. To signify his pleasure, he said thank you to the complimenter. He said that he would like to return her a similar compliment, but men do not often compliment each other on being beautiful. Though the complimenter in this context was a female, he finally simply chose to say thank you without any ‘Return’.

Some males were happy and would like to create mutual pleasure using the emotionless return thank-you (20%, e.g, NM6, NM19) or agree with the compliment with pride (also 20%, e.g., NM14).

NM6: Cảm ơn đã khen. Chị nhìn cũng đẹp quá.

(‘Thank you for your compliment. You look very beautiful too.’)

“Cảm ơn người ta khen mình. Theo em thì người ta khen mình vui thì mình cũng nên khen lại người ta vui luôn.”

(‘I’ll say thank you for complimenting me. To me, she complimented me to make me happy, so I should praise her back to make her happy too.’)

NM19: Cảm ơn chị. Chị cũng đẹp quá.

(‘Thank you, sister. You are also very beautiful.’)

“Em sẽ cảm ơn và khen lại để người ấy cũng vui.”

(‘I’ll say thank you and praise her back to make her happy too.’)

NM14: [Cười tươi] Tất nhiên rồi chị.

([smile sweetly] Of course, sister’)

“Được khen là vui rồi.”

(‘Feel happy when being complimented.’)

According to the comments, the Northern males (NM6, NM19) said thank-you and returned a similar compliment to make the complimenter happy. For NM14, he smiled sweetly and agreed with the compliment with pride (“Tất nhiên rồi chị” ‘Of course, sister’) to show that he was feeling happy.

A smaller number of the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As demonstrated in Table 4.13, the females would also prefer pleasure responses (25%) to modesty responses (15%). In terms of pleasure responses, 20% created mutual pleasure in the form of a smiling return thank you (15%, e.g., NF5) or a smiling return (5%, e.g., NF15); 5% (NF3) signified pleasure with the smiling thank-you.

NF5: [Cười] Hôm nay chị trông cũng rất đẹp. Cảm ơn chị đã đến dự ngày khai trương.
(‘[Smile] Today you look very beautiful too. Thank you for your coming!’)

“Em thấy vui, khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui, và cảm ơn chị ấy.”

(‘I am happy, paying a return compliment to make her happy too, and saying thank-you to her.’)

NF15: [Cười] Chị cũng đẹp thế.
(‘[Smile] Sister, you are also that beautiful.’)

“Thấy vui khi được khen.”

(‘Feel happy when being complimented.’)

NF3: [Cười] Cảm ơn lời khen của chị.
(‘[Smile] Thank you for your compliment.’)

It is apparent that Leech’s (1983) modesty notion did not have a big influence on either male or female responses. The number of responses that showed the spirit of modesty was extremely low in male data, occupying 10% as opposed to 15% in female data. The females’ modesty response was quite simple, including a ‘smile’ and an expression saying that the complimenter was overstating, for example:

NF17: Chị cứ quá khen ạ [Cười]
(‘You are always overpraising me [Smile]’)

“Vui nhưng phải tỏ ra khiêm tốn.” (‘Be happy but must appear humble.’)

To sum up, over a half of the females in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment while for the males, this number was very small. Most of the males expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this scenario.

4.14. Responses to Flattery Compliment

An initial actual analysis of the responses to this compliment scenario did not indicate any difference between males and females in the South. This section presents CRs and gender variation in the North.

There was a dramatic difference in CRs between males and females in the North. As Fig 4.14 illustrates, only 35% of the males but a much higher 70% of the females reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. Only a small number of the females (30%) expressed a lack of interest in the compliment while for the males, this number increased by 65%. This is to say, most of the females may perceive the flattery compliment more as a positive speech act while for many males, this compliment could be a negative act.

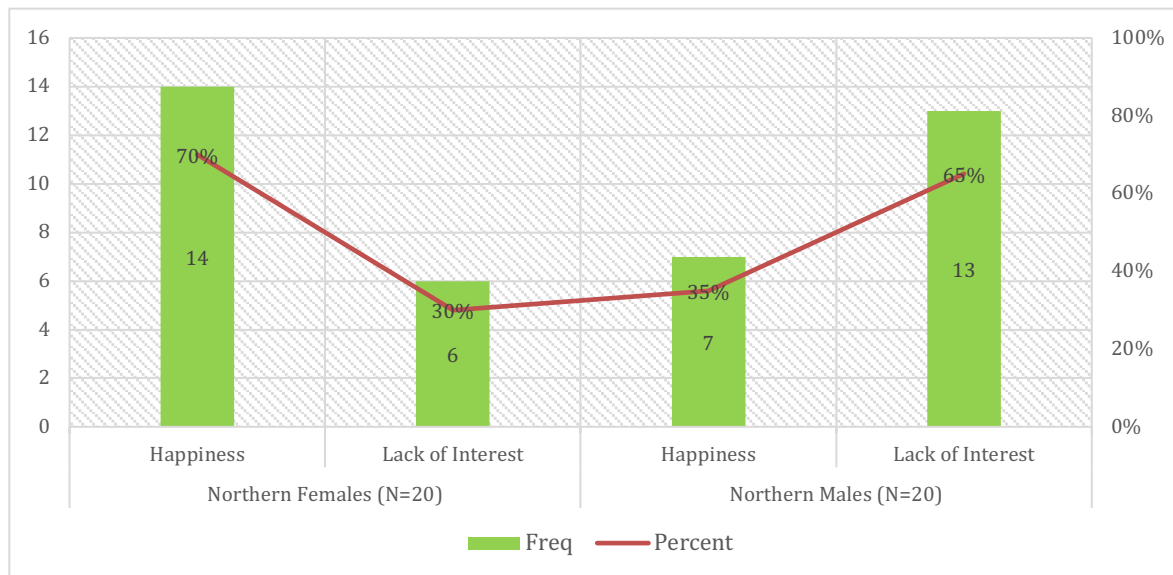


Figure 4.14. Feelings of flattery compliment across genders in the North

Table 4.14

Responses to flattery compliment across genders in the North

Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (60%)	- signified pleasure	4	20%
	- responded to the compliment humorously	4	20%
	- smile	3	15%
	- created mutual pleasure	1	5%
Modesty (10%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (20%)	- closed the conversation	2	10%
	- expressed some doubt about the compliment	1	5%
	- explicitly negated the compliment	1	5%
Pretend interest (10%)	- responded with a 'fake' smile	2	10%
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (35%)	- signified pleasure	2	10%
	- created mutual pleasure	3	15%
	- smile	1	5%
	- agreed with the compliment with pride	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (35%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	3	15%
	- silence	2	10%
	- explicitly negated the compliment	1	5%
	- switched to another topic	1	5%
Pretend interest (30%)	- responded with a 'fake' smile	3	15%
	- responded with different forms of thank-you	3	15%

A large number of the females (70%) expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As shown in Table 4.14, the females were not very humble as their pleasure responses (60%) were much higher than modesty responses (10%). In order to show pleasure, 20% signified pleasure with a smiling thank-you (e.g., NF2); 15% chose to smile (e.g., NF16, NF17).

NF2: Cám ơn em. ('Thank you, sister.')

“Em thấy vui khi được khen, em không nghĩ là họ khen chỉ để nịnh nọt, mà là khen đúng về em.”

(‘I feel happy when being complimented. I don’t think they compliment me just to flatter me, but they are saying right about me.’)

NF16: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Ai cũng thế khi mình được khen thì ai cũng vui hết.”

(‘Everybody is happy when being complimented.’)

NF17: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Thấy vui khi được cô lễ tân khen nhiều như vậy.”

(‘Feel happy when the receptionist compliments me that much.’)

The Northern females felt happy for many reasons. NF2 was happy due to the thought that the complimenter was saying something right about her. NF17 felt happy when receiving a lot of compliments and NF16 was often happy when being complimented.

The other 20% responded to the compliment humorously, in the form of a smiling joke (5%, NF11), a closing joke (5%, NF10), or a silent joke (10%, NF12). The comments show that NF11 felt proud and satisfied while NF10 was happy upon receiving the compliment. The responses creating mutual pleasure were very small in number (5%).

NF11: [Cười] Đi phẫu thuật thẩm mỹ đấy.

(‘[Smile] I go do plastic surgery.’)

“Vui. Cười đắc ý sáng khoái. Thấy vui và đắc ý với lời khen.”

(‘I feel happy. Smile proudly and satisfactorily. I feel happy and satisfied with the compliment.’)

NF10: [Cười tươi] Con bé này mà khéo miệng. Em làm việc đi.

(‘[Smile sweetly] This little girl, your mouth is very smooth. Continue your work.’)

“Thấy vui trong lòng vì được khen.”

(‘Feel happy inside when being complimented.’)

NF12: Em được cái nói ngọt. Đạo này em có hay uống nước mía không mà nói ngọt thế? [Cười]

(‘Your mouth is too sweet. Have you recently drunk sugarcane juice so your mouth is that sweet? [smile]’)

Only a small number of the males expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As we can see in Table 4.14, 35% of the males responded to the compliment with pleasure, using different strategies. Ten percent signified pleasure in the form of a smiling thank-you (e.g., NM18); 15% created mutual pleasure using the smiling return thank-you (e.g., NM13); 5% chose to smile (NM12) and another 5% agreed with the compliment with pride (NM3).

NM18: [Cười] Cám ơn em.
(‘[smile] Thank you’)

‘Khi được khen nhiều như vậy sẽ thấy vui.’

(‘Being complimented that much made me feel good.’)

NM13: Cám ơn. Em nhìn cũng xinh mà [Cười]
(‘Thank you. You look pretty too [smile]’)

‘Khi mình được khen thì mình sẽ thích. Mình sẽ cũng khen lại họ một câu để họ cùng vui.’

(‘I felt good when being complimented. I’ll return her a compliment to make her happy too.’)

NM12: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

‘Khi được khen nhiều như vậy sẽ thấy vui.’

(‘Being complimented that much made me feel good.’)

NM3: [Cười tươi] Đẹp cũng là một điều kiện để thành công.

(‘[smile sweetly] Being beautiful is also a condition to be successful.’)

According to the comments, NM18 and NM12 felt happy when receiving a lot of compliments at one time. As NM13 commented, receiving the compliment made him feel good, and so he wanted to return a similar compliment to make the complimenter happy too. NM3 agreed with

the complimenter that good appearance was a condition to be successful. In general, these Northern males expressed positive feelings about the compliment.

Another considerable difference between two genders was that only a small percentage of the females expressed negative feelings about the compliment (30%) while for the males, this number dramatically increased by 65%. As shown in Table 4.14, 20% of the females showed a lack of interest in the compliment in a number of ways; 5% negated the compliment due to its flattery purpose (NF9); 5% expressed some doubt about the compliment (NF19); 10% closed the conversation (e.g., NF20).

NF9: Đẹp cái gì. Xấu lắm. Không đẹp lâu.
(‘Beautiful what? Very ugly. Not beautiful.’)

“Kiểu phản bác phủ nhận lại lời khen. Cô này có vẻ thích được người ta khen. Em cũng thích được khen nhưng tùy lúc. Khen kiểu nịnh bợ em không thích lắm.”

(‘In the sense of denying the compliment. It seems this girl likes to be complimented. I’d also like to be complimented, but depending on what occasion. I don’t like such a flattery compliment.’)

NF19: [Cười] Có thật không vậy?
(‘[Smile] Is that true?’)

“Thường thường những người đứng đầu họ sẽ nhận được những lời khen thế này. Những lời khen thế này thường là một nửa sự thật, một nửa xu nịnh kiểu nịnh bợ người ta lên. Em cũng sẽ cười. Thường nụ cười sẽ bắt đầu cho một lời cảm ơn. Kiểu vừa cười vừa nói nửa đùa nửa thật vì người ta cũng không phải là thật lòng với mình.”

(‘Normally leaders would receive such compliments. Such compliments are usually half the truth and half the flattery like ‘to butter someone up’. I will also smile. To me, a smile works as a thank-you, in the sense of ‘half joking half honest’ because they are not honest with me, either.’)

NF20: [Im lặng] Chị phải lên làm việc rồi.
(‘[Silent] I must go to work.’)

“Tìm cách lảng tránh lời khen sáo rỗng đó. Trong tình huống này, cô lễ tân khá nịnh nọt. Em thì ko hưởng ứng lời khen kiểu nịnh nọt này lắm nên em sẽ im lặng, hoặc nói sang chuyện khác để tránh đối mặt cái lời khen kiểu thế này.”

(‘Find a way to avoid the empty compliment. In this situation, the receptionist is quite flattering. Since I don’t support such a flattering compliment, I will keep silent or switch to another topic to avoid facing this kind of compliment.’)

Given that the flattery compliment was not sincere, and its purpose was to butter someone up, NF19 used a ‘half-joking and half-honest’ strategy. This recipient chose to express some doubt about the compliment, whereas NF20 closed the conversation to avoid facing such an empty compliment. There was only 10% responding with a ‘smile’ to pretend that they were interested in the compliment.

NF14: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Cười tỏ ra vui vẻ bên ngoài nhưng trong lòng không thích đâu vì biết họ đang khen để nịnh nọt thôi. Lời khen không thật nên không thích. Em không thích khen kiểu nịnh nọt như vậy.”

(‘Smile to appear happy outside but inside I don’t like it, because I know they are complimenting to flatter me. The compliment is not sincere, so I don’t like it. I don’t like such flattery compliments.’)

NF15: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Vì biết cô này chỉ là đang khen xã giao, nịnh một chút thôi nên em không thích.”

(‘As I know this woman is complimenting me as a social strategy, just flattering me a little bit so I am not interested.’)

Despite responding to the compliment with a ‘smile’, the comments show that the two females (NF14, NF15) did not value this flattery compliment due to its flattery purpose and insincerity. The ‘smile’ in their responses might be considered a ‘fake’ smile, helping to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment.

A greater number of the males (65%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As Table 4.14 demonstrates, 35% showed a lack of interest using different strategies. Around

15% minimized the force of the compliment, in the form of a smiling scale-down (5%, NM1) or a thanking scale-down (10%, e.g., NM4, NM6); 10% chose to be silent (e.g., NM8).

NM1: [Cười] Điều đó cũng bình thường thôi.
(‘[smile] It is very normal.’)

“Em không thích lời khen này lắm.”

(‘I don't like this compliment very much.’)

NM4: Cám ơn. Em khen quá lời.
(‘Thank you. You are overstated.’)

“Được khen thì thấy vui nhưng khi được khen quá như vậy thì sẽ không vui, không thấy thích.”

(‘Being complimented made me feel good, but being complimented that much made me unhappy, not interested.’)

NM6: Em quá khen. Cám ơn.
(‘You're overpraising me. Thank you.’)

“Em nghĩ trong môi trường làm việc như trong công ty ít khi nào có lời khen thật lòng lắm. Cảm giác lời khen không thật lòng lắm. Em cũng thích được khen nhưng phải tùy hoàn cảnh và tùy môi trường.”

(‘I think at work place such as in a company, it is rare to have sincere compliments. I feel the compliment was not very sincere. I would also like to be complimented but it depends on the situation and the environment.’)

NM8: [Im lặng] (‘[silent]’)

“Đứng đấy một lúc rồi đi. Vì em cảm thấy người ta khen chỉ để lấy lòng em thôi nên không cần trả lời. Em không thích khen lấy lòng, em chỉ thích được khen thực tế.”

(‘I'll stand still for a while and then leave. I feel this compliment aims at pleasing me, so I don't need to respond to it. I don't like compliments that are aimed at pleasing me. What I like is a real compliment.’)

NM1 was smiling and downgrading the compliment but the comment shows that he was not very interested in the compliment. The comment also shows that receiving a compliment usually made NM4 feel good; however, NM4 said that he was not interested in this compliment due to

lots of compliments given in this situation. As NM4 commented, being complimented that much made him unhappy and not interested. For NM6, the compliment was not sincere because it was given at work place such as in a company. He said that he likes being complimented but it depends on the situation and the environment. SM8 chose to be silent as in his opinion, the compliment in this situation aimed at pleasing him, not being a real compliment. He said that he was not interested in compliments that were aimed at pleasing him. His silence was associated with negative feelings. In general, these Northern males expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

The other 30% pretended to be interested in the compliment, with a ‘fake’ smile (15%, e.g., NM15, NM16) or in different forms of thank-you (also 15%), such as a formulaic thank-you (10%, e.g., NM11), or a smiling thank-you (5%, e.g., NM19).

NM15: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Đây chỉ là lời khen xã giao thôi nên em không muốn nói nhiều về nó. Tìm cái gì đó để thay đổi đề tài.”

(‘This is a polite compliment as a social strategy, so I don't want to talk too much about it. I might find something to change the topic.’)

NM16: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Cười để có tỏ ra vui vẻ thân thiện thôi. Thật ra đây chỉ là những lời nịnh nọt, không phải khen thật lòng. Để mà đáp lại đôi khi chỉ cần tỏ thái độ vui vẻ, cười, thân thiện thế là đủ rồi. Không cần phải tìm lời lẽ gì đó để mà đáp lại.”

(‘I smile to appear friendly. In fact, they are just words of flattery, not sincere compliments. In response to them, I only need to appear happy, friendly, and smiling. That's enough. There is no need to find any words to respond to it.’)

NM11: Cảm ơn. (‘Thank you’)

“Vì theo em những câu khen này rất sáo rỗng. Nó là thành công trong công việc, không liên quan gì đến đẹp cả.”

(‘To me, these compliments are words of cliché. It’s the success in work, not related to my beauty.’)

NM19: Cám ơn [Cười]
(‘Thank you. [smile]’)

“Em thấy lời khen này không bình thường vì em chỉ muốn tập trung làm tốt công việc.”

(‘I think this compliment is abnormal because I only want to focus on doing my job well.’)

NM15 and NM16 chose to smile. Their smile was meant very differently. For NM15, the compliment in this situation was a polite compliment serving as a social strategy, so he was not interested in talking too much about it. He smiled to find some time changing the topic. NM16 viewed the compliment as words of flattery. As he commented, what he should do was to appear happy and friendly with a smile. He smiled as there was no need for him to find any words to respond to the compliment. For NM11 and NM19, the compliments given in this situation were empty words which might be seen as ‘abnormal’, so they were not interested in the compliment. These Northern males were not interested in the compliment but as a matter of courtesy they feigned to be interested in it.

In conclusion, only a small number of the males but a great number of the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment. In contrast, a high number of the males but a lower number of the females expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

4.15. Responses to Admiration Compliment

This section presents CRs and gender variation in two regions. It begins with a detailed analysis of CRs between males and females in the South. A comparison of CRs between males and females in the North comes next.

There was a dramatic difference in CRs between males and females in the South. As illustrated in Fig 4.15, as many as 80% of the females but only 45% of the males reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. Over a half of the males (55%) described a lack of interest in the compliment while for the females, this number was very small (10%).

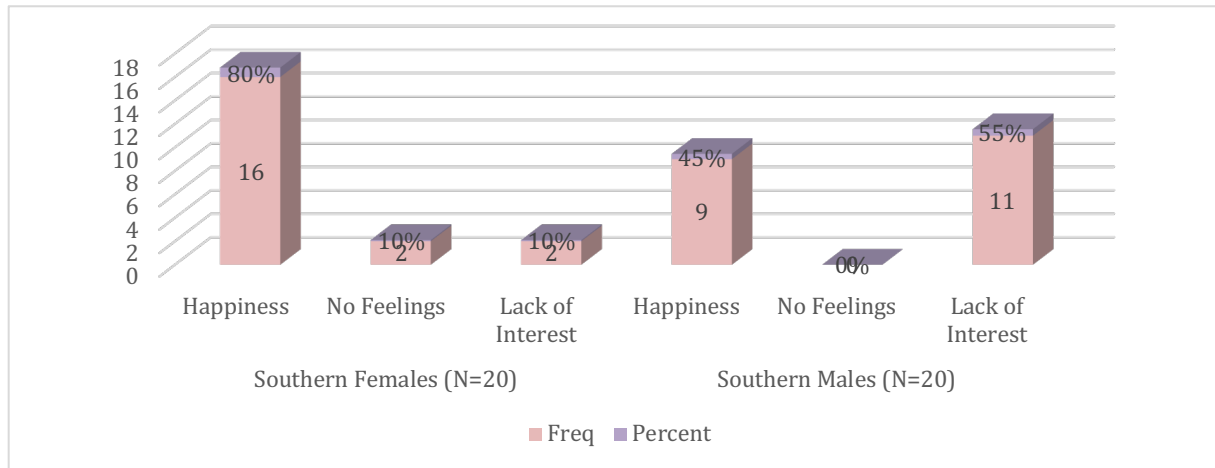


Figure 4.15. Feelings of admiration compliment across genders in the South

Table 4.15
Responses to admiration compliment across genders in the South

Feelings	Southern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Shyness (80%)	- appreciated the complimenter	12	60%
	- ignored the compliment	4	20%
No Feelings (10%)			
	- minimized the force of the compliment.	2	10%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
	Pretend interest (10%) - responded with different forms of thank-you	2	10%
Feelings	Southern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Shyness (45%)	- ignored the compliment	9	45%
No Feelings (0%)			
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
	Pretend interest (55%) - responded with different forms of thank-you	11	55%

Less than a half of the males (45%) but a much higher 80% of the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As we can see in Table 4.15, though the females reported being happy but their responses were associated with a feeling of shyness when receiving the compliment from the man. The females would prefer ‘Appreciating the complimenter’ (60%) to ‘Ignoring the compliment’ (20%). In appreciation for the complimenter, 45% of them responded with the smiling thank you (e.g., SF12) and 15% used the formulaic thank-you (e.g., SF3). For instance, SF3 said thank you to the complimenter, and her thank-you was in pair with silence. The comment shows that SF3 felt happy and slightly shy when she received the compliment in this situation. The silence in her response was associated with the feeling of shyness when receiving the compliment from the man in this context.

SF3: [Im lặng] Cám ơn anh.
(‘[silent] Thank you.’)

“Em thấy vui nhưng hơi thẹn thùng tí.”

(‘I’m happy but a bit shy.’)

SF12: [Cười nhẹ] Cám ơn anh. Em sẽ đàn theo lời anh yêu cầu.
(‘[smile slightly] Thank you. I’ll play a song upon your request.’)

“Có vui nhưng em hơi thẹn với lời khen.”

(‘I’m happy but I feel a bit shy with the compliment.’)

SF12 also said thank-you to the complimenter. Her thank-you was in pair with a smile and a statement that accepted the complimenter's suggestion about playing one more song. The comment shows that she felt happy but slightly shy when she received the compliment. The slight smile embedded in her response was also associated with the feeling of shyness when receiving the man’s compliment in this context.

Almost 20% chose to ignore the compliment with a slight smile in combination with statements that accepted the complimenter's suggestion about playing one more song. To illustrate, SF17 chose to smile as a response to the compliment, and then SF17 agreed with the man's suggestion about playing one more song "Đạ được" ('Yes, I can'). For SF13, she also smiled and agreed with the man's suggestion "Đạ được chứ. Nếu mà anh muốn thưởng thức thì em sẽ đàn tiếp." ('Yes I can. If you'd like to enjoy, I'll continue playing.').

SF17: [Cười mỉm] Dạ được.
([smile slightly] Yes, I can.)

"Em cảm thấy thẹn thùng với lời khen."

(I feel shy with the compliment.)

SF13: [Cười mỉm] Dạ được chứ. Nếu mà anh muốn thưởng thức thì em sẽ đàn tiếp.
([smile slightly] Yes, I can. If you'd like to enjoy, I'll continue playing.)

"Em cảm thấy vui nhưng cũng thấy ngại ngại."

(I feel happy but also shy.)

Based on the comments, though these two Southern females were happy, they were slightly shy when receiving the compliment from the man in this situation.

A smaller number of the males expressed positive feelings about the compliment. Despite being happy, 45% of the males ignored the compliment to show that they were feeling shy when receiving the compliment. The males (e.g., SM1, SM11, SM12) ignored the compliment with silence and an agreement with the man's suggestion about playing one more song. While the females were shy as the compliment was given by the man, the following comments show that the males were shy for many reasons.

SM1: [Im lặng] Dạ được. Anh thích bài nào thì em sẽ đàn bài đó cho anh.
([silent] It's okay. Which song you like, then I'll play it for you.)

"Em vui nhưng ngại vì lời khen này quá đột ngột."

(‘I was happy but a little shy as the compliment was given too suddenly.’)

SM11: [Im lặng] Dĩ nhiên là được ạ. Vậy anh muốn nghe bài nào ạ?
(‘[silent] Certainly, so what song do you want to listen to?’)

“Vui thì có vui nhưng em ngại vì anh ấy tặng hoa cho em trước mặt mọi người.”

(‘I was happy but I was shy because he gave me flowers in front of people.’)

SM12: Được. Em sẽ đàn thêm một bản nữa [Im lặng]
(‘Okay. I’ll play one more song [silent]’)

“Em có vui nhưng thấy hơi ngượng ngùng vì được khen trước mặt mọi người.”

(‘I was happy but I felt slightly embarrassed when being complimented in front of people.’)

The comment shows that SM1 felt shy as the compliment was given very suddenly. SM11 said that he was shy because he was given flowers in front of the crowd. For SM12, being complimented in front of people made him slightly embarrassed. It appears likely that the major reason for the males who reported being happy but chose to ignore the compliment was that the context where the compliment was given was considered inappropriate to the male participants.

A great number of the males expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As presented in Table 4.15, as many as 55% of the males pretended to be interested in the compliment in two different forms of thank-you: the formulaic thank-you (25%, e.g., SM19) and the smiling thank-you (30%, e.g., SM5).

SM19: Cám ơn anh. Ah. Cái này là em đàn phục vụ theo yêu cầu của cấp trên. Anh chờ em xin ý kiến cấp trên trước.
(‘Thank you. Ah. I play the song upon request of my boss. You may please wait for me to consult my boss first.’)

“Em không có hứng thú và muốn từ chối lời khen khéo léo.”

(‘I am not interested and want to reject the compliment skilfully.’)

SM5: [Cười] Cám ơn anh. Em cũng không phiền đâu.
(‘[smile] Thank you. I don't mind either.’)

“Em không thích anh đó nên em thấy khó chịu và càng không có hứng thú với lời khen này.”

(‘I don't like the man so I feel annoyed and I don't even have an interest in this compliment.’)

As commented, SM19 was not interested in the compliment and wanted to reject the compliment politely. He said thank you to the complimenter and indirectly rejected the complimenter's suggestion about playing one more song by saying that he must consult his boss about the suggestion. SM5 reported being annoyed and not being interested in the compliment because he did not like the man (i.e., the complimenter). However, to disguise a lack of interest, he still smiled and said thank you to the complimenter. He agreed to play one more song upon the complimenter's request. In general, these Southern males were not interested in the compliment, but to be polite they pretended to be interested in it.

To sum up, most of the females in the South expressed positive feelings about the compliment. For the males, over a half expressed negative feelings while less than a half expressed positive feelings about the compliment.

The next page presents CRs and gender variation in the North.

There was a considerable difference in CRs between males and females in the North. As shown in Fig 4.16, only 35% of the males but a much higher 90% of the females reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment. In contrast, a very small percentage of the females (5%) but as many as 60% of the males reported a lack of interest in the compliment.

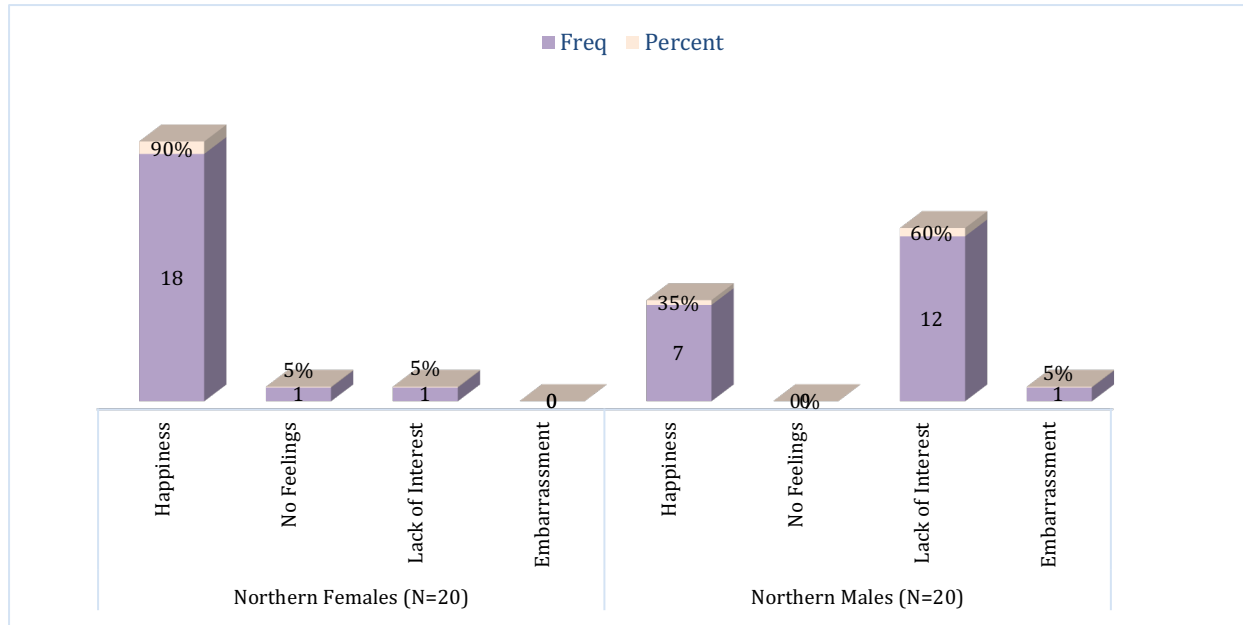


Figure 4.16. Feelings of admiration compliment across genders in the North

Most of the females (90%) expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As we can see in Table 4.16, despite reporting being happy, 55% of the females favored responses with shyness. Nearly 30% responded with pleasure and only 5% appeared humble. With regard to shyness responses, the females used ‘Ignoring the compliment’ (35%) more often than ‘Appreciating the complimenter’ (20%). To ignore the compliment, 30% chose to smile slightly and then agreed with the man’s suggestion about playing one more song (e.g., NF8); 5% was silent and then indirectly rejected the man’s suggestion about playing one more song (e.g., NF3). The recipients did not verbally acknowledge the compliment.

Table 4.16

Responses to admiration compliment across genders in the North

Feelings	Northern Females' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (30%)	- signified pleasure	6	30%
Shyness (55%)	- ignored the compliment	7	35%
	- appreciated the complimenter	4	20%
Modesty (5%)	- minimized the force of the compliment	1	5%
No Feelings (5%)			
	- head nod	1	5%
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (5%)	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	1	5%
Embarrassment (0%)			
Feelings	Northern Males' CR strategies	Freq	Percent
Happiness			
Pleasure (35%)	- signified pleasure	7	35%
Shyness (0%)			
Modesty (0%)			
No Feelings (0%)			
Lack of Interest			
Lack interest (0%)			
Pretend interest (60%)	- responded with a formulaic thank-you	8	40%
	- smile	3	15%
	- minimized the force of the compliment.	1	5%
Embarrassment			
	- responded with a formulaic thank-you.	1	5%

NF8: [Mim cười] Nếu anh muốn em có thể.

([smile slightly] If you'd love to, I can.)

“Em hơi thẹn thùng và bất ngờ với lời khen này.”

(‘I’m a bit shy and surprised by this compliment.’)

NF3: Anh muốn em đàn bài gì? Em biết mỗi bài này [Im lặng]
(‘What song do you want me to play? I only know this song [silent]’)

“Em hơi thẹn với lời khen của anh ấy.”

(‘I’m a bit shy with his compliment.’)

The comments indicate that NF8 and NF3 were slightly shy and surprised when receiving the compliment in this situation. Though NF8 smiled slightly and agreed with the complimenter’s suggestion about playing one more song, she did not verbally acknowledge the compliment. Similarly, NF3 chose to be silent after indirectly rejecting the complimenter’s suggestion. It is likely that NF8 and NF3 chose to ignore the compliment.

Some females (20%, e.g., NF12, NF20) employed the smiling thank-you to show their appreciation for the complimenter. As we can see in the following examples, NF12 said thank-you to the complimenter and rejected his suggestion about playing one more song right at the moment. The comment indicates that NF12 wanted to accept the compliment, but she would not like to continue playing another song immediately after the complimenter’s suggestion. In her opinion, it would not be good to agree with the man’s suggestion immediately. As she reported, she wanted to ‘make a price’ in front of boys.

NF12: Cám ơn anh. Hẹn anh vào một dịp khác [mỉm cười]
(‘Thank you. I’ll play the other time [smile slightly]’)

“Em sẽ cám ơn trước. Nếu có thời gian thì em sẽ nhận lời đàn tiếp. Em chấp nhận lời khen nhưng em không đàn tiếp liền mà sẽ hẹn vào một dịp khác. Vì chấp nhận liền có vẻ không tốt lắm, phải làm giá một tí trước con trai.”

(‘I would say thank you first. If I had time, I would agree to play one more song. I accept the compliment but I don’t want to continue playing right at that moment. I want to continue the other time. It’s not good to agree immediately. I want to ‘make a price’ in front of boys.’)

NF20: [Cười mỉm] Cám ơn.
([smile slightly] Thank you.’)

“Em hơi thẹn với lời khen của anh ấy. Tuy nhiên em vẫn nhìn thẳng vào anh ấy để ngụ ý cảm ơn vì lời khen.”

(‘I feel slightly shy with his compliment, but I still want to look at him directly to show my thanks for the compliment.’)

NF20 also smiled slightly and said thank-you to the complimenter. The comment states that NF20 felt slightly shy when receiving the compliment but she wanted to show her thanks for the compliment. Her slight smile would most probably represent a feeling of happiness and shyness.

Approximately 30% of the females said that they were happy with the compliment, and so would like to let the complimenter know their feeling. They could signify their pleasure in the form of a smiling thank-you (20%, e.g., NF15, NF16) or a formulaic thank-you (10%, e.g., NF11).

NF15: Cảm ơn anh. Nếu anh muốn thì tôi có thể đàn lại thêm một lần nữa [Cười]
(‘Thank you. If you'd love to, then I can play it one more time [smile]’)

“Anh này kiểu thích cô này. Có người thích mình mình phải vui. Nếu em là cô ấy em có thể nhận lời khen của anh ấy, nói cảm ơn và chấp nhận đàn thêm một bài nữa.”

(‘It seems to me that the man likes the girl. I feel happy when somebody likes me. If I were her, I would accept the compliment, say thank you, and agree to play one more song.’)

NF16: [Cười] Cảm ơn. Anh muốn em đàn bài gì?
(‘[smile] Thank you. What song do you want me to play?’)

“Thấy vui trong lòng.”

(‘I feel happy in my heart.’)

NF11: Cảm ơn anh vì đã khen. Em sẽ đàn thêm bài nữa.
(‘Thank you for your compliment. I'll play one more song.’)

“Em sẽ nhận lời khen này vì người đã nói thế, biết thưởng thức tài năng của mình nên mình phải vui.”

(‘I will accept this compliment because he said so. That means he knew and enjoyed my talents, so I am very happy.’)

Both NF15 and NF16 said thank-you to the complimenter and agreed to continue playing one more song. Their thank-you was especially in pair with a smile. For NF15, the man (i.e., the complimenter) liked the girl and so using a smiling thank-you NF15 was most likely to accept the compliment. NF15 said that she felt happy when somebody liked her. NF16 also reported that she felt happy in her heart when she received the compliment from the man. Thus, her smiling thank-you may represent her sense of pleasure when she received the compliment in this situation. Similarly, NF11 said thank-you to the complimenter and agreed to play one more song. The comment reveals that NF11 would accept the compliment as the man enjoyed her talents. She said that she was happy when the man knew and enjoyed her talents.

Only a small number of the males expressed positive feelings about the compliment. As Table 4.16 demonstrates, only 35% of the males signified pleasure when receiving the compliment, in the form of a formulaic thank-you (e.g., NM7, NM11).

NM7: Cảm ơn. Em sẽ đàn cho anh thêm bài nữa.
(‘Thank you. I’ll play you one more song.’)

“Cảm ơn người ta vì người ta đã công nhận tài năng của mình thì mình phải trân trọng điều đó. Chấp nhận lời khen vì người ta đã công nhận tài năng của mình thì mình phải biết trân trọng.”

(‘I want to say thanks to him because he recognized my talent. I have to appreciate it. I’ll accept the compliment as he has recognized my talent. I need to appreciate it.’)

NM11: Cảm ơn anh rất nhiều.
(‘Thank you very much.’)

“Đàn violin là đam mê của mình, nên có người khen thì em sẽ rất vui. Vì khi mình thể hiện đam mê tài năng của mình mà có người khác khen thì em sẽ cảm thấy rất vui.”

(‘Playing the violin is my passion, so I’ll be very happy when somebody compliments me on it. I feel very happy to receive a compliment when I show my passion and perform my talent.’)

According to the comment, NM7 accepted the compliment as a form of appreciation because the complimenter has recognized and enjoyed his talent. NM11 also reported being happy upon receiving the compliment since he really appreciated the complimenter who valued and enjoyed his talent.

Another considerable difference between the two genders was that only a small number of the females (10%) but a greater number of the males (65%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment. As manifested in Table 4.16, as many as 60% of the females reported not being interested in the compliment but they finally feigned to be interested in it; 5% reported a feeling of embarrassment about the compliment. To disguise a lack of interest in the compliment, 40% responded to the compliment in the form of a formulaic thank-you; 15% chose to smile and 5% minimized the force of the compliment.

NM16: Cảm ơn anh. Xin lỗi thời gian còn phải dành cho tiết mục khác.

(‘Thank you. Sorry, the time needs to be spent on another performance.’)

“Em sẽ tìm một lý do để từ chối. Em thấy anh này hơi thất thố quá nên em chỉ nhận hoa thôi chứ không nhận lời đàn thêm. Em sẽ tìm một lý do nào đó để từ chối lời khen.”

(‘I will find a reason to refuse. I think this man was too careless in his behavior, so I only wanted to receive flowers, not accepting to play more songs. I’ll find a reason to reject the compliment.’)

As NM16 reported, the compliment in this context seemed to be inappropriate as the action of giving a compliment and flowers to somebody in public was considered a ‘not good’ behavior. Thus, NM16 said thank you and refused to play one more song. As he said, he would find a reason to reject the compliment.

NM8: [Cười] Cảm ơn anh. Em sẽ đàn cho anh một bài nữa.

(‘[smile] Thank you. I’ll play you one more song.’)

“Nếu là người lạ, em sẽ cẩn trọng nhiều hơn. Nếu là người quen biết thì em sẽ chấp nhận lời khen này. Ở đây em sẽ không chấp nhận lời khen.”

(‘If he were a stranger, I would be more careful. If he were an acquaintance, I would accept the compliment. Here, I won’t accept the compliment.’)

For NM8, whether the compliment was welcomed or not would depend very much on the relationship between the giver and the receiver. As he said, if the complimenter were a stranger, he would be more careful; however, if the complimenter were an acquaintance, he would accept the compliment.

NM20: Được [Mím cười tươi]
(‘Okay [smile sweetly]’)

“Em không thích lời khen này và muốn từ chối trả lời. Em mím cười tươi vì đây là một người không quen mình lắm.”

(‘I don’t like this compliment, and I wanted to reject it. I smiled sweetly because I did not know this man very well.’)

Though NM20 smiled at the compliment and agreed to play one more song, his comment shows that he was not interested in the compliment as he did not know the complimenter very well. His smile was associated with negative feelings, as a way to reject the compliment. In general, the males may perceive the compliment as inappropriate, in part because the context where the compliment was given was not appropriate (i.e., giving somebody a compliment together with flowers in a public setting, e.g., at a coffee shop stage), and in part would depend on the relationship between the compliment giver and receiver.

To sum up, a great number of the females in the North expressed positive feelings about the compliment while a high number of the males expressed negative feelings about the compliment. For many males, the compliment in this scenario could be a negative act, whereas for most of the females this compliment was perceived to be a positive act.

4.16. Chapter Summary

The present chapter explored CRs with semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the two regions of the country, based on the first three research questions about regional and gender variation. The chapter first discussed CRs and regional variation, and then focused on CRs and gender variation in Vietnamese.

In terms of regional variation, the results showed that there were large differences in regional variation and the degree of variation differed depending on the compliment scenarios. The males in both regions perceived thank-you and joking compliments as positive, even though the way they responded to the two compliments was slightly different. The majority of the males in the North viewed the encouragement compliment as positive, while for the males in the South, this number was smaller. A great number of the males in the South perceived the sport session-ending compliment as positive while nearly a half of the males in the North expressed negative feelings about this compliment.

The females in both regions perceived admiration and flirty compliments as positive acts, but we still can see certain differences in their choice of CR strategies. The females in the South expressed positive feelings about the congratulation compliment while over a half of the females in the North expressed negative feelings about it. The females in the South most likely appeared humble when receiving the flattery compliment while this was not the case for the Northern females.

With respect to gender variation, we do not always see gender variation in both regions. We sometimes can only see gender variation in either the South or the North. None of gender differences were found in thank-you and flirty compliment scenarios.

For the encouragement compliment scenario, we can only see gender variation in the South. The females expressed positive feelings about this compliment while for the males, the compliment in this scenario was viewed as both a positive and a negative act. For the three compliment scenarios (sport session-ending compliment, joking compliment, and flattery compliment), we can only see gender variation in the North. Over a half of the males and the females expressed positive feelings about the sport-session ending compliment. The males favored responses showing pleasure; the females wanted to express their pleasure in a modest way. Only a small number of the females expressed negative feelings about the joking compliment, whereas for the males, this number was much higher. Only a small number of the males but a great number of the females expressed positive feelings about the flattery compliment.

With regard to congratulation and admiration compliments, we can see gender variation in both regions. In the South, a large number of the females expressed positive feelings about the congratulation compliment; for the males, this number was smaller. In the North, over a half of the females expressed negative feelings about the congratulation compliment while a high number of the males expressed positive feelings about it. In the South, the females expressed positive feelings about the admiration compliment while the males expressed negative feelings about it. In the North, a great number of the females expressed positive feelings about the admiration compliment while the males expressed negative feelings about it. For the Northern males, the compliment in this scenario was a negative act; for the Northern females this compliment was a positive act.

To sum up, the results of the present study showed considerable differences in CRs across regions and genders. The men and the women perceived the same compliment very

differently depending upon the context in which the compliment was given. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will present the results of the second data set – CRs in two contemporary Vietnamese talk shows, “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) and “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) to examine how the context of the two shows interacts with regional and gender variation.

CHAPTER V

TALK SHOW RESULTS

Chapter 5 presents the results of the talk show data. As the main aim of the present study was investigating how genre and context impact regional and gender variation in Vietnamese CRs, this chapter especially discusses how the context of the two shows used in the present study impacts compliment behaviors and CRs. The chapter begins with an overview of the talk show genre and some unique contributions of the talk show data set to the knowledge of compliments and responses. The chapter then explores how the context of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) impacts regional variation. Finally, the chapter examines influences of the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) on gender variation.

5.1. Overview of the Talk Show Genre

As discussed in section 2.3.2, the talk show genre has its own unique features. One particular feature that differentiates interactions on media contexts from everyday conversations was the audience. Interactions on media contexts such as in television talk shows mean that the participants are having a conversation in front of an audience (O’Keeffe, 2006), not only physically present in the studio but also normally not present in the studio. Saying differently, a talk in media contexts were distributed “not only to a studio audience but also, and primarily, to a home audience” (Salomaa & Lehtinen, 2018, p. 133). This may explain why a talk on media

contexts like a television show is always “shaped for and by the audience who watch or listen to that show in that social context” (O’Keeffe, 2006, p. 4).

Sincerity was also an interesting feature of the talk show genre. As claimed in Salomaa and Lehtinen (2018), “ordinary people on television do things that are not ordinary” (p. 140), so celebrities on television talk shows were usually not being themselves (Tolson, 2010; Salomaa & Lehtinen, 2018). What we see in television talk shows may not reflect what we can actually see in real life. As argued in Tolson (2010), spoken interactions on such a media context “can never be the naturally occurring ‘ordinary conversation’ of everyday life” (p. 278), because such important conversational features as “speaker roles, power, and turns-taking rights” or “when and how to open the interaction, and how to frame it” (O’Keeffe, 2006, p. 4) may differ considerably depending on the purpose of each show.

In different shows, we may have different discourse expectations such as “the appropriacy of topics, the form, function and positioning of discursal elements” (O’Keeffe, 2006, p. 29). In Chapter 4, in having casual conversations through semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with the participants in the two regions using compliments in movie discourse, we found that there were dramatic differences about gender and region. The sociolinguistic interview results reflect certain dialects; however, certain dialects could be eliminated in media contexts, especially in talk shows that are broadcast on national television channels. Thus, in this chapter, what we see in the talk show data may not reflect certain dialects because people’s interactions in media contexts, as discussed above, are not the same as people’s interaction in their own regions. This explains why in Chapter 4 we can see considerable differences in CRs with sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the two regions of the country, but we cannot see big differences about gender and region in the two shows analyzed in the present chapter.

The talk show data set contributes to the recent research trend that focused on collecting and analyzing compliments in certain contexts, especially discussing particular features of the context and how the context impacts compliment behaviors as well as the responses. The present chapter discusses one by one in-person compliments in certain contexts along with visual illustrations of the nonverbal responses. Prior research usually claims that such nonverbal behaviors as smile and head nod would support an acceptance or that ‘silence’ was a rejection; however, the talk show data set reviews to us that these nonverbal responses were not always meant as an acceptance or a rejection. One of the most interesting things we learn from the talk show data was that one form could perform more than one function and so the same nonverbal reaction may have different meanings depending on its occurrence in the interactional context. With the talk show data, we learn that an acknowledgment was not necessarily meant as an acceptance. Throughout the present chapter, we can see that the context does matter very much in giving compliments and interpreting the responses. Compliment behaviors and CRs may differ between two shows, not only due to the gender of the host but also depending on the particular features or the main purpose of each show. Because compliments are related to the contents of the show, the nature of each show may tell us what compliments and responses were expected to be given in each show. This chapter aims to explore this issue further as well as discusses how genre and context impact regional and gender variation.

The next section of the chapter discusses particular features of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) and how the context of the show impacts actual compliment behaviors and general CRs. It then presents an overview of CRs in this show. A brief discussion of how the context of this show may impact regional variation is presented next.

5.2. The Talk Show “Vui Sống Mỗi Ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’)

The first show used in the present study was “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) broadcast on VTV3, a national television channel and then published again on a YouTube channel. As the main focus of this show was about beauty and living a happy life, it was not surprising that the host was a famous female actress and guests were often female models, Miss Ladies, Miss Vietnam, actresses, dancers, and singers. As we can see in Figs 5.1 and 5.2 in section 5.2.1, direct compliments addressing guest greatly outnumbered indirect compliments not addressing guest. To be associated with the theme of the show, the compliments given in the show, as could be expected, were often appearance compliments. Here we can see a difference in actual compliment behaviors in two types of discourse.

The compliments in movie discourse, as demonstrated in section 3.2, could perform functions of many other speech acts such as thank-you, encouragement, congratulation, flattery, or flirty, and especially were involved in a wide variety of topics and several conversational turns. However, as could be expected in this TV show discourse setting, the female host mainly used the compliments to begin and facilitate the conversation, or to start and develop a conversational topic. The female host’s compliments were often the preface to a question in the show, so it makes sense that most of the responses were non-verbal in order to not interrupt the host’s ongoing action. As most of the compliments given in the show were direct person-to-person compliments and the topics of compliments were closely associated with the topic of the show, it was expected that guests would acknowledge most of the compliments from the host. A great number of the nonverbal responses made by the guests were also expected to support an acknowledgment.

To explore this issue further in depth, the next section presents an overview of CRs and an analysis of the nonverbal behaviors obtained in the show.

5.2.1. Overview of Compliment Responses

Due to particular features of the show, as we discussed in section 5.2, most of the compliments given in this show were direct person-to-person compliments that concerned beauty or appearance. The responses obtained in the show were mainly non-verbal. This section presents general patterns of CRs in the first show.

As shown in Fig 5.1, direct compliments (n=8) were given more often than indirect ones (n=2). In terms of CRs, Fig 5.1 indicates a general tendency for the Southern female guests to acknowledge direct compliments, with 75% of the responses, compared to 12.5% of Appreciation Expression and another 12.5% of Evade. For indirect compliments, we could not observe the guest’s reaction as the guest was not on camera at the time the compliments were given.

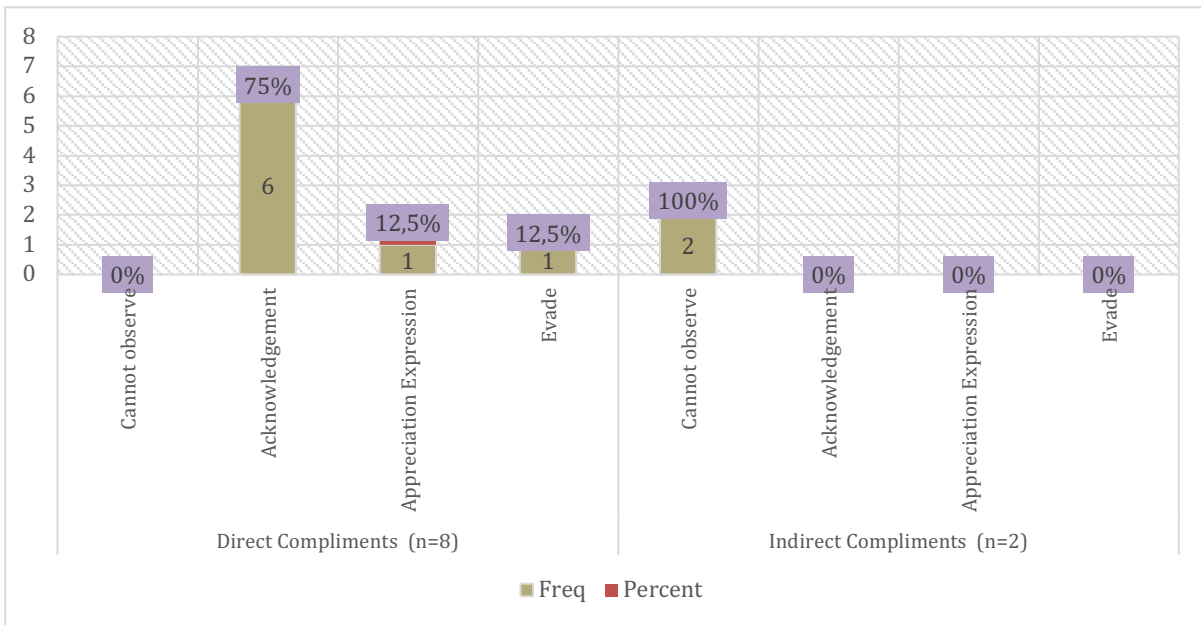


Figure 5.1. Compliment responses of the Southern female guests

While Fig 5.1 shows a small number of compliments given to the Southern female guests (N=10), of which direct compliments had a higher frequency (n=8) than indirect ones (n=2). In contrast, the compliments given to the Northern female guests, as shown in Fig 5.2 below, numbered nearly 19 (14 direct vs. 5 indirect), which was almost twice the number of compliments given to their Southern counterparts. Concerning CRs, the Northern female guests tended to acknowledge direct compliments, with 85.7% of responses, as opposed to only 14.3% of Appreciation Expression and 0% of Evade. For indirect compliments, the cases in which we could not observe the guest's reaction occurred at a higher frequency, scoring 80% (n=4) compared to 20% (n=1) of Acknowledgement.

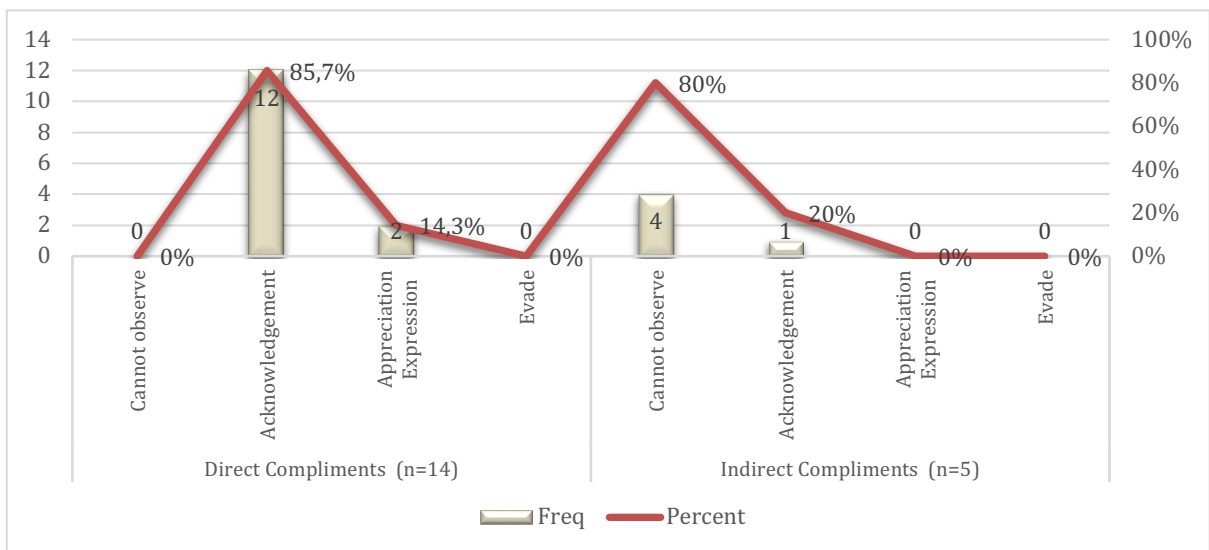


Figure 5.2. Compliment responses of the Northern female guests

As we see in Figs 5.1 and 5.2, there was a general tendency for the female guests in both regions to acknowledge the compliments. As reviewed in section 2.2.2, previous studies (e.g., Herbert, 1990; Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Cheng, 2011; Cedar, 2012; Allami & Montazeri, 2012) claimed that nonverbal behaviors such as ‘smile’ and ‘head nod’ would more often support an acceptance. In the present study, we found that these non-verbal behaviors may have different meanings. Some might support an acknowledgment as an acceptance while some

were ambiguous. In this section, we present and analyze these two cases in more detail along with visual illustrations of the examples.

5.2.1.1. Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance

As presented in section 5.2, most of the responses observed in this show were non-verbal behaviors. The compliments given in the show were mainly direct person-to-person compliments and the topics of compliments were closely associated with the topic of the show. As we expected, the guests acknowledged most of the compliments from the host. A great number of the nonverbal responses made by the guests also supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance. As shown in Table 5.1 below, 50% (n=4) of the nonverbal responses produced by the Southern female guests and also 50% (n=7) of the ones made by the Northern female guests did support an acknowledgment as an acceptance.

Table 5.1

Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance

Guests	Compliment Turn	In response to direct compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The Southern female guests</i>			<i>(n=4)</i>	<i>(50%)</i>
SF2	1 st	- smile	1	12.5%
SF3	1 st	- smile plus hand touching chin	1	12.5%
SF5	1 st	- Evade	1	12.5%
	2 nd	- laughing plus a Vietnamese polite token		
SF4	2 nd	- laughing	1	12.5%
<i>The Northern female guests</i>			<i>(n=7)</i>	<i>(50%)</i>
NF1	1 st	- laughing	1	7.14%
	2 nd	- laughing plus arms movement	1	7.14%
	3 rd	- hand touching hair	1	7.14%
NF3	1 st	- smile	1	7.14%
NF2	1 st	- smile	1	7.14%
NF4	2 nd	- head nod	1	7.14%
	3 rd	- smile	1	7.14%
Guests	Compliment Turn	In response to indirect compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The Southern female guests</i>			<i>(n=0)</i>	<i>(0%)</i>
<i>The Northern female guests</i>			<i>(n=1)</i>	<i>(20%)</i>
NF3	1 st	- cannot observe	1	20%
	2 nd	- laughter		

In this section, we analyze those CR patterns along with visual illustrations of the examples.

Figs 5.3 and 5.4 demonstrate dramatic changes in SF3's reaction to the direct compliment. As Fig 5.3 shows, the female host used a direct compliment on the guest's appearance to begin the conversation. In the starting position, SF3 was sitting with hands on knee when she was addressed as "Chị Kim Thu ơi" ('older sister, Kim Thu'). In Vietnamese, "Chị gái" ('older sister') can be used as a polite form of address for a woman, especially in public settings like in a TV show setting. There were no remarkable responses observed in the starting position; however, as the female host made a compliment on SF3's appearance "càng ngày chị càng đẹp, và càng ngày" ('you are more and more beautiful'), there was a change in SF3's reaction, which was from sitting with hands on knee to hand touching chin. As the female host continued giving a positive comment about the guest's beauty "vẻ đẹp của chị mặn mà hơn rất nhiều" ('your beauty is much more attractive'), we again were able to see a remarkable change in SF3's reaction.

ELAN 5.9 - SF3 Kim Thu.eaf

File	[Host]	Tier	[E-trans]	Optic	[Guest]	[E-trans]
No						
2	Xin chào diễn viên Kim Thu.		Let's welcome the actress, Kim Thu.		[mím cười] [cúi đầu chào] Kim Thu xin chào quý vị khán giả của 'Vui sống mỗi ngày'	[smile] [head bowed slightly] I would like to say greetings to the audience of 'Live Happier Every Day'.
3	Chị Kim Thu ơi càng ngày chị càng đẹp, và càng ngày em nghĩ là ở chị có một vẻ đẹp có lẽ là do vì chị là mẹ cho nên vẻ đẹp của chị mặn mà hơn rất nhiều so với hình ảnh trước đây khi mà chưa có hai nhóc kháu khỉnh như vậy.		Kim Thu, you are more and more beautiful. I think in you, there is beauty of a mother, so your beauty is much more attractive than your previous image when you didn't have two pretty kids.		[tay sờ cằm] [mím cười]	[hand touching chin] [smile]
4	Chị có thể chia sẻ một chút về cuộc sống gia đình của mình bây giờ được không?		Can you share a little bit about your family life at the present moment?		Thư nghĩ là qua tuổi 30 thì nếu mà một người phụ nữ mà có một gia đình hạnh phúc và nhất là hai đứa con trai kháu khỉnh mà nó sống khỏe và nó sống vui mỗi ngày lớn lên thì người phụ nữ có thể nói là không còn gì hạnh phúc hơn. Có thể mình gọi đó là cái viên mãn của người phụ nữ ở tuổi qua hàng 30.	I think after the age of 30, nothing could be happier to a woman if she had a happy family and especially two pretty boys who are happy and healthy living and growing up every day. We can say that is the perfection of women over the age of 30.

Figure 5.3. SF3's reaction to the direct compliment in Segment 3

Starting position

Chị Kim Thu ơi (Kim Thu)

càng ngày chị càng đẹp, và càng ngày (you are more and more beautiful)

“[tay sờ cằm]” (“[hand touching chin]”)

em nghĩ là ở chị có một vẻ đẹp có lẽ là do vì chị là mẹ cho nên (I think in you there is beauty of a mother, so)

vẻ đẹp của chị mặn mà hơn rất nhiều (your beauty is much more attractive)

“[mím cười]” (“[smile]”)

so với hình ảnh trước đây (than your previous image)

khi mà chưa có hai nhóc kháu khỉnh như vậy (when you didn't have two pretty kids)

Figure 5.4. Illustration for a change in SF3's reaction during Segment 3

Fig 5.4 shows that SF3 smiled very sweetly at this moment. The change in SF3's reaction during the complimenting segment may lead us to the conclusion that she has acknowledged the compliment. Her answer to the question in Segment 4 in Fig 5.3 suggested that SF3 was feeling very happy as she had a happy family with two pretty boys, who were happily and healthily living and growing up every day. This answer explained to us why SF3 looks more attractive than her previous image. For this reason, the action of 'hand touching chin' and 'smile' observed in Segment 3 could be interpreted positively.

Fig 5.5 illustrates SF5's evading the first direct compliment. The host began the discourse segment with a question about the guest's profound memory during her time as a Miss Vietnam 2018 titleholder. In order to answer the question, the guest began to smile and talk about her memory at the Miss World pageant. To maintain the conversation, the host delved into this issue with such questions as "Tự làm" ('Do it yourself?') as in Segment 7 or "Em không có người hỗ trợ hay đó là quy định của cuộc thi?" ('You don't have a sponsor or is it the rule of the contest?') as in Segment 8. The host continued the conversation with a direct compliment on SF5's appearance "Chị thấy em đâu cần làm nhiều đâu tại em đẹp quá rồi mà!" ('I see you don't need to do very much because you are very beautiful!').

As shown in Segment 9 in Fig 5.5, SF5 began to laugh and tilt her head to one side before she minimized the force of the compliment by praising other contestants at the Miss World pageant. She then put one hand on chest, smiling and tilting her head to one side. As she said, other contestants were very beautiful (even without makeup), so she had to look good all the time to meet the judges and others in the competition. Though SF5's verbal response may indicate that she was downgrading the compliment, the gestures such as laughing together with head tilted to one side in the beginning and one hand on chest along with a smile and head tilted

to one side observed later on in the response possibly suggested that SF5 was happy to receive the compliment.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
6	Còn nếu mà nói về một kỷ niệm sâu sắc trong cái khoảng thời gian đương nhiệm thì nó có khó trả lời không Tiểu Vy?	Tieu Vy, if we talk about a profound memory during your time in office, then is it difficult for you to answer?	[mim cười] Em nghĩ là em cũng có khá nhiều kỷ niệm [hai tay vén tóc ra sau] nhưng mà thật ra cái kỉ niệm mà em nhớ là cái lần sau khi em đăng quang được đi thi Hoa hậu Thế giới. Đó là lần đầu tiên em được ra nước ngoài và phải tự mình xách 9-10 cái va li to đi là mà nặng lắm. Qua đó thì em cũng chuẩn bị đồ đạc, make-up, làm tóc.	[smile] I think I have a lot of memories [two hands pushing hair back], but actually the thing that etched markedly on my memory is the first time after I was crowned I was able to compete in Miss World. That was my first time going abroad and having to carry 9-10 big and heavy suitcases by myself. There, I had to prepare clothes, do make-up and hair on my own.
7	Tự làm?	Do it yourself?	tự làm hết tất cả mọi thứ	Do everything by myself.
8	Em không có người hỗ trợ hay đó là quy định của cuộc thi?	You don't have a sponsor or is it the rule of the contest?	Đó là quy định của cuộc thi [một tay để lên gối] [một tay trên ghế] và mình phải tự lập, tự làm hết tất cả mọi thứ [một tay phía trước ngực] [một tay trên ghế].	That's the rule of the contest [one hand on knee] [one hand on chair] and I myself must be independent and able to do everything [one hand on chest] [one hand on chair]
9	Chị thấy em đâu cần làm nhiều đầu tai em đẹp quá rồi mà!	I see you don't need to do very much because you are very beautiful!	[bật cười] [ngiêng đầu sang một bên] Nhưng mà chị biết không ở nước ngoài người ta rất là đẹp, người ta để mặt mộc thôi cũng đã đẹp rồi [một tay để trước ngực] [mim cười] [ngiêng đầu sang một bên] nên mình lúc nào cũng phải thật là chỉnh chu để mà gặp ban giám khảo hoặc là các thí sinh trong cuộc thi.	[laughing] [head tilted to one side] but you know people overseas are very beautiful. Without makeup they are also very beautiful [one hand on chest] [smile] [head tilted to one side] so I must always look neat to meet the judges or other contestants in the competition.

Figure 5.5. SF5's reaction to the first direct compliment

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
10	Vốn dĩ tuổi trẻ đã là một sắc đẹp rồi,	Young age has inherently been a beauty,	[mim lạng] [hai tay để lên gối]	[silent] [hands on knee]
11	và hôm nay chị nhìn thấy Tiểu Vy có một chút gì đó có vẻ đậm thắm hơn, cuốn hút hơn!	and Tieu Vy, today I see that you have something sweeter and more attractive!	<u>Ừ [bật cười]</u>	Yes [laughing]
12	Cái này là do ê-kíp xây dựng cho em hay là do em muốn?	Is this image built by your team or is it the image that you really want to be?	[mim cười] Dạ, em [hất tóc ra sau] với cả ê kíp của em sau một thời gian em nghĩ là mình đã định hình được phong cách của mình [mim cười] Sau khi đăng quang thì em cũng phải nên cân nhắc một chút xiu về những trang phục mà mình thường xuyên mặc.	[smile] Yes, I [push hair back] together with my team after a period of time, I think I have defined my personal style [smile] After I was crowned, I should also need to consider a little bit about the types of clothes that I usually wear.
13	Có những trang phục nào mà em phải dẹp không dám mặc luôn nữa không?	Are there any outfits that you have to get rid of because you no longer dare to wear them?	[mim cười] Dạ cũng có.	[smile] Yes, there are also some.

Figure 5.6. SF5's reaction to the second direct compliment

As the discourse proceeds, Fig 5.6 portrays SF5's reaction to the second direct compliment. In Segment 10, the guest was silent with two hands on knee listening to the host. In order to continue the topic, the host made a compliment on the guest's appearance as we can see in Segment 11. Fig 5.6 illustrates a change in SF5's reaction between Segment 10 and 11. If in Segment 10 SF5 was silent with hands on knee, then in Segment 11 she responded to the compliment with "Dạ [bật cười]" ('Yes [laughing]'). In Southern Vietnamese, "Dạ" ('Yes') was viewed as a politeness strategy indicating that the hearer recognized and understood what the speaker is saying. Therefore, it was possible to conclude that SF5 has noticed the compliment whose main purpose was to prepare the context for the question in Segment 12. Her response to the question in Segment 12 was relatively positive. Nonverbally, she smiled twice and pushed hair back. Verbally, she directly admitted that her sweet and attractive appearance was the image that she and her team built for her. As she answered, after she was crowned, she took into consideration the types of clothes she could wear. Though SF5 verbally evaded the first direct compliment and responded to the second direct compliment nonverbally, her relatively positive responses throughout the discourse context given in Figs 5.5 and 5.6 suggest that SF5 might probably welcome the two direct compliments.

Fig 5.7 indicates certain changes in SF4's reaction to the two direct compliments. The first direct compliment on the guest's appearance was made in Segment 5. Because the camera only captured the female host at the time the first compliment occurred, '[tiếng cười nhẹ]' ('[soft laughter]') was recorded as the guest's response. As the discourse proceeds, the host continued giving a second direct compliment on the guest's appearance. Fig 5.7 illustrates a small change in SF4's reaction at this moment. If 'soft laughter' was recorded in Segment 5, then in Segment 7 SF4 began to laugh. The compliment in Segment 7 was used as the pre-context for the follow-up

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
4	Cảm ơn Phan Thị Mơ vì Mơ đã dành thời gian đến với chương trình ngày hôm nay. Mơ nè Mơ có thể kể một chút về cuộc sống bây giờ của mình được không?	Phan Thi Mo, thank you again for spending your time being here today. Mo, can you tell us something about your current life?	Hiện tại em là sinh viên năm cuối của Trường CD Văn hoá nghệ thuật và du lịch Sài Gòn, ...	I'm currently a final-year student of the Saigon College of Arts, Culture, and Tourism, ...
5	Chỉ thì chị vẫn nghĩ rằng là một người đẹp như Mơ thì chắc chắn sẽ nhận được rất là nhiều lời mời,	Mo, I am always thinking that a beautiful girl like you will definitely receive a lot of invitations,	[tiếng cười nhẹ]	[soft laughter]
6	và không biết là với những lời mời như vậy thì Mơ có sự chọn lọc hay không hay là vì mới là một người đẹp và tham gia rất nhiều cuộc thi cho nên Mơ cũng muốn tần xuất của mình xuất hiện rất nhiều trước công chúng.	Mo, and I do wonder whether you will make any selection out of those invitations or 'cause you are a new beauty who has just participated in many beauty contests, you also want you to appear in public more frequently.	Em thì cũng muốn xuất hiện nhiều đó nhưng vì em còn dành thời gian cho việc thực tập của mình nữa cho nên em chỉ nhận những lời mời khi mà em đảm bảo được thời gian cho những công việc đó.	I actually want me to appear in public frequently, but 'cause I have to spend time on my internship, I will only be able to accept the invitations that I can secure the time for.
7	Mơ xuất hiện trong các khung hình thì lúc nào cũng rất rạng rỡ,	Mo, every time you appear on picture frames, you always look very brilliant,	[bật cười]	[laughing]
8	và để có được một vẻ ngoài tươi tắn như thế này thì có lẽ Mơ cũng cần rất nhiều bí kíp đúng không?	and in order for such a fresh look you may need a lot of tips, right?	Uhmm Em thì cũng ít thôi không có nhiều lắm đâu. Tại vì em nghĩ rằng ai cũng muốn mình xinh xắn trước mặt mọi người, rồi muốn phong cách mình đa dạng nè, mới mẻ hơn trong mắt của nhiều người. Thế nên là em cũng dành một chút thời gian để đi mua sắm, đi shopping, chuẩn bị cho mình những cái phụ kiện, những cái quần áo để chăm chút một chút về vẻ bề ngoài khi mà mình xuất hiện ở đâu đó.	Well, I only need few, not so many, 'cause I think people always want to look pretty in public, and want more diverse and newer styles in front of the crowd. So I also spend some time going shopping and preparing accessories and clothing to take care of my outer appearance when I appear somewhere.




Figure 5.7. SF4's reaction to the first two direct compliments

question coming in Segment 8 which delved into the tips of the guest for her fresh look on picture frames. As she answered in Segment 8, people would generally like to look pretty in public, so she paid very much attention to her appearance every time she appeared somewhere in public. In spite of a lack of evidence to interpret the meaning of her 'soft laughter' at the first direct compliment in Segment 5, her answer to the question in Segment 8 indicated that with laughing, SF4 indirectly agreed with the second direct compliment in Segment 7. Her laughing in Segment 7 was associated with an acknowledgment.

For the Northern female guests, an acknowledgment given in different forms of nonverbal behaviors was also very common. As shown in Table 5.1 in section 5.2.1, 50% of the nonverbal responses made by the Northern female guests were strategies like 'smile', 'head nod', 'laughing', 'laughing plus arms movement', or 'hand touching hair' which were employed to acknowledge direct compliments. These nonverbal behaviors supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance, as we can see in the following examples.

Fig 5.8 demonstrates NF1’s reaction to the first direct compliment. As shown in Segment 3, after the introduction, the host began the conversation that revolved around the topic of natural beauty such as body shape, skin, and hair. In order to develop the topic, the host made a compliment on the guest’s naturally bright and white skin, which was the preface to a question in Segment 5 that mainly focused on the guest’s special tips to take care of her skin. As we can see in Segment 4, NF1 started laughing at the moment she received the compliment. Her laughing shows that she has heard and noticed the compliment.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	Quý vị khán giả thân mến qua những hình ảnh giới thiệu về vị khách mời vừa rồi Vân biết chắc là quý vị đã biết cô ấy là ai. Chúng ta hãy cũng gặp gỡ cô ấy ngay bây giờ xin giới thiệu với quý vị diễn viên Lan Phương.	Ladies and gentlemen, through the introductory pictures of our guest, I guess you have known who she is. Let's meet her now. I'm glad to introduce you the actress Lan Phương.		
2	Xin chào Lan Phương	Hi Lan Phương	[mim cười] [gật đầu] Xin chào Vân chào quý vị khán giả	[smile] [nodding] Hi Van and greetings to the audience.
3	Um người xưa thì vẫn nói là nhất dáng, nhì da, thứ ba là tóc.	Well it is usually said that first body shape, second skin, third hair.	[gật đầu]	[nodding]
4	Có một điều ở Phương mà hầu như không thay đổi. Đó là làn da từ ngày xưa tới giờ Phương luôn có một làn da trắng sáng và rất là tự nhiên.	Phuong, there is one thing that hardly changes in you. That is your skin. From the past until now, you always have naturally bright and white skin.	[bật cười]	[laughing]
5	vậy thì không biết là có bí quyết riêng gì để chăm sóc cho làn da của mình không?	Do you have any special tips to take care of your skin?	Bây giờ thì cũng không còn trắng lắm như ngày xưa [cười ra tiếng] [sờ nhẹ vào da trên tay] bởi vì đi phim. Quay phim suốt ngày nhiều khi cũng tiếc lắm, nhưng mà phải chấp nhận thôi vì công việc mà. Bản thân Phương kể cả là làn da có thể là cũng có một chút gen di truyền và chế độ chăm sóc nhưng mà, cứ hôm nào mà Phương ngủ khuya dậy sớm, nghĩa là thời gian ngủ không đủ, thì sẽ thấy thể hiện ngay trên gương mặt của mình, nó sẽ không còn mịn màng nữa nó sẽ hơi có cái gì đó nó xám lại, tái lại và lại phải dùng đồ trang điểm để làm cho nó rục rỡ lại. Cho nên là Phương thường luôn cố gắng cho mình một giấc ngủ thật là đủ.	Now, my skin is not as white as it was before [laughing] [gently touching skin on arm] 'cause I go filming. Going filming all day made me feel regret for my skin, but I have to accept 'cause that is my work. I may have some hereditary genes but I also have a certain skin care plan. Whenever I sleep late and get up early, that is, the sleeping time is not enough, I would be able to see a change on my face. My face would be no longer smooth. It would be something grey and pale, and I had to use make-up to make it brighter. So I usually try to get enough sleep.

Figure 5.8. NF1’s reaction to the first direct compliment

Her answer to the question in Segment 5 indicated that NF1 indirectly agreed with the compliment. In verbally saying that “Bây giờ cũng không còn trắng lắm như ngày xưa bởi vì đi phim” (‘Now, my skin is not as white as it was before 'cause I go filming’), NF1 indirectly admitted that her skin was very white in the past and that at the present moment her skin is also

white but not as white as before because she usually goes filming. As shown in Fig 5.8, to illustrate for the fact that her skin is now not as white as before because she often goes filming, NF1 laughed and gently touched the skin on her arm. Later on in Segment 5, NF1 explained that other than hereditary genes, she also needed a certain skin care plan such as not staying up late and getting up early or having to get enough sleep every night for bright and white skin. The answer to the question in Segment 5 suggested that NF1's laughing at the first direct compliment in Segment 4 was associated with positive feelings. Her laughing in this context was associated with an acknowledgment.

Segment 6 in Fig 5.9 shows that the female host switched to another topic by talking about her memories about the guest (i.e., also her classmate). NF1 was laughing and putting one hand on the other at this discourse segment.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
6	Những kỉ niệm mà mình không bao giờ quên được về cô bạn học chung lớp với mình.	The memories that I will never forget about my classmate.	[bật cười] [một tay đặt trên tay còn lại]	[laughing] [one hand put on the other hand]
7	Có lẽ bởi vì Phương luôn luôn có một vẻ đẹp rất là tự nhiên, cho nên nó có phần giản dị, thế nhưng chính vì điều đó mới tạo ra một vẻ đẹp rất là Lan Phương, với vẻ đẹp gì đó của riêng Phương không phải cầu kỳ quá nhiều.	Phuong, maybe 'cause you always have a very natural beauty. It's kind of a simple beauty, but that is what made a particular beauty of you, Lan Phuong. With a particular beauty of your own, not too sophisticated.	[bật cười] [một tay bắt đầu sờ tay còn lại]	[laughing] [one hand starts touching the other hand]
8	nhưng mà nói qua thì cũng phải nói lại bởi vì dù sao thì chúng ta làm công việc này. Chúng ta phải đối diện với rất là nhiều thứ và độ tuổi của mình thì nó cũng không còn trẻ nữa rồi cho nên nếu mình không có ý thức thì nó sẽ ảnh hưởng rất nhiều đến làn da cũng như vẻ đẹp của mình.	But I have to say that doing this job, we have to face a lot of things and our age is no longer young. So if we are not aware of taking care of ourselves, it will greatly affect our skin and beauty as well.	[im lặng]	[silent]
9	Vấn đề ý một điều ở Phương là bây giờ Phương đã chịu khó tìm tòi cũng như là ứng dụng cho mình những phương pháp trang điểm nó khác hơn so với ngày xưa.	Phuong, one thing that I notice in you is that you have been searching for and applying make-up techniques that are completely different from the ones you applied in the past.	[tiếng cười]	[laughter]
10	và làm cho Phương có một vẻ đẹp mặn mà hơn rất nhiều.	That made you look much more attractive,	[tay sờ tóc]	[hand touching hair]
11	Không biết là với việc trang điểm thì Phương sẽ biến hoá như thế nào để mình có một vẻ ngoài rạng rỡ và vẫn tự nhiên nhất?	Phuong, I don't know how will you do with make-up to have a radiant and natural look?	Uhm Phương không thích đánh phấn son quá nhiều đâu [lấy tay che mũi] đặc biệt là lớp nền [lấy tay vén tóc]. Phương là người đi đâu người ta cũng nhìn người ta cũng bảo lúc đi quay phim người ta cũng bảo 'thế trang điểm chưa?' bảo 'trang điểm rồi' vậy sao không nhìn thấy phấn đâu cả?'. Đối với họ thì cho rằng đó là cái gì đó không hay nhưng bản thân Phương thì Phương lại thấy đó là một lời khen tại vì trang điểm mà để người ta không nhìn thấy cái lớp nền đâu thấy vẫn tự nhiên thì đó mới là hay. Phương thích như vậy hơn. Phương cảm thấy làn da Phương rạng rỡ hơn khi mà không phải đánh quá nhiều lớp phấn trên da.	Well, I don't like wearing heavy make-up [hand covering nose] especially heavy foundation layer [hand touching hair] Everytime I go somewhere or go filming, people always look at me and ask 'Did you make up yet?' 'Yes, I did', I replied. 'Yes? Why we don't see powder?' For them, that is something not good, but to me, that is a compliment, because it's good to layer make-up for a natural look so people cannot see the base layer. I prefer this make-up technique. I feel my skin is more radiant when I don't have to apply too many layers of powder on my skin.

Figure 5.9. NF1's reaction to the other two direct compliments

To facilitate the conversation, the host made the other two direct compliments that were also associated with the guest's beauty. Fig 5.9 indicates dramatic changes in NF1's reaction to the two direct compliments. If in Segment 4 in Fig 5.8, NF1 simply laughed at the first direct compliment, then in Segment 7 in Fig 5.9 she made a change in her hand gesture when she received a second direct compliment. In Segment 10, NF1 simply touched her hair upon receiving the third direct compliment. Fig 5.10 illustrates considerable changes in NF1's reaction during Segment 7.



Figure 5.10. Illustration for a change in NF1's reaction during Segment 7

Because NF1 was not on camera in the starting position where the host began praising her natural and simple beauty “Có lẽ bởi vì Phương luôn luôn có một vẻ đẹp rất là tự nhiên cho nên nó có phần giản dị” (‘Phuong, maybe 'cause you always have a very natural beauty. It's kind of a simple beauty’), none of remarkable changes were observed at this moment. As the host

continued complimenting that “thế nhưng chính vì điều đó mới tạo ra một vẻ đẹp rất là Lan Phương” (‘but that is what made a particular beauty of you, Lan Phương’), Fig 5.10 still does not show any remarkable changes in NF1’s reaction. She was silent putting one hand on the other. Up until the moment the host complimented that “vói vẻ đẹp gì đó của riêng Phương” (‘with a particular beauty of your own’), we were able to see a change in NF1’s reaction. As shown in Fig 5.10, “[bật cười]” (‘[laughing]’) was observed at this moment even though there was no change in NF1’s hand gesture. We were only able to see a change in NF1’s hand gesture (i.e., one of her hands starts touching the other hand) when the host was about to end the compliment as she said “không phải cầu kỳ quá nhiều” (‘not too sophisticated’). The change in NF1’s reaction during Segment 7 may lead us to the conclusion that she has acknowledged the compliment. As the discourse proceeds, Segment 9 in Fig 5.9 shows that the host began a new conversational topic in relation to NF1’s make-up techniques. The host then gave NF1 a compliment on this issue “và làm cho Phương có một vẻ đẹp mặn mà hơn rất nhiều” (‘That made you look much more attractive’) in Segment 10 whose main function was to prepare the context for the question in Segment 11. Fig 5.11 illustrates NF1’s reaction to this compliment. She simply touched her hair upon receiving the compliment.

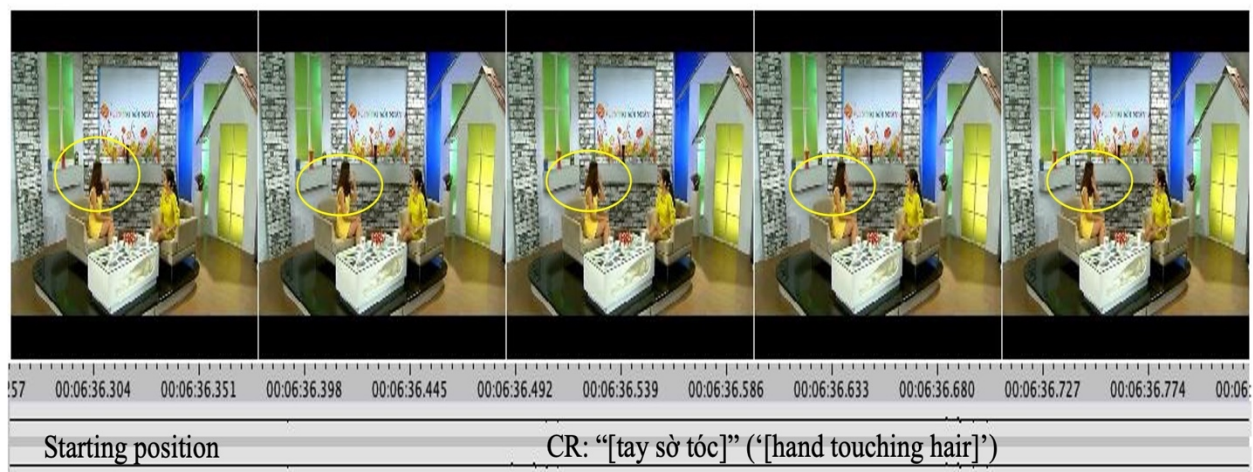


Figure 5.11. Illustration for a change in NF1’s reaction to Segment 10

Her answer to the question in Segment 11 in Fig 5.9 reveals that NF1 was not keen on wearing heavy make-up. For her, it would be a compliment when she was wearing make-up, but people were not able to realize that she was wearing make-up. As she said, she liked make-up techniques that may help her have a natural look. She also agreed that her skin looked more radiant when she did not have to apply too many layers of powder on her skin. This answer reviewed to us that NF1 indirectly agreed with the compliment in Segment 10 that the make-up techniques she was applying made her look much more attractive. Thus, “[tiếng cười]” (‘[laughter]’) recorded in Segment 9 and “[tay sờ tóc]” (‘[hand touching hair]’) observed in Segment 10 in Fig 5.9 were associated with positive feelings. It was also possible to conclude that NF1’s hand touching hair upon receiving the third direct compliment in Segment 10 was a compliment acknowledgment. Since NF1 most likely acknowledged the first direct compliment in Segment 4 in Fig 5.8 and acknowledged the third direct compliment in Segment 10 in Fig 5.9, we can say that NF1 most likely acknowledged the second direct compliment in Segment 7 even though we still need further contextual information for a most accurate interpretation of her response to Segment 7.

Fig 5.12 illustrates a small difference in NF3’s reaction to indirect and direct compliments. After a short video clip about the guest was shown, the host was facing the camera introducing the guest to the audience. As manifested in Segment 1 in Fig 5.12, the host’s introductory remarks contained an indirect compliment on the guest’s appearance. As NF3 was not on camera at the moment the compliment was given, we were not able to observe her reaction to the compliment. To end the introduction, the host made a second indirect compliment on NF3’s appearance, as demonstrated in Segment 2 in Fig 5.12. Though the guest was still not in the camera at this moment, her ‘soft laughter’ that marks a slight difference in her reaction to

the first and second indirect compliment was recorded. Producing ‘soft laughter’ indicated that NF3 has responded to the compliment.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	Quý vị khán giả thân mến qua đoạn video clip vừa rồi thì Vân tin chắc rằng quý vị đã biết vị khách mời của chúng ta ngày hôm nay là ai? Xuất thân là một diễn viên múa ba lê, có sở hữu một nhan sắc mặn mà, nữ tính, và rất đỗi dịu dàng. Và Vân thấy rằng vẻ đẹp ấy theo thời gian thì ngày càng toả sáng hơn và Vân nghĩ là tất cả quý vị cũng đồng ý với quan niệm này của Vân đúng không ạ? Chúng ta hãy cùng gặp cô bây giờ trong chuyên mục "Trò chuyện cuộc sống".	Ladies and gentlemen, through the video clip we've just watched, I am very sure that you've already known who our today's guest is. Originated as a ballet dancer, she possesses an alluring, feminine, and gentle beauty. I think her beauty will be increasingly shining over time. I think you all do agree with me, right? Let's meet her now in the program 'Live Happier Every Day'.		Cannot observe
2	Hãy cùng chào đón người đẹp Thanh Mai.	Let's welcome the beautiful Thanh Mai.	[tiếng cười nhẹ]	[soft laughter]
3	Xin chào chị Thanh Mai ạ.	Hi Thanh Mai!	[cười rất tươi] [hơi cúi đầu] Chào Vân, chào khán giả của chương trình 'Vui sống mỗi ngày'	[smile sweetly] [head bowed slightly] Hi Van, and greetings to the audience of 'Live Happier Every Day'.
4	Với một cái biệt danh mà mọi người có nhắc về chị đó là người đẹp không tuổi.	There is a nickname that everybody used to talk about you. That is an ageless beautiful woman.	[mim cười]	[smile]
5	Thì chị cảm thấy như thế nào ạ?	How do you feel?	[bật cười] Thật ra, Mai nghĩ xã hội bây giờ nó khác ngày xưa. Mai ví dụ như ngày xưa thì chúng ta không có thông tin hiểu biết nhất định để chúng ta chăm sóc cho vẻ bề ngoài của mình cũng như tinh thần của mình. Còn bây giờ thì khác rồi, bây giờ thì mình có thể xem phim nè, sách báo nè, hay những chương trình 'Vui sống mỗi ngày'. Đầu có thể chia sẻ thông tin, để chúng ta biết thế nào, để làm cho sức khỏe tốt hơn cũng như là vẻ đẹp được lâu bền hơn. Mà cũng không riêng gì Mai đâu, Mai thấy bạn bè trong giới nghệ thuật rồi, những chị bạn bè làm trong việc kinh doanh chung với Mai, thì Mai thấy là họ cũng đều là những người rất ngạc nhiên, khi mà đến cái tuổi của họ rồi, mà mình cảm giác như là họ đã không thay đổi so với quá khứ.	[laughing] Actually, I think our current society is different from before. For example, in the past we didn't have certain knowledge or pieces of information to take care of our appearance as well as our mental health. But now it's different. Now we can watch movies, read books and newspapers, or watch such programs as 'Live Happier Every Day' that helps to share information, seek for how to improve our health as well as to keep our beauty longer. Not only me. I've seen my colleagues in the field of arts and business, whose age is getting older but surprisingly their look does not change very much.

Figure 5.12. NF3’s reaction to indirect and direct compliments

In Segment 4, the host began the conversation with a direct compliment on NF3’s appearance which became the main topic for the question in Segment 5. As we can see in Segment 5, the guest first explained how in the modern society people can easily search for information that helps to improve health and beauty. Near the end of the answer, she especially asserted that not only she but also many of her colleagues in the field of arts and business were able to maintain their beauty very well. This answer indicated that NF3 agreed with the compliment that she was an ageless beautiful woman. Thus, her ‘soft laughter’ recorded as a

response to the indirect compliment in Segment 2 and her ‘smile’ at the direct compliment in Segment 4 were associated with positive feelings, indicating that she acknowledged both indirect and direct compliments.

Fig 5.13 illustrates NF4’s reaction to the two direct compliments. In Segment 4 and 6, NF4 nonverbally acknowledged the next two direct compliments. In Segment 4, the host used a compliment on the guest’s elegant manner as a strategy to develop the conversation and to prepare the context for the question in Segment 5. “[Gật đầu]” (‘[nodding]’) was observed as NF4’s reaction to this compliment. A nod of head may indicate that NF4 was listening to the host and so recognized the compliment. To answer the question in Segment 5, NF4 explained

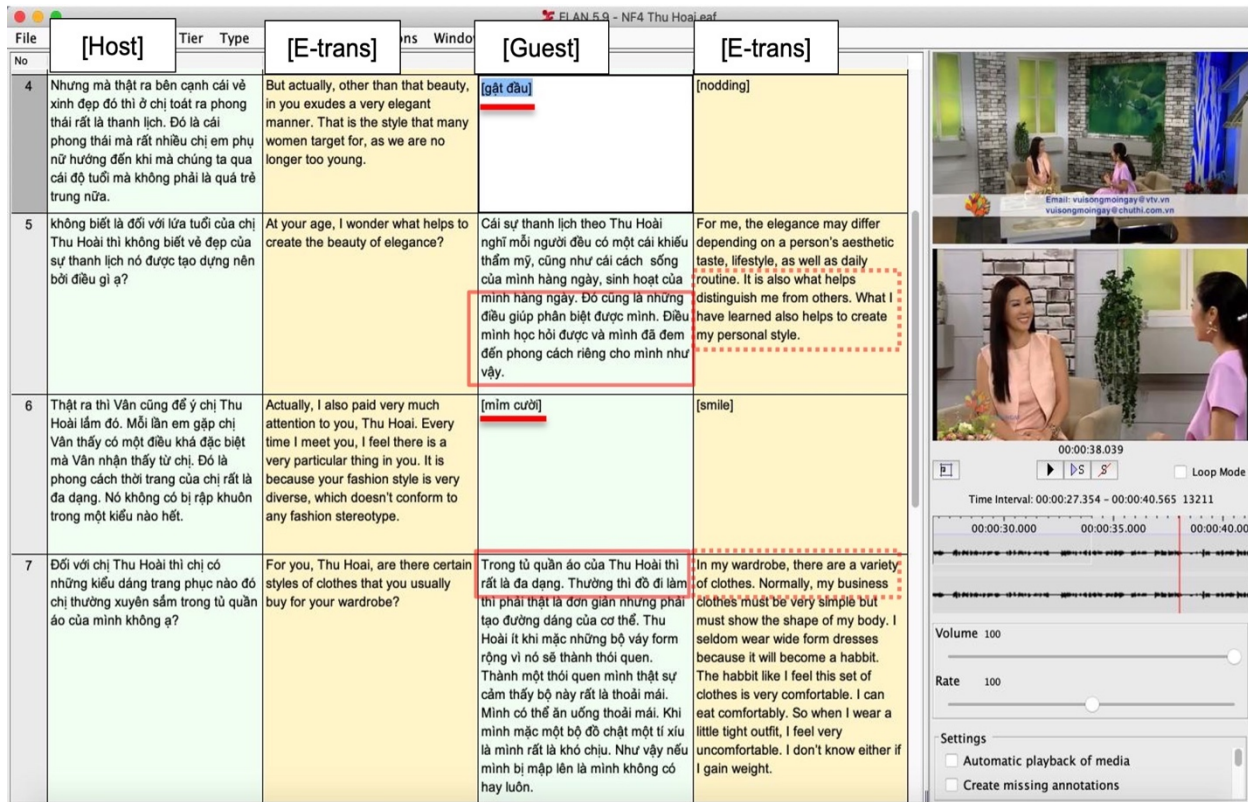


Figure 5.13. NF4’s reaction to the two direct compliments

that elegance may differ from person to person depending on aesthetic taste, lifestyle, as well as daily routine. Most noticeably, she indirectly admitted that the beauty of elegance was what helped to distinguish her from others and that what she has learned also helped to create her

beauty of elegance. Based on NF4's answer in Segment 5, it was possible to interpret the head nod in Segment 4 as a compliment acknowledgment. NF4 indirectly acknowledged the direct compliment with a head nod.

As the discourse proceeds, the host switched to another topic by giving a direct compliment on the guest's fashion style which was also the topic for the question in Segment 7. In saying that “Trong tủ quần áo của Thu Hoài thì rất là đa dạng” (‘In my (i.e., Thu Hoai's) wardrobe, there are a variety of clothes’) and then sharing some types of clothes she usually bought for her wardrobe, it is likely that NF4 indirectly agreed with the compliment that her fashion style was very diverse. Due to her positive answer to the question in Segment 7, it was possible to say that the smile observed in Segment 6 was associated with positive feelings. NF4 was interested in the compliment topic, and so she most likely acknowledged the compliment in Segment 6.

To sum up, in the context of this show, we so far have seen very little regional variation. As most of the compliments given in the show were appearance compliments associated with the theme of the show, a great number of the nonverbal responses made by the guests in both regions, as could be expected, were supporting an acknowledgment as an acceptance. The results of this section were entirely consistent with previous findings (Herbert, 1990; Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Cheng, 2011; Cedar, 2012; Allami & Montazeri, 2012) that such nonverbal behaviors as ‘smile’ and ‘head nod’ would more often support an acknowledgment. In this section, we found that an acknowledgment was meant as an acceptance.

However, as we mentioned in section 5.2.1, the same nonverbal behaviors may have different meanings dependings on the discourse context in which they were produced. Some may support an acknowledgment as an acceptance while some were ambiguous. The next section

analyzes the nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous and so did not clearly support an acknowledgment as an acceptance in the context of this show.

5.2.1.2. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous

As presented in section 5.2.1.1, a great number of nonverbal responses made by the guests in both regions did support an acknowledgment as an acceptance. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous, as shown in Table 5.2 below, were small in number. Only 25% (n=2) of the nonverbal responses made by the Southern female guests and approximately 35.7% (n=5) of the ones produced by the Northern female guests were supposed to be ambiguous.

Table 5.2
Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous

Guests	Compliment Turn	In response to direct compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The Southern female guests</i>			(n=2)	(25%)
SF4	1 st	- laughter	1	12.5%
	3 rd	- smile	1	12.5%
<i>The Northern female guests</i>			(n=5)	(35.7%)
NF2	2 nd	- laughter	1	7.14%
	3 rd	- Appreciation Expression		
NF4	1 st	- Appreciation Expression		
	4 th	- smile	1	7.14%
NF5	1 st	- laughter	1	7.14%
	2 nd	- head nod	1	7.14%
	3 rd	- smile plus head tilted to one side plus hand touching nose	1	7.14%

In this section, we analyze those CR patterns together with visual illustrations of the examples.

As shown in Fig 5.14, in order to focus on the topic ‘shopping’, the host asked the guest several questions about shopping in general and about the guest’s shopping hobbies in particular. Before ending the topic, the host again made a compliment on the guest’s appearance “Mơ biết không Vân cảm thấy rất ngưỡng mộ Mơ bởi vì với cương vị là một người đẹp thế này” (‘Mo, do you know that I really admire you a lot, because such a beautiful girl like you’), and on the guest’s shopping hobby “mà Mơ lại rất là tinh táo trong việc mua sắm và chỉ sắm những gì cần thiết nhất với bản thân mình thôi” (‘you are very smart in shopping and only buy the most necessary items for you’). “[Mỉm cười nhẹ]” (‘[smile slightly]’) was observed as the guest’s response to the compliment in Segment 12. The ‘slight smile’ observed in Segment 12 in Fig 5.14 was ambiguous. The discourse context given in Fig 5.14 did not provide enough evidence to decode this nonverbal behavior.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
9	Trước khi lên đường tham dự một cuộc thi về sắc đẹp nào đó thì chắc chắn là Mơ cũng đã dành rất nhiều thời gian cũng như công sức của mình để có thể tìm ra những bộ trang phục vừa ý nhất. Nhưng mà nếu trong đời thường thì sao? Mơ dành bao nhiêu thời gian cho việc mua sắm?	Before leaving for a beauty contest, Mo, you certainly had spent a lot of time and effort in order to find the best outfits. But what if in real life? How much time do you spend for shopping?	Em không có định là một tuần dành bao nhiêu đến bao nhiêu thời gian cho mua sắm, ...	I am not planning to spend how much time per week for shopping, ...
10	Trên thực tế có rất nhiều người điều kiện kinh tế không có dư giả. Họ có thể phải thâm học vào thu nhập của mình, thậm chí là phải ứng lương trước, hay là phải vay mượn người khác để có thể mua sắm thì Mơ đã bao giờ gặp trường hợp thế này chưa?	In reality, there are many people whose economic conditions are not rich. They may have a deficit of income, even ask for a salary advance, or borrow money from others to be able to afford their shopping. Mo, have you ever met such cases?	Dạ, em thấy nhiều rồi, cứ thích đi mua đi mua ... Em chỉ khuyên một điều là nhìn vào mục đích mình có sự dụng món đồ đó hay không. Còn nếu nhầm mắt mà đi mua, mua nhiều như vậy thì không biết là mặc đến bao giờ mới hết. Cảm giác là bỏ ra một số tiền như vậy để mua một món đồ như vậy để sử dụng không biết mấy lần thì uống quá.	Yes, I've seen a lot, just like to buy and buy ... My only advice is to consider whether we really need that item. If we close our eyes shopping, we may buy so much that we don't know when we will be able to use them all. I feel it's a waste of money when spending a big amount buying items that we're not sure how many times we will use them.
11	Đúng rồi	Correct	[bật cười]	[laughing]
12	Mơ biết không Vân cảm thấy rất ngưỡng mộ Mơ bởi vì với cương vị là một người đẹp thế này, mà Mơ lại rất là tinh táo trong việc mua sắm và chỉ sắm những gì cần thiết nhất với bản thân mình thôi.	Mo, do you know that I really admire you a lot, because such a beautiful girl like you, you are very smart in shopping and only buy the most necessary items for you.	[mỉm cười nhẹ]	[smile slightly]
13	Thưa quý vị bây giờ thì xin mời tất cả quý vị chúng ta sẽ cùng với người đẹp Phan Thị Mơ đến với phóng sự sau đây để hiểu hơn về nỗi khổ khi những người phụ nữ của chúng ta mắc phải căn bệnh mua sắm là như thế nào nhé.	Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to invite you all together with the beautiful Phan Thi Mo to come to our following reportage to better understand sufferings of women who have a shopping addiction.		

Figure 5.14. SF4’s reaction to the third direct compliment

Fig 5.15 demonstrates NF4’s appreciation expression upon receiving the first direct compliment. As shown in Segment 3, the female host began the conversation with a compliment

on the guest's appearance. NF4 verbally expressed her gratitude to the female host (Van) for the compliment. Nonverbally, she laughed and adjusted her bodice as illustrated in Fig 5.15.

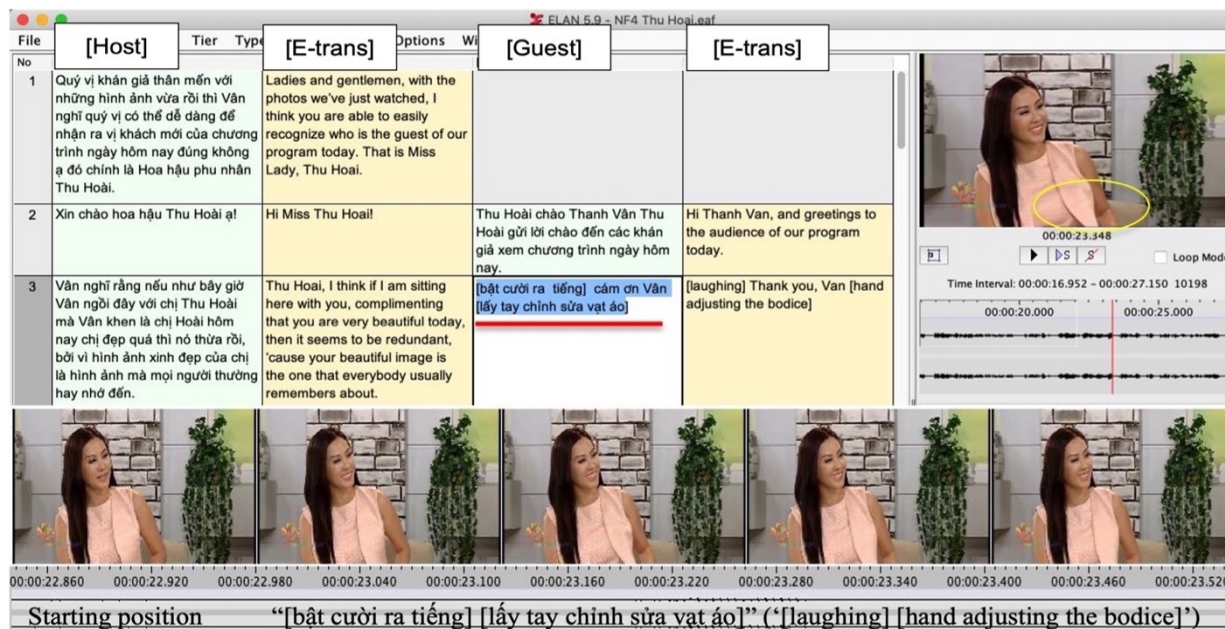


Figure 5.15. NF4's reaction to the first direct compliment

The verbal response suggested that NF4 most likely accepted the compliment; however, her gestures would probably receive different interpretations. One possible interpretation for her gestures was that she was probably feeling happy to receive the compliment, and so her laughing and adjusting her dress could be interpreted positively, as a sign of pleasure. Another possible interpretation was that NF4 was feeling slightly embarrassed when she received a direct compliment right in the beginning of the conversation. As a matter of courtesy, she said thank you. The action of laughing and adjusting her dress could be strategies that may help her overcome embarrassment in this context. In this sense, NF4 might acknowledge the compliment as a strategy of politeness in this public setting. Acknowledgment in this context was not necessarily meant as an acceptance.

Fig 5.16 demonstrates NF5's reaction to the first two direct compliments. After the host's introduction, the guest said greetings to the audience and to the famous and beautiful MC, Thanh Van who was also the female host. It is clear that the guest's greetings in Segment 2 contained a

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	Và người cùng trò chuyện với Vân bây giờ sẽ là một vị khách mời đặc biệt. Cô là một người đã được vinh danh là ngôi sao ăn chay quyền rũ nhất Châu Á do tổ chức bảo vệ động vật PETA Châu Á bình chọn trong thời gian vừa qua. Và chúng ta sẽ cùng gặp cô ngay bây giờ xin giới thiệu cùng với tất cả quý vị ca sĩ Hồ Quỳnh Hương (HQH).	And the one talking to me now is a special guest, who was crowned the Asia's sexiest vegetarian star, voted recently by the PETA Asian Animal Protection Organization. And we'll meet her right now. I'd like to introduce you all the singer, Ho Quynh Huong (HQH).		
2	Xin chào chị HQH ạ!	Hi HQH	[mỉm cười] [cúi đầu chào] HQH xin gửi đến khán giả "Vui sống mỗi ngày" lời chào thân ái và cũng xin được gửi đến MC xinh đẹp nổi tiếng của chương trình, MC Thanh Vân.	[smile] [head bowed slightly] I'd like to send warm greetings to the audience of "Live Happier Every Day" and to our famous and beautiful MC, Thanh Van.
3	[bật cười ra tiếng] Cảm ơn chị HQH đã dành cho Vân lời khen ngay từ đầu chương trình	[laughing] Thank you, HQH for giving me a compliment right from the beginning of the program.	[im lặng]	[silent]
4	Chị Quỳnh Hương cảm thấy như thế nào khi mà trong một danh sách đề cử có rất nhiều ngôi sao nổi tiếng của làng giải trí Châu Á mà mình lại được vị trí này?	Quynh Huong, how do you feel when the nomination list consisted of many famous stars of the Asian entertainment industry but you got this position?	Có mấy người bạn nói với Hương là HQH ơi, HQH được đề cử thôi, Hương đã thấy có cái gì nhầm lẫn ở đây không [bật cười] Thấy 300 người toàn là những người đẹp và người nổi tiếng không thôi. Cho đến khi mà mình mở Trang PETA ra đó thì Hương thấy đúng là có hình mình và có công bố Hương là người được bình chọn nhất.	When a few friends told me that HQH, you have been nominated, I wondered whether there was a mistake here [laughing] 300 people were all beauties and celebrities. Until I opened the PETA website, I found that there was a picture of me there and an announcement that I was the most voted person.
5	có thể là do chị HQH còn khiêm tốn về bản thân mình cho nên chị đã bất ngờ với danh hiệu này,	HQH, you probably humble yourself, so you have been surprised at this title,	[tiếng cười nhẹ]	[soft laughter]
6	Thế nhưng đối với những ai đã yêu quý chị HQH suốt một thời gian dài, không chỉ là ở giọng hát mà còn vì con người và vẻ đẹp của chị, thì mọi người có một nhận định chung thế này: ai thì cũng phải chịu sự lão hoá của thời gian thế nhưng giống như đối với chị Quỳnh Hương có một cái điều nó ngược lại thì phải.	but, HQH, those who have loved you for a long time, not only thanks to your voice but also due to yourself and your beauty, came to the same conclusion that everybody bears the aging over time, but Quynh Huong, it seems to be contrary to you.	[gật đầu]	[nodding]

Figure 5.16. NF5's reaction to the first two direct compliments

compliment. Segment 3 shows that the female host laughed and said thank you to the guest for giving her a compliment right in the beginning of the program.

As manifested in Segment 4 in Fig 5.16, the host began the conversation with a question about the guest's feelings when she won the title 'Asia's sexiest vegetarian star' since the nomination list included many famous stars of the Asian entertainment industry. In answering the question, the guest expressed a big surprise when she knew that she was nominated and won the title among 300 people who were all beauties and celebrities. The host then moved on with a compliment that the guest probably humbled herself, by saying she was surprised at this title. As shown in Segment 5 in Fig 5.16, "[tiếng cười nhẹ]" ('[soft laughter]') was recorded at this moment. Then the host continued her conversational turn with a second compliment that everybody ages over time, but for the guest (Quynh Huong), it was the contrary. Fig 5.17 illustrates NF5's a nod of head upon receiving the compliment in Segment 6.



Figure 5.17. Illustration for NF5's reaction to Segment 6

Her head nod, on the one hand, suggested that she agreed with the host, but on the other hand could be interpreted as an indicator of having heard the compliment. Or it may simply indicate that NF5 was listening to the host. With 'soft laughter' or even with a nod of head, it was impossible to predict whether NF5 accepted or rejected the two compliments. These nonverbal responses were still ambiguous.



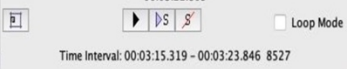
No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]	
7	càng hát hay hơn thì lại càng xinh đẹp ra và mọi người đang thắc mắc là liệu chị HQH có một bí quyết gì đó đặc biệt trong chuyện giữ gìn sắc đẹp của mình.	The better you sing, the more beautiful you become. HQH, everybody wonders whether you have any special tips to maintain your beauty.	[mím cười] [ngiêng đầu sang một bên] [tay sờ mũi]	[smile] [head tilted to one side] [hand touching nose]	
8	và đang liên tưởng rằng không biết là chuyện mình ăn chay với danh hiệu đó có phải là yếu tố quyết định cho vẻ đẹp của chị bây giờ hay không?	and we are guessing whether or not your vegetarian diet is the key factor for your current beauty?	Hương chỉ biết là khi mà Hương ăn chay và nó cũng có thời gian mà hai năm Hương ngưng không có tham gia vào showbiz giống như là quay vào bên trong mình, mình có ăn chay mình cũng có tập ngồi thiền à thì hình như nó có một cái tác động gì đó tới con người của mình. Thứ nhất là tâm hồn mình, mình thấy nó nhẹ nhàng, bình bình an an. Nó có cái gì đó rất là thanh thản trong con người của Hương. Cái người đối diện thì nói với Hương như vậy và Hương không biết có phải hay không? Và mọi người khen là Hương có đẹp lên [lấy tay vén tóc] [bật cười] rồi có người thì nói Hương có dịu dàng hơn. Những cái đó nó biến đổi một cách tự nhiên mà Hương không biết là có phải hay không.	For me, I only know that during the time of going vegetarian and two years of not participating in showbiz, I have been back into my inner self. Going vegetarian and practicing meditation seems to have had a certain influence on my inner self. First is my soul. I found it light and peaceful. People opposite me said to me that there is something very serene inside me, but I don't know if it's true. Some complimented that I am more beautiful [hand touching hair] [laughing], and some said that I am sweeter. These things change naturally, so I don't know if it's true or not.	
9	Chị HQH đã được ăn chay từ hồi nhỏ đúng không ạ?	HQH, have you been a vegetarian since you were a child?	Hương chỉ biết là Hương bắt đầu ăn chay từ khi Hương học lớp 4, ...	I only know that I have started eating veggie since I was in grade 4th, ...	

Figure 5.18. NF5's reaction to the third direct compliment

Segment 7 in Fig 5.18 shows that the host maintained the conversation with another direct compliment on the guest's beauty, serving as the preface to a question in Segment 8. This was also the third compliment given up to this point. As Fig 5.18 illustrates, NF5 smiled, tilted her head to one side, and then touched her nose upon receiving the third compliment. The change in her reaction to Segment 7 shows that she recognized the compliment. In answering the question in Segment 8, NF5 admitted that there have been some changes in her inner self during the time of going vegetarian and two years of not participating in showbiz. Going vegetarian and practicing meditation made her soul light and peaceful. As she said, some complimented her saying that she was more beautiful and some said that she was sweeter, but she was unsure whether or not their compliments were true. It seems like she was casting doubts on the compliments. NF5 neither accepted nor rejected the compliment in Segment 7, and so her

nonverbal reactions to the compliment in Segment 7 were ambiguous.

To sum up, as could be expected in the context of this show, only a small number of the nonverbal behaviors made by the female guests in both regions were ambiguous. Since the topics of the compliments were closely associated with the theme of the show, the female guests in the show, as we expected, acknowledged the compliments in order to move the conversation on, as we can see through the examples in section 5.2.1.1. Nonetheless, due to the compliments given in front of millions of the viewers across the country, it makes sense that the guests in the show mainly acknowledged the compliments nonverbally.

5.2.2. Regional Variation

In the context of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), we may have seen very little regional variation as the female guests in both regions most likely acknowledged the compliments with different forms of nonverbal behaviors. According to the results analyzed in section 5.2.1.1, ‘smile’ and ‘head nod’ could support an acknowledgment and an acknowledgment was also meant as an acceptance. However, in section 5.2.1.2, we found that an acknowledgment was not clearly meant as an acceptance. The ‘smile’, ‘head nod’, and ‘laughter’ in section 5.2.1.2 were ambiguous and so did not support a clear agreement or disagreement. ‘Appreciation expression’ was often coded as an acceptance in previous studies (e.g., Holmes, 1988; Mustapha, 2011; Guo et al., 2012; Moalla, 2013; Zhang, 2013; Yuhaida et al., 2014), but in this show, the ‘Appreciation expression’ was often ambiguous. There was not enough contextual information to interpret its meaning. Again, these findings suggested to us that the same nonverbal behaviors may have different meanings and the particular context of the show yielded very interesting results of the compliments and responses in the show.

Section 5.3 will first discuss particular features of the second show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) and how its particular context impacts actual compliment behaviors and general CRs. Next, we present an overview of CRs and discuss how the context of this show may influence gender variation.

5.3. The Talk Show “Chuyện Của Sao” (‘Story of Stars’)

The show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) is broadcast on VTV9, a national television channel and also a specialized channel for viewers in the Southern region of Vietnam, hosted by the male journalist MD. This show often revolves around recent achievements of guests or around outstanding performance of guests. Guests for this show were thus often male and female singers, actors, actresses, and models. We see that there might be a gender bias in the types of shows males and females host. For example, females like the female host OTV usually host beauty shows, like the show about beauty and living a happier day, while males like the male host MD usually host shows about general stories of stars that often revolve about performance, ability, and recent achievements rather than appearance. Since compliments are related to the contents of the show and CRs may also vary depending on the settings in which the compliments were given, we may expect to see certain differences in compliment behaviors and responses in the two shows.

First, the two shows differed greatly in the topics and formats of compliments. As the second show centered on recent performance and achievements of guests, topics of the compliments in this show, as could be expected, were on performance and achievements or on a combination of both appearance and achievements rather than merely on appearance as we have seen in the first show. What made a second difference between the two shows was that the

compliments given in the first show were often direct compliments addressing the guest, whereas as we will see in Figs 5.20 and 5.21 in section 5.3.1, compliments given in the second show were largely indirect compliments not addressing the guest.

The functions of the compliments in the two shows also differed considerably. As mentioned in section 5.2, the compliments in the first show were usually the preface to a question; whereas, in addition to this function, the compliments in the second show could also serve as different conversational strategies. The host mainly used the compliments to introduce about recent achievements of guests to the audience. This may in part explain why the indirect compliments were overwhelmingly dominant in the second show and why there may exist some differences in CRs in the two shows as well.

As discussed in section 5.2.1.1, a great number of the responses in the first show were nonverbal and seemed to support an acknowledgment as an acceptance. Due to some similar features of the two shows, most of the responses in the second show were also expected to be nonverbal in order to avoid interrupting the host's ongoing action. The big difference was that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by both the male and the female guests did not clearly support an acknowledgment as an acceptance as we have seen in the first show. Most of the nonverbal behaviors made by both genders in the second show were expected to be ambiguous for two main reasons. First, a great number of the compliments given in this show were indirect compliments not addressing the guest. Second, most of the compliments in this show were associated with the topic of the show that revolves around performance and achievements, so it was highly expected in Vietnamese culture that the guests including both the males and the females would not accept such compliments in a public setting. The next sections will explore CRs in the show further.

5.3.1. Overview of Compliment Responses

As presented in section 5.2.1, in the context of the first show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), direct compliments were given more often than indirect compliments. Nonetheless, this was not the case in the context of the second show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’). As shown in Figs 5.19 and 5.20 in the present section, the male host made more indirect compliments than the direct ones. The female guests received more indirect compliments (n=20) than the male guests (n=14); whereas, the male guests received more direct compliments (n=10) than the females (n=5). Saying differently, the male host gave fewer direct compliments to the females than to the males.

In terms of CRs, Fig 5.19 demonstrates a general tendency for the male guests to acknowledge both direct compliments (n=10, 100%) and indirect compliments (n=5, 35.7%). For indirect compliments, the percentage of Acknowledgment was smaller since we sometimes cannot observe the guest’s reaction (n=5, 35.7%). ‘Appreciation expression’ and ‘Evade’ were not common.

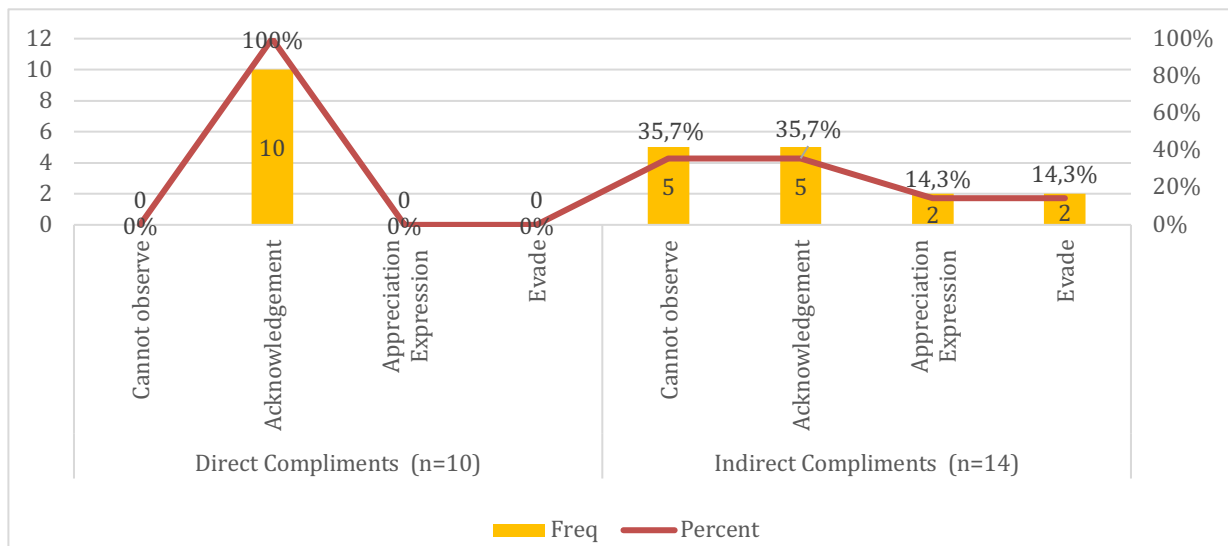


Figure 5.19. Compliment responses of the male guests

Fig 5.20 below indicates a tendency for the female guests to acknowledge both direct compliments (n=4, 80%) and indirect compliments (n=7, 35%). For indirect compliments, we often cannot observe the guest’s reaction (n=12, 60%). ‘Appreciation expression’ and ‘Evade’ were very rare.

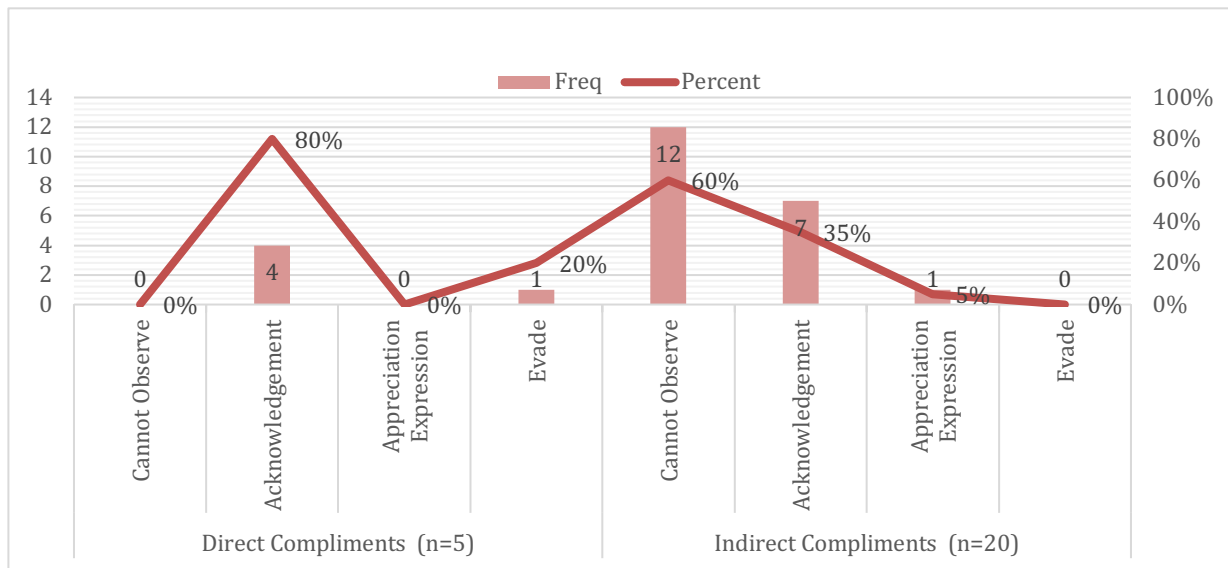


Figure 5.20. Compliment responses of the female guests

In general, the tendency was for both the male and the female guests to acknowledge the compliments with different forms of nonverbal behaviors. Some might support an acknowledgment as an acceptance while some were ambiguous. This section presents these two cases in detail with visual illustrations of the examples.

5.3.1.1. Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance

In the first show show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), as presented in Table 5.1 in section 5.2.1.1, we saw that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors used by the female guests clearly supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance. However, for the second show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’), Table 5.3 below shows only a small percentage of the nonverbal behaviors that clearly support an acknowledgment as an acceptance.

Table 5.3

Nonverbal behaviors that supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance

Guest	Compliment Turn	In response to direct compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The male guests</i>			<i>(n=1)</i>	<i>(10%)</i>
SM7	1 st	- smile	1	10%
<i>The female guests</i>			<i>(n=2)</i>	<i>(40%)</i>
SF7	1 st	- smile	1	20%
	2 nd	- head nod	1	20%
Guests	Compliment Turn	In response to indirect compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The male guests</i>			<i>(n=1)</i>	<i>(7.14%)</i>
SM7	1 st	- Appreciation Expression	1	7.14%
	2 nd	- smile plus a Vietnamese polite token		
<i>The female guests</i>			<i>(n=2)</i>	<i>(10%)</i>
SF2	1 st	- laughter plus a Vietnamese polite token	1	5%
SF6	1 st	- smile plus head down	1	5%

We analyze those CRs along with illustrations of the examples in the following.

Fig 5.21 illustrates SM7's reaction to the first indirect compliment. As shown in Segment 3, the host began the conversation with an indirect compliment on the guest's outstanding performance. As soon as the host finished the conversational turn, SM7 expressed his gratitude for the compliment. Verbally, he said thank you to the host (Duc) for complimenting him (Phuc) too much and nonverbally, he began to smile and put his head down and tongue out as portrayed in Fig 5.21. Complimenting "too much" was already suggesting a downgrading of the compliment, not a full acceptance. He then generalized to all singers making an effort. Although with such verbal response together with such gestures, he was most likely accepting the compliment, I would say that the verbal response was not a full acceptance.

File	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
No				
1	Và ngày hôm nay quý vị đã biết rồi khách mời của chúng ta là ca sĩ rất phong độ, vừa này MD đã phải thể hiện sự thân phục của mình trên sân khấu,	and today you all have known that our guest is a very cool singer, whom I've just expressed my admiration for on stage.		
2	Khi mà bên dưới xem Ung Hoàng Phúc (UHP) diễn trong chương trình "Âm nhạc và bước nhảy" thì MD rất là bất ngờ.	Ung Hoang Phuc (UHP), when I watched you perform in the program 'Music and Dance', I was very surprised.	[gật đầu] Dạ	[nodding] Yes
3	Nếu đây là một ca sĩ trẻ, xuất hiện ở cái thế hệ sau này thì tôi hay gọi là lớp 9X thì mình thấy một điều cũng rất là bình thường, vì bây giờ đây là thế loại thịnh hành nhưng mà đây là UHP. ca sĩ mà đã có gần 20 năm đứng trên sân khấu phong độ từ đó đến giờ. Tôi thấy không những không suy suyển mà nó còn tăng thêm nữa ấy.	If this is a young singer who appears in the junior generation that I often call 9X generation, I might find it very normal, 'cause now this is a popular genre, but this is UHP. A singer who has been standing on stage for nearly 20 years, having cool performance ever since. I see that his performance is not getting bad but even getting a lot better.		
4	Phúc làm như thế nào để duy trì phong độ đó trong suốt một thời gian dài như vậy?	Phuc, how did you do to maintain your good performance for a long time?	[cười tươi] [hơi cúi đầu] [lè lưỡi] Dạ cảm ơn anh Đức đã quá khen. Thật sự đối với một người nghệ sĩ giống như Phúc thì càng lâu, mình càng phải cố gắng hơn.	[smile] [head down slightly] [put tongue out] Yes, thank you, Duc for complimenting me too much. Actually, for an artist like me, the longer the time is, the harder I need to try.

Figure 5.21. SM7's reaction to the first indirect compliment

For the female guests, Table 5.3 in the present section shows only a small number of the nonverbal behaviors that clearly support an acknowledgment as an acceptance, as we can see in the next examples.

Figure 5.22 demonstrates SF7’s reaction to the first indirect and direct compliment. As soon as the host finished the introduction, SF7 verbally said thank you for the host’s winged introductory words. Nonverbally, she began to laugh with hands in front of chest and head down slightly. Responding to the compliment with such a verbal thank-you along with such nonverbal behaviors, SF7 most likely acknowledged the indirect compliment in the introductory remarks. The host began the conversation with a focus on the guest’s 10-year milestones. He then made a direct compliment on the guest’s achievements in her past 10 years. As illustrated in Segment 5 in Fig 5.22, SF7 smiled as she received this compliment. Her smile simply reveals that SF7 recognized the compliment.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	Và hôm nay MD rất vui được đến đây trò chuyện cùng với quý vị người sẽ là nhân vật chính trong chương trình "Âm nhạc và bước nhảy" sẽ phát sóng trên kênh VTV9 tối ngày hôm nay.	And today, I'm glad to be here to tell you who will be the main character in the program "Music and Dance" broadcast on VTV9 tonight.		
2	Quý vị sẽ được gặp lại một gương mặt khá ái. Nữ ca sĩ xinh đẹp với rất nhiều bài hit và đặc biệt có ấy trở lại với sân khấu sau một khoảng thời gian miệt mài với những bộ phim.	You will meet a lovely face again. A beautiful female singer with lots of hit songs, and especially she came back to stage after a period of hard work with movies.		
3	Đó là ca sĩ Minh Hằng.	That is the singer, Minh Hang.	Xin cảm ơn anh rất là nhiều với những lời giới thiệu rất là có cánh ạ [bật cười] [Hai tay chấp vào trước ngực] [Cúi đầu xuống]	Thank you very much for your winged introductory words [laughing] [hands on chest] [Head down slightly]
4	Bây giờ nhìn lại những cái mốc thời gian 10 năm ấy thì Hằng thấy là những bước ngoặt nào nó đã xảy ra nó khiến cuộc đời mình đi theo những cái mà tính cứ nó lại khớp với những gì mà mình đã dự liệu như thế?	Now looking back at those 10-year milestones, Hang, you see what turning points have made your life coincidentally go as what you have planned?	Tuy em có già đi nhưng mà em vẫn còn đại làm tự mình nhắc nhở như thế, nhắc nhở về số tuổi mình thật sự cũng không muốn chia sẻ lắm. Khi mà nhìn lại thì wow bây giờ mình đã 30 tuổi rồi một hành trình khá dài, ...	Though I have been old, I remain very foolish. I usually remind myself as such, reminding me of my age that I don't really want to share. When I look back, wow now I'm 30 years old already and it's been a rather long journey, ...
5	Nữ hoàng quảng cáo anh thấy rồi này, khiêu vũ này, võ địch cuộc thi "Bước nhảy Hoàn vũ", và rất nhiều những thành tích khác, và đặc biệt rất nhiều bài hit, và rất nhiều bộ phim nhất là bộ phim chiếu năm ngoái mà hôm nay MH sẽ hát một bài trong bộ phim đó, đó là bộ phim "Bao giờ có yêu nhau"	The advertising queen I have seen; dancing, winning the "Universe Steps" competition, and many other achievements, and especially many hit songs, and many movies, especially the one that was broadcast last year, and today MH, you will sing a song from that movie. That is the movie "When will we love"	[mim cười]	[smile]

Figure 5.22. SF7’s reaction to the first indirect and direct compliment

As the discourse proceeds, Segment 6 in Fig 5.23 shows that the host continued the conversational turn with a focus on the guest’s most recent successful movie “Bao giờ có yêu nhau” (‘When will we love’). In Segment 7, the host made a second direct compliment on the guest’s acting talent in the movie. As we can see in Segment 7, SF7 nodded her head to show that she was listening to the host. A nod of head indicated that SF7 has heard and noticed the compliment. In answering the question in Segment 8, SF7 explained why she was able to play a role that was very special and different from the previous ones. As she said, she spent five years to nourish her dream and cultivate wonderful emotions to be able to transform into a character that was neither her destiny nor the life she has been going through.

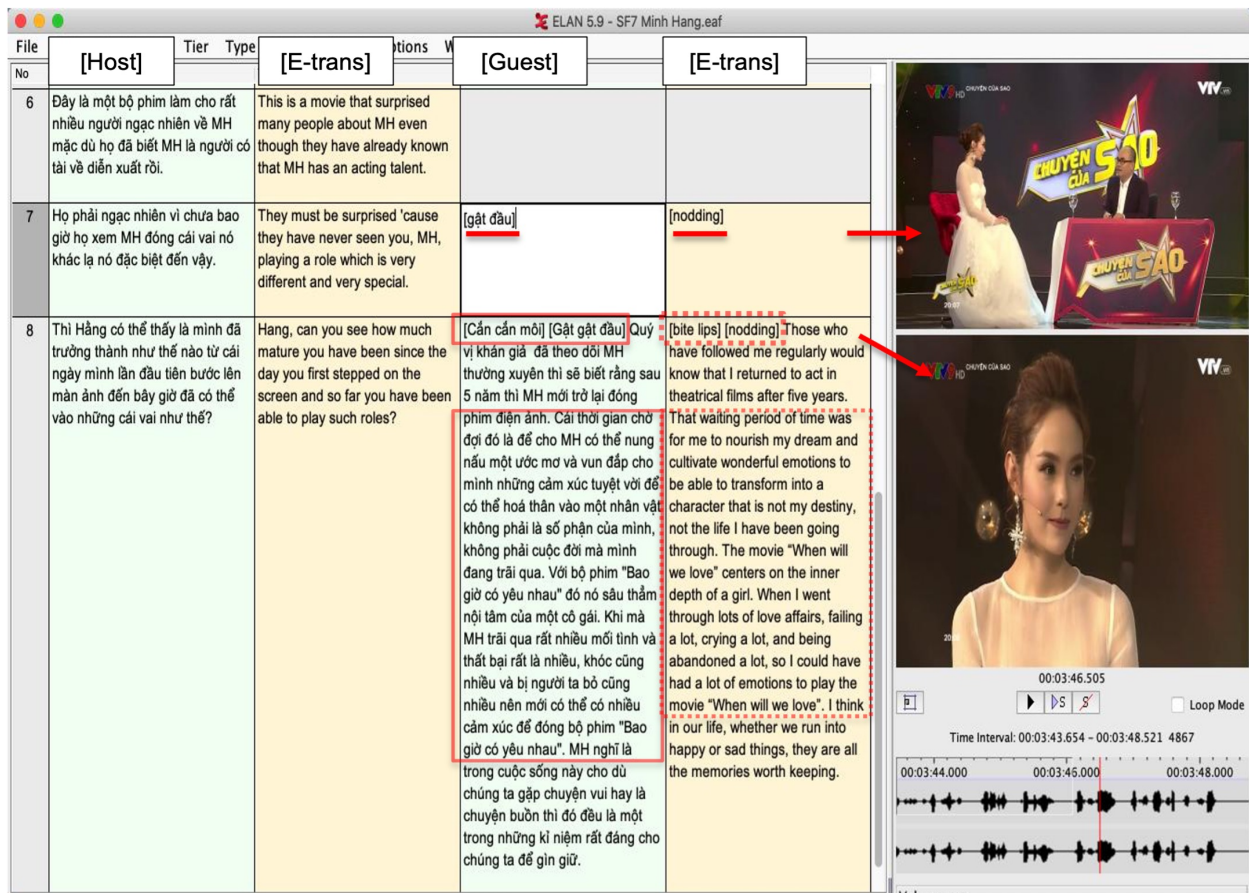


Figure 5.23. SF7’s reaction to the second direct compliment

The reason she was able to act well in the movie “Bao giờ có yêu nhau” (‘When will we love’) was that she went through lots of love affairs and failure in love may have let her experience many types of emotions so that she was able to act well in the movie. Her answer to the question in Segment 8 shows that SF7 acknowledged the compliment in Segment 7. Thus, a nod of head in this context was associated with a compliment acknowledgment. Because SF7 acknowledged the compliment in the introductory remarks and the one in Segment 7, her smile in Segment 5 in Fig 5.22 would be probably associated with positive feelings rather than with negative feelings. The smile observed in Segment 5 in Fig 5.22 may possibly signify SF7’s pleasure in receiving the first direct compliment. Both her smile and head nod in this context might support an acknowledgment as an acceptance.

To sum up, for the second show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’), we by far have found very little gender variation in CRs. The number of nonverbal behaviors that might support an acknowledgment as an acceptance was relatively small in number. The results of the present section were entirely consistent with previous findings (Herbert, 1990; Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Cheng, 2011; Cedar, 2012; Allami & Montazeri, 2012) that nonverbal behaviors such as ‘smile’ and ‘head nod’ would support an acceptance. In the present section, we found that an acknowledgment was meant as an acceptance.

However, as we mentioned in section 5.2.1, the same nonverbal responses may have different meanings depending on the discourse context in which they were produced. Some might support an acknowledgment as an acceptance while some were ambiguous. In the next section, we analyze the nonverbal behaviors that were supposed to be ambiguous and so could receive different interpretations.

5.3.1.2. Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous

In section 5.3.1.1, we found that only a small number of the nonverbal behaviors made by the male and the female guests did support an acknowledgment as an acceptance. In the context of the second show, Table 5.4 shows that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors used by both genders were not clearly supporting an acknowledgment as an acceptance.

For the male guests, Table 5.4 indicates that 90% (n=9) of the nonverbal responses to direct compliments and 28.6% (n=4) of the nonverbal responses to indirect compliments were supposed to be ambiguous. These nonverbal responses may receive different interpretations as we can see in the following examples.

Table 5.4
Nonverbal behaviors that were ambiguous

Male Guest	Compliment Turn	In response to direct compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The male guests</i>			(n=9)	(90%)
SM1	1 st	- smile plus head nod	1	10%
	2 nd	- head nod	1	10%
SM2	1 st	- smile plus head down plus arms movement	1	10%
	2 nd	- smile plus head down	1	10%
SM3	1 st	- laughing plus faceup plus chair rotation	1	10%
	2 nd	- eye gaze shift	1	10%
SM6	1 st	- silence	1	10%
	2 nd	- laughing	1	10%
SM8	1 st	- laughing plus head down plus hand covering mouth plus a Vietnamese polite token	1	10%
<i>The female guests</i>			(n=2)	(40%)
SF1	1 st	- laughter	1	20%
	2 nd	- Evade		
SF4	1 st	- a Vietnamese polite token “Đạ” (‘Yes’)	1	20%
Guests	Compliment Turn	In response to indirect compliments	Freq	Percent
<i>The male guests</i>			(n=4)	(28.6%)
SM2	1 st	- smile plus head tilted to one side	1	7.14%
	2 nd	- smile plus head down plus arms movement	1	7.14%
SM4	1 st	- laughter	1	7.14%
SM5	1 st	- smile plus arms movement plus faceup	1	7.14%
<i>The female guests</i>			(n=5)	(25%)
SF3	1 st	- smile	1	5%
	2 nd	- smile plus head down plus arms movement	1	5%
	3 rd	- smile plus head down	1	5%
SF8	1 st	- smile	1	5%
SF2	2 nd	- eye gaze shift	1	5%

SM1’s response to the compliment in Segment 4 in Fig 5.24 was supposed to be ambiguous. As shown in Segment 3, the host began the conversation with an emphasis that it was not easy to use a specific title to introduce about SM1 at the present moment because he has well performed different roles in the past few years. “[Bật cười] [hai tay đan vào nhau]” (‘[laughing] [hands interlocked]’) was observed at this segment. In order to continue the conversation, the host made a compliment on SM1’s recent outstanding achievements. Instead of laughing as in Segment 3, in Segment 4 “[mim cười] [gật đầu]” (‘[smile] [nodding]’) was observed as a signal that the male guest was listening to the host, and so noticed the compliment.

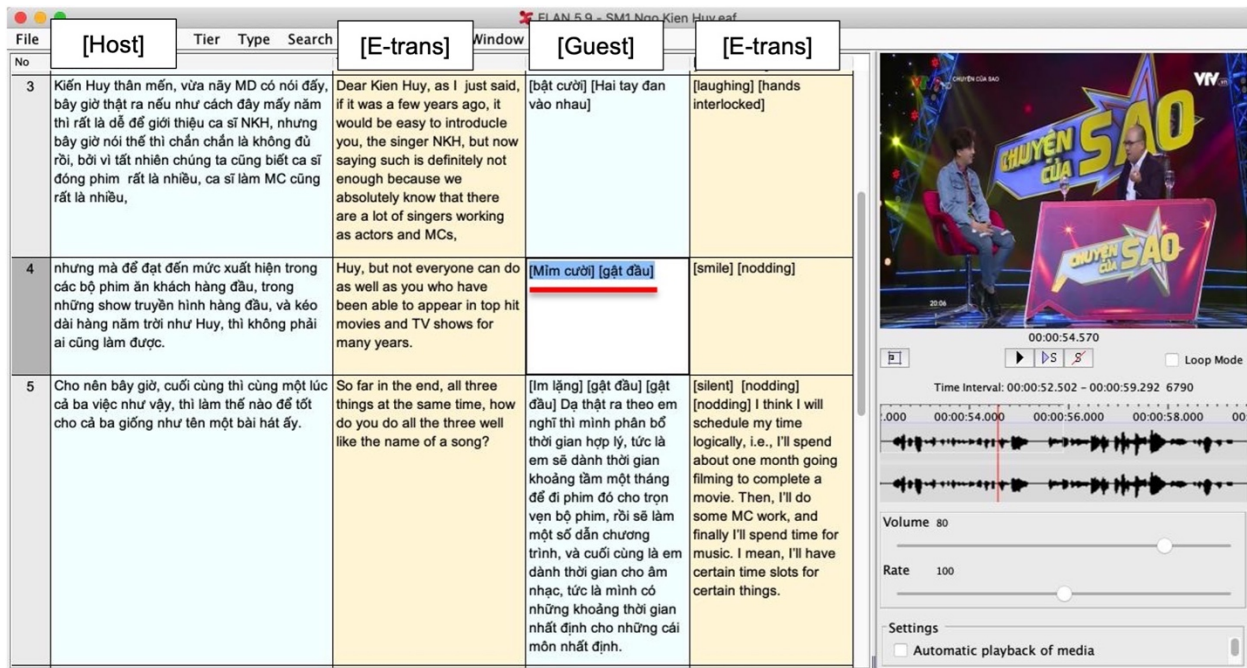


Figure 5.24. SM1’s reaction to the first direct compliment

Since there was hardly any remarkable change in SM1’s reaction between Segment 3 and Segment 4, it was impossible to conclude whether or not the male guest was feeling happy when acknowledging the compliment with a smile and head nod. As the discourse proceeds, Segment 6 in Fig 5.25 shows that the host talked about the time SM1 appeared in the movie “The Talent” as a starter for a new conversational topic. In order to continue the topic, the host then made an

indirect compliment on SM1’s performance as we can see in Segment 7 in Fig 5.25. As the guest was not in the camera, we could not observe the guest’s reaction to this indirect compliment.

File	[Host]	Tier	Type	Search	[E-trans]	Window	[Guest]	[E-trans]
No								
6	anh MD nhớ là cách đây mấy năm khi mà Huy xuất hiện trong bộ phim "Thần tượng", lúc đó có thể như một cái phát hiện mới. Mọi người nghĩ rằng ca sĩ đóng phim thì cũng bình thường thôi, nhất là trong bộ phim cũng nói về ca sĩ.				Huy, I remember that a few years ago when you appeared in the movie "The Talent", at that time you could have been a new discovery. People think that it is normal for singers to act in movies, especially in the movie that is also about singers.		[mim cười]	[smile]
7	Thế nhưng mà ngay cả những người về phê bình điện ảnh là khó tính nhất, họ cũng rất là bất ngờ và họ nói rằng oh không ngờ Ngô Kiến Huy lại tiềm tàng khả năng làm diễn viên xuất sắc như vậy.				But even the most demanding movie critics were also very surprised and they said that oh unexpectedly, Ngô Kiến Huy has the potential to become such an excellent actor.			
8	Sau đó là thấy Huy xuất hiện trong rất nhiều phim, và hầu hết đều là những phim rất là ăn khách. Rõ ràng không còn là một cuộc dạo chơi nữa, nó đã là một công việc thật sự. Người ta đã nhìn thấy một anh diễn viên thật sự.				Huy, afterwards you have appeared in many movies and most of them were highest-grossing movies. Definitely, it was no longer a walk-around. It has been a real job. People have seen a real actor.		[Gật đầu]	[nodding]
9	Đấy đấy mới là cái đặt ra vấn đề, đặt lên cân, thì cái nào quan trọng hơn, bởi vì điện ảnh Việt Nam bây giờ cũng rất là khởi sắc. Diễn viên có thể sống bằng nghề của mình, và không phải như trước đây diễn viên phải đi hát để kiếm thêm tiền nữa.				That is what poses the problem, when putting on the scale, which is more important because now Vietnamese movie industry is also prospering. Actors can live by their own profession; unlike before actors have to go singing to earn a lot more.		[Mim cười] [Gật đầu] Em nghĩ thật ra thì ca hát vẫn là nghề chính, bởi vì ca hát là nghề nghiệp mà em thích nhất, dành hết đam mê cho nó nhiều nhất.	[smile] [nodding] I think singing remains my main profession because singing is the profession that I like the most and I devote all my passion to it.

Figure 5.25. SM1’s reaction to the second direct compliment

Starting position CR: “[gật đầu]” (“[nodding]”)

Figure 5.26. Illustration for SM1’s reaction to the second direct compliment

The host again continued the topic with a direct compliment on SM1’s accomplishments. If “[mim cười] [gật đầu]” (“[smile] [nodding]”) was his response to the first direct compliment, then “[gật đầu]” (“[nodding]”) was his reaction to the second direct compliment, as portrayed in Fig 5.26. His head nod, on the one hand, may suggest that he has agreed with the host, but on the other hand can be interpreted as an indicator of having heard the compliment. His head nod to

the second compliment may lead us to the conclusion that the compliment was noticed but was not possible to reveal his actual feelings about the compliment. Though there was a small change in his response to the two direct compliments, the contextual information within the complimenting sequence does not provide enough evidence to predict his actual feelings in acknowledging the two compliments, and so fails to give an accurate explanation for such a change. Thus, we can say that SM1's nonverbal responses to the two direct compliments were ambiguous and so could receive different interpretations.

Fig 5.27 portrays SM3's reaction to the indirect and direct compliment. SM3 verbally downgraded the compliment in the introductory remarks. Segment 1 in Fig 5.27 indicates that the host began the introduction with a compliment on SM3's accomplishments. As only the host was facing the camera shot and the guest was not on camera during the introduction, no responses could be observed at this moment. Interestingly, right after the host finished the introduction, the guest verbally downgraded the compliment. As shown in Segment 3 in Fig 5.27, SM3 said greetings to the host and to the audience, and then emphasized that the host was slightly overstated when introducing about him with many titles. The reaction “[láy tay vuót mũ]” (‘[hand touching nose]’) along with his verbal response suggested that he was probably feeling embarrassed or not confident in acknowledging the compliment. Since SM3 most likely downgraded the compliment, the host again confirmed that the compliment was correct. As demonstrated in Fig 5.27, there was a dramatic change in SM3's reaction between the two discourse segments. Instead of hand touching nose and verbal mitigation as recorded in Segment 3, in Segment 4 he neither verbally rejected nor accepted the second compliment. SM3 chose to

respond to the second compliment nonverbally, with laughing plus faceup plus chair rotation.

No	[Host]	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	và hôm nay, lại một lần nữa, MD nhắc lại là lại một lần nữa "Chuyện của sao" chào đón một nghệ sĩ dài, và cũng rất là khó để có thể giới thiệu anh trong một vai trò nào cụ thể, vì vai trò nào anh cũng làm và làm rất là tốt.	And today, the 'Story of Stars' once again welcomes a TV artist. And it is also very difficult to introduce him in a specific role, 'cause he did many roles and did very well.		
2	Mọi người sẽ biết đến anh rất nhiều ở cả vị trí một ca sĩ, một diễn viên, và cả một MC, hình như còn nhiều việc khác mà MD cũng không biết nữa, hôm nay phải cần anh ấy chia sẻ.	People have known very much about him as a singer, an actor, and a MC, and many other jobs that I don't know. Today, we need him to share.		
3	Chúng ta cùng chào đón diễn viên ca sĩ Bá Thăng	Let's welcome the actor and singer, Ba Thang.	Xin chào anh MD ạ, lời đầu tiên cho Thăng gửi lời chào trân trọng đến quý vị đang theo dõi đài truyền hình. Và hôm nay anh Đức thì hơi quá lời khi mà giới thiệu Thăng [Lấy tay vuốt mũi] quá nhiều chức danh như vậy. Chức danh của Thăng cũng chỉ là gói gọn trong một chữ "Nghệ sĩ làm nghệ thuật" mà thôi.	Hi MD and I'd like to send respectful greetings to those who are watching this TV program. And today, MD, you are slightly overstated when introducing me [hand touching nose] too many titles. My title can be summarized in a word, 'a person doing arts'.
4	Thì tất nhiên ai cũng biết là sẽ gọi đơn giản nhất là nghệ sĩ nhưng mà không phải ai cũng có thể làm tốt một lúc nhiều việc như vậy	Of course, we know that the simplest title is an artist, but not everybody was able to simultaneously do many jobs well.	[bật cười] [ngửa mặt lên] [xoay ghế]	[laughing] [face up] [rotate chair]




Figure 5.27. SM3's reaction to the indirect and direct compliment

This change suggested that the second compliment was noticed but might not lead us to the conclusion that SM3 was feeling happy with the direct compliment. It was possible to argue that the male guest was probably feeling happy in receiving the compliment, but it was also possible to say that he was not confident in receiving this direct compliment but as a politeness strategy, he appeared happy with laughing plus faceup and chair rotation. In order for a more accurate interpretation of his response, we again need further contextual cues.

Fig 5.28 demonstrates SM8's response to the indirect compliment in the introductory remarks. As shown in Segment 1, the host made a compliment on the guest's appearance and talent while introducing about him to the audience. As the host had yet to finish the conversational turn, only nonverbal responses were observed at this moment. Segment 1 in Fig 5.28 especially illustrates SM8's gestures when receiving the compliment. As soon as the host finished the introduction, the guest said thank you to the host (MD) and sent greetings to the host and to the audience as well. Later on, in the greetings in Segment 2, SM8 especially stressed that the host's introductory words made his nose bigger, and in the end, he began to laugh. In Vietnamese culture, saying that the host's introductory words made his nose bigger usually means that SM8 really appreciates the host and the compliment as well. In saying this, SM8 would also like to appear humble after the host introduced lots of good things about him to the audience. In saying this, SM8 might feel slightly embarrassed but he was more likely to accept the compliment in Segment 1. Because SM8 was modest when receiving the compliment in Segment 1, in Segment 3 the host again confirmed that the compliment was correct. Fig 5.29 illustrates certain changes in SM8's reaction during Segment 3.

No	[Host]	Tier	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	Và ngày hôm nay, khách mới của chúng ta là một anh chàng hẳn chắc là gương mặt thân quen của mỗi nhà, tài năng, đẹp trai và còn rất trẻ để có thể làm rất nhiều điều mà bản thân bạn ấy khao khát và khán giả mong muốn.		And today, our guest is a boy who may be a familiar face of every family, very talented, handsome, and still very young to be able to do lots of things as he desires and as the audience expect.	[bật cười ra tiếng] [hơi cúi đầu xuống] [Hai bàn tay chà chà vào nhau]	[laughing] [head down slightly] [rub hands together]
2	Chúng ta cùng chào đón diễn viên Võ Tấn Phát. Xin chào Tấn Phát		Let's welcome the actor, Vo Tan Phat. Hi Tan Phat	Dạ xin chào anh MD [Mim cười] [hơi cúi đầu chào] Cảm ơn anh MD và xin chào khán giả đang xem chương trình 'Chuyện của sao'. Bây giờ anh giới thiệu mà ngồi đây nở lể mũi hết tron á [cười ra tiếng]	Hi MD [smile] [head bowed slightly] Thank you, MD and greetings to the audience who are watching the 'Story of Stars'. Your introductory words made my nose bigger [laughing]
3	Thật ra chuyện đó là đương nhiên mà, trẻ là đúng rồi này, đẹp trai là đúng này, còn tài năng thì mọi người thấy rồi đấy thì rất nhiều cuộc thi và giành giải cao.		That's absolutely certain. Being young is true; being handsome is true; speaking about talent, everybody can see that you took part in many competitions and won high prizes.	[Cười to] [Lấy tay che miệng] Dạ [Hơi cúi đầu xuống]	[laughing] [hand covering mouth] Yes [head down slightly]
4	Nếu mọi người quan sát sẽ thấy trong mấy năm gần đây, trong rất nhiều lĩnh vực và mỗi lĩnh vực được chia thành hai nhóm, ...		If we observe, we will see in recent years, in many areas and each area is divided into two groups, ...		

Figure 5.28. SM8's reaction to indirect and direct compliments

Starting position
Thật ra chuyện đó là đương nhiên mà (That's absolutely certain)
trẻ là đúng rồi này (being young is true)

“[lấy tay che miệng]” (“[hand covering mouth]”)
Dạ [cười to] (“Yes [laughing]”)
đẹp trai là đúng này (being handsome is true)
còn tài năng thì mọi người thấy rồi đấy (speaking about talent, everybody can see that)

“[hơi cúi đầu xuống]” (“[head down slightly]”)
thì rất nhiều cuộc thi và giành giải cao (you took part in many competitions and won high prizes)

Figure 5.29. Illustration for a change in SM8's reaction during Segment 3

As we can see in the starting position, SM8 was a little surprised when the host asserts that the compliment was absolutely accurate. At the moment the host confirmed “trẻ là đúng rồi

này” (‘being young is true’), there was a big change in SM8’s reaction. He began to cover his mouth with his hand. As the host continued complimenting that “đẹp trai là đúng này” (‘being handsome is true’), we again can see a dramatic change in SM8’s reaction. Instead of covering his mouth, he said yes and burst out laughing. In the end, SM8 put head down slightly at the time the host complimented “thi rất nhiều cuộc thi và giành giải cao” (‘you took part in many competitions and won high prizes’). The changes in SM8’s reaction during Segment 3 may lead us to the conclusion that he has acknowledged the compliment. Since it could be inappropriate to accept or reject the compliment in this context, SM8 chose to acknowledge the compliment in Segment 3 nonverbally. Though SM8 was inclined to accept the indirect compliment in Segment 1, there was not enough evidence to conclude that he would accept the direct compliment in Segment 3. His nonverbal behaviors observed in Segment 3 would probably receive different interpretations, as an indicator of extreme happiness or great embarrassment.

Fig 5.30 portrays the context in which SM5 received the indirect compliment and Fig 5.31 in the next page illustrates some changes in SM5’s reaction to this indirect compliment. As Fig 5.31 demonstrates, there were no remarkable responses observed in the starting position; however, as the host made a compliment on SM5’s performance “phong cách biểu diễn rất là tự tin” (‘and confident performance style’), there was a change in SM5’s reaction, which was from silence to smile and cupping hands together. As the host continued giving a positive comment about him “và là cái nhân tố cũng rất là thú vị” (‘being an interesting factor’), we again can see a dramatic change in SM5’s reaction. SM5 continued smiling and started rubbing hands and facing up. The change in SM5’s reaction during the complimenting segment may lead us to the conclusion that he has acknowledged the compliment, but it was impossible to conclude whether

his smile plus arms movement plus faceup was an indicator of extreme happiness or great embarrassment. We need further contextual information for a more accurate interpretation.

No	[Host]	Tier	Type	[E-trans]	Options	W	[Guest]	[E-trans]
1	và hôm nay, mời quý vị cùng trò chuyện với một gương mặt rất mới nhưng cũng rất thú vị, một chàng trai mà chắc cũng là vừa lạ, vừa quen đối với nhiều người xem truyền hình.			And today, let's talk to a very new but interesting face, a boy who sounds both familiar and unfamiliar to many TV viewers.				
2	Chúng ta cùng chào đón nam ca sĩ Trần Vũ. Xin chào Trần Vũ			Let's welcome the male singer, Tran Vu. Hi Tran Vu!			[mím cười] [cúi đầu chào] Xin chào anh MD và toàn bộ khán giả đang xem chương trình 'Chuyện của sao' ạ.	[smile] [head bowed slightly] Hi MD and greetings to the audience of the 'Story of Stars'.
3	Chắc khán giả của VTV không bất ngờ lắm khi gặp Trần Vũ ngày hôm nay. Trong chương trình "Sao mai điểm hẹn" trên VTV3 trước đây thì Vũ đã là một cái tên làm cho nhiều người bất ngờ.			It is very sure that the audience of VTV are not very surprised at meeting Tran Vu today. In the program 'Sao Mai Meeting Point' on VTV3 before, Vu was a name that surprised many people.				
4	Người ta có một cái từ là 'From nowhere' 'Từ đâu đó' không ai biết tự nhiên bất thình lình xuất hiện, mặt mũi sáng láng, phong cách biểu diễn rất là tự tin và là cái nhân tố cũng rất là thú vị ở mùa 'Sao mai điểm hẹn năm đó'.			People had a word called 'From nowhere' 'Từ đâu đó' nobody knows. He suddenly appeared with a bright face and confident performance style, being an interesting factor of the 'Sao Mai Meeting Point's season that year.			[mím cười] [hai tay chụm vào nhau] [chà chà hai bàn tay] [mặt ngược lên]	[smile] [cup hands together] [rub hands together] [face up]
5	bản thân MD cũng biết Trần Vũ từ mùa Sao mai đó và vẫn âm thầm theo dõi con đường của chàng trai này			MD also got to know Tran Vu from that 'Sao Mai Meeting Point's season, and silently followed the career path of this boy.				

Figure 5.30. SM5's reaction to the indirect compliment in Segment 4

Starting position

Người ta có một cái từ là 'From nowhere' 'Từ đâu đó' không ai biết ('People had a word called 'from nowhere' nobody knows')

tự nhiên bất thình lình xuất hiện, (he suddenly appeared.)

“[mím cười] [hai tay chụm vào nhau]”
 (“[smile] [cup hands together]”)

mặt mũi sáng láng (with a bright face)

phong cách biểu diễn rất là tự tin. (and confident performance style)

“[mím cười] [chà chà hai bàn tay] [mặt ngược lên]”
 (“[smile] [rub hands together] [face up]”)

Và là cái nhân tố cũng rất là thú vị (being an interesting factor)

ở mùa 'Sao mai điểm hẹn năm đó' (in the 'Sao Mai Meeting Point's season that year')

Figure 5.31. Illustration for a change in SM5's reaction during Segment 4

For the female guests, Table 5.4 in the present section shows that a high number of the nonverbal behaviors used by the female guests did not clearly support an acknowledgment as an acceptance. These nonverbal responses may receive different interpretations as we can see in the following examples.

SF3 produced different reactions to the first and subsequent indirect compliments. Segment 4 in Fig 5.32 shows that the host began the conversation with a story from a long time ago. SF3 remained silent with one hand rubbing the other hand. The host then continued the conversation with an indirect compliment on SF3's performance, and there was a change in her reaction, from silence to smile at the moment the host compliments her on performance, as we can see in Fig 5.33.

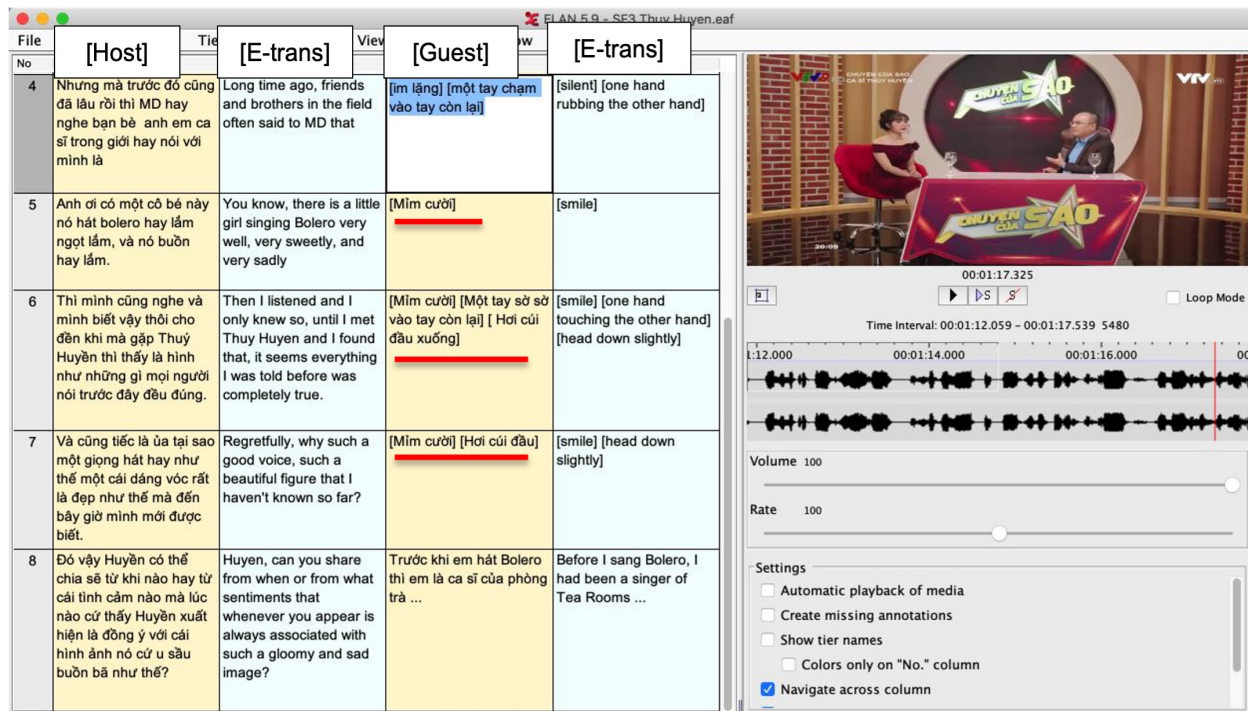


Figure 5.32. SF3's different reactions to first and subsequent indirect compliments



Starting position

CR₁: “[mim cười]” (‘[smile]’)

Figure 5.33. Illustration for a change in SF3’s reaction during Segment 5



CR₂: “[mim cười] [một tay sờ sờ vào tay còn lại] [hơi cúi đầu xuống]”
 (‘[smile] [one hand touching the other hand] [head down slightly]’)

Figure 5.34. Illustration for a change in SF3’s reaction during Segment 6



CR₃: “[mim cười] [hơi cúi đầu]”
 (‘[smile] [head down slightly]’)

Figure 5.35. Illustration for a change in SF3’s reaction during Segment 7

This change suggests that SF3 recognized the compliment. The host then continued the conversation and paid a second compliment confirming that his first compliment about SF3 was completely true. As portrayed in Fig 5.34, in addition to a 'smile', one of her hands started touching the other hand, and her head was put down slightly. It is apparent that there was a dramatic change in her reaction during Segment 6 in which the host repeated the compliment. Fig 5.35 demonstrates that SF3 was still smiling and putting her head down very slightly when the host repeated the compliment one more time. It is apparent that there was a dramatic change in SF3's reaction to the first and subsequent indirect compliments, implying that the guest has noticed the compliment. However, the nonverbal responses were ambiguous in this context.

One possible interpretation for her changes over the three complimenting segments was that SF3 was probably feeling happy with the first indirect compliment, and so her smile to the first compliment can be interpreted as a sign of pleasure. Repeating the compliment two more times later in the discourse would probably make her feel happier, and in order to hide her extreme happiness she has made some changes such as head down and touching hands, and head down again. According to this interpretation, SF3 may have viewed and experienced compliments as positive speech acts. A second possible interpretation was to interpret her changes as an indicator of great embarrassment and her view of compliments as negative speech acts. With this explanation, SF3 may be slightly embarrassed with the first compliment, and so she chose to respond to it with just a 'smile'. The fact that the host repeated the compliment two more times later in the discourse would probably make her feel shy, and possibly to disguise her great embarrassment, she has put her head down and touched her hands. In order for an accurate interpretation of her changes over the three complimenting segments, we again need further contextual information.

Fig 5.36 portrays SF8's reaction to the indirect compliment. As shown in Segment 2, the host began the conversation with an indirect compliment on the guest's appearance. We were not able to observe the guest's reaction to this compliment as the camera only captured the host at this moment. To facilitate the conversation, the host made a compliment on the guest's appearance and ability in Segment 4 which also functions as the pre-context for the question in Segment 5. As we can see in Segment 4, SF8 began to smile at the time she received the compliment. In answering the question in Segment 5, SF8 said that she was accustomed to her bad luck and she viewed it as a challenge for her singing profession. Her answer in Segment 5 did not reveal whether she would accept or reject the compliment in Segment 4. There was not enough evidence to conclude whether her smile in Segment 4 was associated with positive or negative feelings, and so the smile in this context was ambiguous.

File	[Host]	Tier	Type	[E-trans]	[Guest]	[E-trans]
No						
1	Xin trân trọng giới thiệu nữ ca sĩ Hồng Mơ.			I'm glad to introduce the female singer, Hong Mo (HM).	Hồng Mơ xin gửi đến quý vị khán giả của chương trình 'Chuyện của sao' lời chào thân thương.	I'd like to send warm greetings to the audience of the program 'Story of Stars'.
2	Ngày hôm nay Hồng Mơ ngồi cạnh tôi ở đây, quý vị nhìn thế này, tươi tắn, xinh xắn, đáng yêu như thế này.			Today, HM sitting next to me here, she looks cheerful, pretty, and lovely.		
3	thì không chỉ có MD và rất nhiều khán giả đã biết đến HM từ nhiều năm qua nhất là ấn tượng qua cuộc thi 'Tiếng hát truyền hình' nhiều người sẽ còn cảm thấy tiếc			Not only me but also many viewers who have known HM for many years, especially our impression of HM in the contest 'Ho Chi Minh City Television Singing' still feel regret,		
4	người ta cứ tiếc là sao một ca sĩ xinh xắn như thế hát hay như thế thực lực mạnh như thế có vẻ như chưa có độ nổi tiếng xứng tầm với những gì mà cô ấy đáng được hưởng.			people regret that such a pretty singer, such a good singing voice, such a singer of great ability seems not to achieve the fame as she deserves.	[mim cười]	[smile]
5	Tức là người ta nói HM có gì đó hơi lận đận, mà Mơ có thật sự nghĩ rằng mình lận đận không?			HM, it is said that you are something unlucky. Mo, do you actually think that you are unlucky?	Thật sự là em theo đuổi cái nghề hát này rất là lâu rồi, thấy cái chữ lận đận mình đã quen điều đó rồi, là thấy cái chuyện lận đận nó rất là bình thường. Em đã tập sống với cái chuyện lận đận đó và em cảm thấy lận đận giống như là một thử thách sự đam mê của em với cái nghề hát này.	Honestly, I have been pursuing this singing profession for a long time. I have been accustomed to my bad luck. I feel being unlucky or unsuccessful is very normal. I have learned to live with my bad luck and I feel it's like a challenge of my passion for this singing profession.

Figure 5.36. SF8's reaction to the indirect compliment

Fig 5.37 illustrates SF2’s reaction to the second indirect compliment. As shown in Segment 8, the host began a new topic by talking about SF’2 performance perspective. As SF2 was not in the camera, we could not observe her reaction at this moment. The host then maintained the conversation with the compliment on her appearance and performance as in Segment 9.



Figure 5.37. SF2’s reaction to the second indirect compliment

During the time the compliment was given, the host was facing the camera; however, at the moment the host finished the compliment, the camera turned to capture both the host and the guest. Fig 5.37 illustrates that SF2 was simply silent and stared at the host. This was a neutral response. The context in this complimenting sequence does not provide enough evidence to interpret the meaning of this nonverbal behavior.

To sum up, as could be expected in the context of this show, a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by both the male and the female guests were ambiguous and so did not clearly support an acceptance. This result makes sense as the majority of the compliments given in the show were about performance and achievements and not addressing guest directly.

Moreover, in Vietnamese culture, boasting about performance and achievements is unacceptable, especially for the celebrities in a public setting. Thus, it makes sense that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by both the male and the female guests were ambiguous and could receive different interpretations. To be polite (i.e., not interrupting the host's on-going action) and not to threaten the face of the host (i.e., not rejecting immediately), it also makes sense that most of the responses were nonverbal.

5.3.2. Gender Variation

In the context of the second show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’), we found very little gender variation in CRs. Both genders were closely similar in having a high number of the nonverbal behaviors not clearly supporting an acknowledgment as an acceptance. Instead, a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by both the males and the females were ambiguous. In section 5.3.1.1, we found that such nonverbal responses as ‘smile’, ‘head nod’, and ‘laughter’ could support an acknowledgment as an acceptance, but in section 5.3.1.2, we found that these nonverbal behaviors were ambiguous and could receive different interpretations. These findings contribute to our argument that the same nonverbal responses may have different meanings and the context may play a decisive role in interpreting the responses. The assumption that ‘smile’ was a positive nonverbal response which indicates an acceptance or ‘silence’ was a rejection was not always true. Assigning a semantic interpretation to certain types of nonverbal behaviors as in many previous studies was a great matter of concern.

5.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of the talk show data set according to the last two research questions related to regional and gender variation as presented in the beginning of Chapter 3. The first part of the chapter focused on discussing how genre and context impact compliment behaviors and general CRs in the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’), followed by a brief overview of regional variation in the context of this show. The second part of the chapter especially reviewed influences of genre and context on gender variation in the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’), with a comparison of compliment behaviors and CRs between the two shows. The results showed very small regional variations as the female guests in both regions most likely acknowledged the compliment with different forms of nonverbal behaviors. A great number of the nonverbal responses made by the female guests in both the South and the North clearly supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance. We found very little gender variation in the second show. Both genders were closely similar in having a high number of the nonverbal behaviors not clearly supporting an acknowledgment as an acceptance. The next chapter, Chapter 6, will discuss the main findings of the present study and provides the conclusions to the study.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study can be said to be conducted based on the hypothesis that genre and context could influence the way people give and receive compliments. We believe that people's interactions in media contexts would differ from people's interactions in their own regions. The results of the sociolinguistic interviews and the two talk shows seemed to confirm this hypothesis. We can see big differences across region and gender within sociolinguistic interviews but we can only see small regional and gender variations in the two shows. The chapter begins with a discussion of cross-gender compliment behaviors elicited in the present study to those in previous gender studies. Then, we discuss regional and gender variation through sociolinguistic interviews, followed by contributions of the sociolinguistic interview data set to existing and future research. Next, the issue of how the context of the two shows impacts regional and gender variation is addressed. Some contributions of the talk show data set to existing and future research are also presented. Finally, limitations and recommendations for future research are discussed.

6.1. Compliment Behaviors in the Present Study

The results of the present study have shown the importance of genre and context in dealing with compliment data. There were considerable differences in actual compliment

behaviors between two genres, movie discourse and talk show discourse. Also, the context does matter very much, as we see big differences in actual compliment behaviors in the two shows. This section aims to thoroughly discuss those findings and further explain why there were such differences between the present study and previous gender studies.

6.1.1. Actual Compliments in Movie Discourse

Eight actual compliments were observed in various Vietnamese movies (see Table 3.5 in section 3.2). These compliments were given for particular purposes. These compliments performed functions of various speech acts such as thank-you, encouragement, congratulation, or flattery. Previous gender studies investigating actual compliments occurring during spontaneous and everyday interactions through field note methods (Holmes, 1988; Parisi & Wogan, 2006; Rees-Miller, 2011) suggested that compliments would frequently fall into four main categories of appearance, performance, personality, and possession (see section 2.1.3). In movie discourse settings, these compliments have their own unique features.

First, actual compliments in movie discourse most frequently involved a wide variety of topics and functioned differently from situation to situation. Women most frequently give men compliments on ability (see Table 3.5 in section 3.2). Collecting compliments occurring during spontaneous and everyday interactions, Parisi and Wogan (2006) found that American females tended to give males compliments on skill rather than on other topics. At first sight, this finding in the present study supported Parisi and Wogan's (2006) American corpus. However, the ability compliments observed in the first two scenarios in the present study (Video 1 & Video 2) possessed their own particular features. In the context of Video 1, the woman (Lan Anh) gave the man (Hung) a compliment on his vehicle-fixing ability as a thank-you for his help. In a different

context in Video 2, the woman made a compliment in an attempt to encourage the man in depression. The compliment given in this context concerned both the man's vehicle-fixing ability and nice personality. It is obvious that the ability compliments given in two different contexts performed two different functions. Further, the compliment in the first scenario was on ability while the compliment in the second scenario concerned both ability and personality. Thus, we cannot one hundred percent conclude that the findings in the present study support Parisi and Wogan's (2006) claim for American English that females tended to give males compliments on ability. As argued above, compliments in movie discourse may perform different functions depending on the discourse segment in which they were given. Compliments that were involved in more than one topic were not rare.

Women most frequently give women compliments on appearance (see Table 3.5 in section 3.2). This finding resembled the results reported by Holmes (1988) about compliments in students' everyday interactions in different settings and by Rees-Miller (2011) about actual compliments in unstructured settings. However, this finding was in great contrast with Rees-Miller's (2011) report about compliments observed in goal-oriented activities. Rees-Miller (2011) found that the most common topic in goal-oriented settings was related to performance, which was quite contrary to the topics of compliments given in unstructured settings that mainly concerned appearance, especially between two female interlocutors. The present finding also differed from Wu's (2008) result about compliments given in an American TV-series setting in which compliments on appearance were very rare. However, the present finding supported our argument about the importance of context in dealing with compliment data. In the present study, the compliment portrayed in the scenario of Video 5 functioned as a congratulation act on the shop opening day. Thus, it makes sense that the compliment in this context involved a variety of

topics. Woman 2 (the complimenter) first gave Woman 1 (complimentee) a compliment on her appearance, and then paid one more compliment on the new shop. In contrast, the appearance compliment paid in the context of Video 6 served as a flattery act due to a certain difference in social status between the receptionist (also the complimenter) and the sales department head (also the complimentee) and many compliment turns made before it. As such, though these two compliments concerned appearance, one functioned as a congratulation act that was involved in two different topics and one served as a flattery act that contained several compliments turns before it.

Second, actual compliments in movie discourse often contained several compliment turns or conversational turns, and involved more than two interlocutors. Men most frequently give men compliments on ability or personality (see Table 3.5 in section 3.2). This result contradicted Holmes' (1988) finding that in New Zealand English, men tended not to compliment men on ability or skill. However, the present finding in part confirmed Rees-Miller's (2011) result about compliment behaviors in goal-oriented activities that men received far more compliments and the topics of compliments mostly concerned performance. As argued in the present study, the compliments occurring in different contexts may perform different functions. In the present study, the ability compliment given in a sports setting in the Video 3 scenario was supposed not to be a real compliment as it mainly served as part of an ending sequence. In contrast, the personality compliment given on the occasion of the New Year in the Video 4 scenario served as a strategy to create a humorous atmosphere in the office as well as to reduce the distance between staff members and the office head. As explained in detail in section 3.2, the compliment in this context contained several conversational turns and compliment turns and involved more than two discourse participants (i.e., in addition to the complimenter and the complimentee).

This case was also true to the compliments observed in the last two scenarios. Men most frequently give women compliments on ability (see Table 3.5 in section 3.2). This result was consistent with Holmes' (1988) conclusion that in New Zealand English, men were more likely to compliment women on ability or skill. It also resembled the compliment behaviors in an American TV-series setting reported by Wu (2008) that females and males tended to compliment the opposite gender on performance rather than on other topics. The finding in the present study called our attention to the contexts in which the two ability compliments were paid. In the Video 7 scenario, the man highly valued the woman's ability to play the violin, so immediately after the woman finished the song, the man stepped towards the coffee shop stage and gave flowers to the woman. The compliment in this scenario contained many conversational turns and involved more than two discourse participants. It was also a way to show the man's affection for the woman and her outstanding ability. However, in the context of Video 8, the ability compliment served as a flirty compliment. As explained in detail in section 3.2, this compliment included many conversational turns and involved more than two discourse participants. In answering the old man's question, the young man (complimenter) said that he felt tasty because the woman (complimentee) cooked very well. It is apparent that the man gave the woman a compliment on her cooking ability as a strategy to win the woman's affection. Thus, despite the fact that the two compliments observed in the last two scenarios concerned ability, one served as admiration for the woman's outstanding ability about playing violin while one was purposefully made as an effort to earn the woman's affection.

To sum up, a discussion of actual compliments observed in movie discourse again confirmed the importance of context in categorizing compliments, because compliments in different movie discourse segments may perform different functions. The compliments in movie

discourse, as discussed above, concerned a wide variety of topics, contained several compliment turns or conversational turns, and involved more than two discourse participants. Thus, categorizing compliments according to four major topics would make it impossible to adequately describe all the contextual features associated with the compliments in movie discourse. This is also the issue we need to take into consideration when examining actual compliments in talk show discourse.

6.1.2. Actual Compliments in Talk Show Discourse

As discussed above in section 6.1.1, the compliments in movie discourse frequently performed functions of many other speech acts such as thank-you, encouragement, congratulation, flattery, or flirty, and were involved in a wide variety of topics and several conversational turns. In addition, the compliments in movie discourse often contained many compliment turns and involved more than two discourse participants. In more naturally occurring data as in talk shows, the compliments were in-person compliments that were mainly used as conversational strategies. In movie discourse, compliments differed greatly from setting to setting. In talk show discourse, the context also matters very much, as we can see big differences in actual compliment behaviors in the two shows.

As discussed in section 5.2, the theme of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) was about beauty and living a happy life, so it makes sense that most of the compliments given by the female host to the female guests in both regions revolved around appearance. Very few compliments concerned performance or personality. This finding paralleled the results reported by Holmes (1988) and Rees-Miller (2011) about actual compliments in unstructured settings that women tend to give and receive compliments on

appearance. However, the present finding was in conflict with compliment behaviors discussed in Wu (2008). Also in media discourse but in the different context of American TV-series *Ugly Betty*, Wu (2008) found that performance compliments were most preferred. Such a conflict between the present study and Wu's (2008) study showed that the context of the show does matter very much in giving compliments. One more particular feature of the show in this study was that the compliments given in this show were mainly direct compliments addressing guests. Compliments not addressing guests but aimed to introduce the guest to the audience were not common in the context of this show. This result makes sense as the compliments given in this show were closely associated with the theme of the show. The female host mainly used the compliments as a preface to a question or as strategies to begin and develop the conversation about beauty and living a happy life. Thus, it was not surprising that direct compliments may work better than indirect compliments in connecting the guests into the conversation and the theme of the show. Another possible explanation for this finding was probably related to the gender of the host. As reported in previous gender studies (Holmes, 1988; Lee, 2009; Rees-Miller, 2011), women tend to give and receive compliments on appearance. There was very little regional variation in compliment behaviors in this show. The only regional variation was that the female host paid more compliments to the Northern female guests than to the Southern female guests.

As could be expected, the context of the show "Chuyện của sao" ('Story of Stars') suggested very little gender variation but pointed out big differences in compliment behaviors between the two shows. As discussed in section 5.3, most of the compliments in this show were related to performance and achievements or on a combination of both appearance and achievements rather than merely on appearance as we have seen in the first show. This result

makes sense because these topics of compliments were associated with the theme of this show that focused on recent performance and achievements of guests. Interestingly, talking about achievements in this show patterned similarly to Rees-Miller's (2011) finding about actual compliments observed in goal-oriented activities. According to Rees-Miller (2011), the most common topic in goal-oriented settings was related to performance while appearance received lots of attention in unstructured settings. One more thing worthy of mention was that compliments given in the second show were largely indirect compliments not addressing guests but directed to the audience. This result makes sense as the compliments made in this show were closely associated with the theme of the show. The purpose of this show was to let the audience know about the guests' recent achievements and performance, so most of the time the male host turned his face to the camera to talk to the audience. A second possible explanation for this finding was related to the topics of compliments. In Vietnamese culture, "it is not acceptable to boast about one's past achievements or capabilities and, compared with foreigners, the Vietnamese often sound shy and reserved, and are self-effacing about their own skills" (Ellis, 1995, p. 151). Even though the focus of the show was on the guests' recent achievements and performance, the male host was probably avoiding giving too many direct compliments on these topics in a public setting. Thus, it is little wonder that the male host made more indirect compliments than direct ones (see Figs 5.22 and 5.23 in section 5.3.1). The gender of the host may also in part result in such a finding. To make this point more obvious, again the male host paid more indirect compliments to the female guests rather than to the male guests even though this gender difference was not dramatic (n=20 vs. n=14 respectively). To explain this finding, we can take into account Holmes' (1988) argument that some compliments in some cross-sex interactions were usually considered inappropriate, especially in a public setting as in a television

talk show in a Southeast Asian country like Vietnam. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the male host gave fewer direct compliments to the female guests. The findings of the two shows called our attention to the fact that compliment behaviors in talk show discourse would also vary greatly depending on the context of the show.

6.1.3. Summary

As we reviewed in section 2.1.2, many previous studies on compliments (Holmes, 1988; Chen, 1993; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Rees-Miller, 2011; Yuhaida et al., 2014; Danziger, 2018) have categorized compliments according to four major topics. On the surface, this methodological framework was good as it provided a range of possible categories for compliments (appearance, performance, possession, personality). However, the findings of the present study about actual compliments observed in movie discourse and talk show discourse have shown that such a compliment categorization was highly problematic. The findings of the present study indicated that categorizing compliments according to four major topics would have made it impossible to adequately describe all the contextual features associated with the compliments in movie discourse and in talk show discourse. As we discussed in section 6.1.1, the compliments in movie discourse were usually situated in different contexts in which compliments would frequently perform functions of various speech acts, relating to a wide variety of topics and several compliment turns or conversational turns, and involving more than two discourse participants. In talk show discourse, most of the compliments we found were direct compliments addressing guests or indirect compliments that introduced the guests to the audience. The topics of compliments in talk show discourse, as we saw in section 6.1.2, also varied greatly depending on the content of the show. Compliments in the show about

beauty and living a happy life most frequently revolved around appearance but compliments in the show about guests' recent achievements focused on such topics as achievements and appearance or a combination of both appearance and achievements. Hence, conventionally categorizing compliments according to four major topics cannot fully account for all the discourse features associated with the compliments in these two discourse settings.

The findings of the present study also pointed out an inconsistency regarding gender variation between the present study and previous gender studies. As discussed in section 2.1.3, using field note methods, previous gender studies (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Parisi & Wogan, 2006; Lee, 2009; Rees-Miller, 2011) collecting and analyzing compliments obtained in everyday interactions have found dramatic variation between males and females in giving and receiving compliments but the present study does not. The results of the present study, as discussed above in section 6.1.2, showed very little gender variation. In the present study, we found big influences of genre and context on compliment behaviors. We can see considerable differences about actual compliment behaviors in movie discourse and talk show discourse. The context does matter very much, because compliments in different movie discourse segments would perform different functions, each with their own unique features, and compliments given in two different shows would also vary greatly. Data collection method can account for the inconsistency regarding gender variation between the present study and previous gender studies, as it was expected that compliments occurring in everyday interactions would differ from those given in movie discourse and talk show discourse. The inconsistency in compliment behaviors between the present study and previous gender studies again proved the importance of discourse settings in categorizing and analyzing compliments.

Setting is also an important factor influencing the way people respond to compliments. As presented in Chapter 4, through semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with the participants in the two regions using compliment scenarios in movie discourse, we have found dramatic differences in regional and gender variation. The following section aims to further discuss and interpret those differences.

6.2. CRs through Sociolinguistic Interviews

The results of the sociolinguistic interviews have shown large differences in regional and gender variation. This section will begin with a discussion of regional variation, and then focus on gender variation.

6.2.1. Regional Variation

This section aims to further discuss and interpret CRs and regional variation in Vietnamese according to the first two research questions:

RQ1. *How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments?*

RQ2. *How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments?*

presented in the beginning of Chapter 3. The section mainly focuses on the way men and women in the two regions responded to the compliments.

6.2.1.1. Southern Men vs. Northern Men

This section aims to find an answer to Research Question 1 *How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments?* The section first discusses Research Question 1a - the way the Southern and the Northern men responded to compliments given by a

woman. Then, we focus on Research Question 1b by discussing the way the Southern and the Northern men responded to compliments given by a man.

RQ1a. How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments given by a woman?

As regards the compliments given by a woman, the results showed that there were certain differences between regions. However, the degree of variation varied greatly from situation to situation. For the thank-you compliment, we do not see a big difference between two regions. Ninety percent of the males in both regions reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the thank-you compliment (see Fig 4.1 in section 4.1). The males in both regions tended to express happiness in a modest way by minimizing the force of the compliment (see Table 4.1 in section 4.1). This result suggests that the males in both regions perceived the thank-you compliment as a positive speech act which according to Holmes (1988), is positively valued by both speaker and hearer.

However, there was a small difference in the choice of strategies to minimize the force of the compliment. The males in the South favored smiling scale-down the most (45%), in addition to explaining scale-down (25%) and thanking scale-down (20%). In contrast, their Northern counterparts used explaining scale-down more frequently (55%) than smiling scale-down (35%). Such a difference in the choice of CR strategies between two groups pointed out certain differences about socio-cultural values in two regions. Feeling happy about the compliment, the males in the South were happy to receive the compliment while the males in the North attempted to explain that helping people was not a big thing. Nearly 55% out of 90% of the males in the North reported that helping the woman fix her motorbike was what any man can do easily. The

males in the North appeared to think humbly of themselves and so attempted to minimize the force of the compliment to a greater extent. This result about the Northern males was in line with Nguyen's (2016) conclusion in the sense that despite accepting the compliment, the way the males in the North accepted compliments was supposed to show modesty.

For the encouragement compliment, we see a dramatic difference in two regions. Only half of the males in the South but a much higher 80% of the males in the North reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the compliment in this scenario (see Fig 4.2 in section 4.2). Only 20% of the males in the North but another half of the males in the South expressed negative feelings about the compliment. This result suggests that the males in the two regions viewed the same compliment very differently. For the males in the North, the compliment in this situation was viewed more as a positive speech act. However, for the males in the South, the encouragement compliment was perceived as both a positive and a negative act.

Fifty percent of the males in the South and 80% of the males in the North reported that they found solace upon receiving the encouragement compliment (see Table 4.2 in section 4.2). In more details, the two groups tended to use formulaic and promising thank-you as a way to show their appreciation for the compliment. 'Silence' was found very common among the Northern males (at 40%) but very rare among the Southern males (at 5%). This finding contradicts previous findings of CRs in Vietnamese that native speakers of Vietnamese tend to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty and politeness (Tran, 2010; Nguyen, 2016). In this situation, it goes without saying that the males in the two regions did not respond to the compliment negatively or reject the compliment to show modesty. By contrast, they viewed the compliment as a source of solace that may help them feel better when they were in depression. Humbleness that can be seen as an important part of self-image (Chen, 1993) and a

common social value in Vietnamese culture (Ellis, 1995) was not an influential factor in this situation.

RQ1b. How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese men respond to compliments given by a man?

In terms of the compliments given by a man, the results of the present study highlighted certain differences in two regions. For the sport session-ending compliment, we can see a considerable difference in two regions. A great number of the males in the South (80%) but only over half of the males in the North (55%) expressed positive feelings about the compliment (see Fig 4.3 in section 4.3). Only a small number of the males in the South (20%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment, while for the males in the North, this number was 45%. This result suggests that the sport session-ending compliment was more welcomed and appropriate in the South than in the North. The males in the South viewed it more as a positive speech act, while as many as 45% of the males in the North perceived it as a negative act. What was considered appropriate in the South may not be very appropriate in the North.

Though the males in two regions were closely similar in the choice of CR strategies to show their pleasure, the two groups differed in the number of modesty responses (see Table 4.3 in section 4.3). Despite feeling happy about the compliment, the males in the South showed much of their modesty compared to the males in the North. Forty five percent of the males in the South expressed their happiness in a modest way while for the males in the North, this number was much smaller (only at 20%). In more details, the males in the South favored shifting the praise to the complimenter (25%) rather than minimizing the force of the compliment (20%) even though the difference is not so dramatic. In contrast, the males in the North favored shifting the praise to the complimenter (15%) to minimizing the force of the compliment (5%). These

findings point out certain differences in socio-cultural values in two regions. The males in the South seemed more modest in receiving the ability compliment in a sports setting whose main aim was to help to end the practice session. Though this result was not in agreement with previous findings of CRs in Vietnamese that native speakers of Vietnamese tend to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty and politeness (Tran, 2010; Nguyen, 2016), it may call our attention to the fact that the males in the South received the compliment in a modest way. For 45% of the males in the North, giving a compliment in a sports setting which aimed to end the practice session was inappropriate (see Table 4.3 in section 4.3). In this situation, the complimenter was expected not to give a compliment. Thus, it makes sense to see that only 20% of the males in the North expressed their happiness in a modest way.

For the joking compliment, though the males in both regions generally responded to the compliment with a sense of happiness, we can see some small differences between the two regions. As shown in Fig 4.4 in section 4.4, almost 85% of the males in the South reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the compliment, while for the males in the North, this number was smaller, only at 60% of the total. Only 15% of the males in the South but a much higher 40% of the males in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment. This result indicates that the joking compliment was more welcomed by the Southern males. The males in the South overwhelmingly perceived the joking compliment more as a positive speech act, whereas nearly 40% of their Northern counterparts viewed this compliment as negative.

The males in both regions gave more pleasure responses than modesty responses (see Table 4.4 in section 4.4). For the males in the South, the difference was not so dramatic (45% vs. 40% respectively); for the males in the North, the difference was very dramatic (50% vs. 10%). This result indicates that the males in both regions were happy to receive the compliment.

However, a clear imbalance in the number of modesty responses made by the males in two regions reveals some socio-cultural differences between regions. A high tendency to receive the compliment with pleasure (50%) indicates that at the workplace, the Northern males were more directed toward accepting the praiseworthiness of the compliment. Compared to the males in the South, the males in the North were less humble in receiving such a compliment at the workplace. In contrast, the Southern males' tendency to show much modesty in the response complies with Leech's (1983) notion of modesty (minimize praising of self, maximize dispraise of self). Despite reporting a feeling of happiness when receiving the compliment in this scenario, some males in the South still attempted to minimize the praiseworthiness of the compliment. This result matches Nguyen's (2016) finding that the way the Vietnamese accepted compliments was supposed to show modesty. In the working environment, the Southern males appeared more humble in receiving the compliment.

6.2.1.2. Southern Women vs. Northern Women

This section aims to find an answer to Research Question 2 *How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments?* The section first discusses Research Question 2a - the way the Southern and the Northern women responded to compliments given by a woman. Then, we focus on Research Question 2b by discussing the way the Southern and the Northern women responded to compliments given by a man.

RQ2a. How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments given by a woman?

As regards the compliments given by a woman, the results showed that there were considerable differences in two regions. For the congratulation compliment, we can see a big difference in CRs made by the females in two regions. Only 40% of the females in the North but a much higher 90% of the females in the South reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the congratulation compliment (see Fig 4.5 in section 4.5). Only 10% of the females in the South but as many as 60% of the females in the North expressed negative feelings about the compliment. This result indicates that the females in the South perceived the congratulation as a positive speech act while their Northern counterparts viewed it more as a negative act. Such a congratulation compliment was welcomed in the South but was considered inappropriate in the North.

There was a high tendency for the females in two regions to respond to the congratulation with pleasure (see Table 4.5 in section 4.5). The responses that show modesty were very small in number. Nearly 85% of the females in the South responded to the compliment with pleasure and only 5% produced a happiness response in a modest way. Similarly, 25% of the females in the North chose pleasure responses rather than modesty responses (15%). This finding leads us to reassess previous conclusions that male and female native speakers of Vietnamese tend to reject compliments as a way to show modesty. It seems to us that the analysis of CRs in previous studies (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016) without taking into account non-verbal responses and the speakers' reported feelings about compliments has resulted in a problematic interpretation of the responses. Meanwhile, the result also underlines that the notion of modesty discussed in Leech (1983) which minimizes praise to self and in Gu (1990) which values self-denigration did not have a big influence on the responses to this compliment scenario in both regions.

Of 60% of the Northern females reporting a lack of interest in the compliment, only 10% chose to ignore the compliment or change the topic to show that they were not interested in the congratulation compliment. The other 50% said that they must pretend to be interested in the compliment as a matter of courtesy. Although in the eyes of the females in the North, the congratulation compliment was reported to be associated with such negative functions as a social strategy, an insincere compliment, and a type of flattery, the response strategies to be employed were not explicitly negative reactions. According to Farenkia (2012), the compliments that are insincere, exaggerated, or accompany hidden intentions may provoke negative reactions. However, the findings in this study show that the females in the North produced so-called positive reactions (e.g., 'uh ah', explanation, emotionless return thank-you, courteous thank-you) as strategies to disguise their lack of interest. Saying differently, the females in the North were less direct in expressing negative feelings about the compliment in this situation.

For the flattery compliment, even though the females in both regions expressed positive feelings about this compliment, we can see some small differences between the regions. A total of 100% of the females in the South reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment in this situation, whereas for the females in the North, this number was smaller (only at 70%). This result suggests that the females in both regions viewed this compliment more as a positive speech act. However, the flattery compliment was considered more appropriate in the South than in the North, as there were still 30% of the females in the North expressing negative feelings about this compliment.

Approximately 55% of the females in the South were happy but appeared humble when receiving the flattery compliment and 45% favored pleasure responses (see Table 4.6 in section 4.6). A higher number of modesty responses show that the females in the South appeared more

humble in receiving the flattery compliment. However, the extremely high percentage of the females in the South reporting a feeling of happiness across the two compliment situations can be taken as one of the most interesting findings in this study. This result shows that in the eyes of the females in the South, both compliments were viewed as positive rather than negative speech acts. The current findings provide empirical evidence that the females in the South particularly enjoyed the two compliments and tended to respond to them with a sense of pleasure. Thus, it is probable that previous interpretation of CRs in Vietnamese (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016) led to the misconception that Vietnamese tend to reject compliments to show modesty. Politeness in traditional Vietnamese culture, according to previous studies (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016), was to reject compliments to show “khiêm” (‘modesty’). However, these findings of the present study show that politeness among Southern females was to explicitly respond to the compliments with pleasure or to show pleasure in a modest way.

For the females in the North, the number of ‘modesty’ responses was very small in number (10%) as opposed to 60% of pleasure responses. Unlike the females in the South, the females in the North were less humble in receiving the compliment in this situation. A higher percentage of pleasure responses shows that the females in the North were happy about the compliment, and so were willing to express their pleasure in the responses. Leech’s (1983) notion of modesty does not apply to the Northern females in this scenario. The current finding helps to confirm that politeness in the eyes of the females in the North did not lead participants to reject compliments or to respond to the compliments negatively, as suggested in previous studies (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016). What was ‘polite’ in the North was to respond to the compliment with a sense of pleasure if the speakers felt happy about the compliment. In cases where the speakers were not interested in the compliment (e.g., congratulation compliment), the

speakers often produced ‘positive reactions’ to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment. Showing an explicit lack of interest in the compliment was viewed as a possible threat to the complimenter’s positive face, i.e., a desire to be liked by others (Brown & Levinson, 1987) in the eyes of the females in the North.

RQ2b. How do Southern and Northern Vietnamese women respond to compliments given by a man?

Regarding the compliments given by a man, we can only see some small differences between the regions. For the admiration compliment, a great number of the females in both regions (SF, 80% & NF, 90%) reported a feeling of happiness upon receiving the compliment (see Fig 4.7 in section 4.7). Only a small number of the females in two regions expressed negative feelings about the compliment. This result suggests that most of the females in both regions perceived the compliment in this situation as a positive speech act.

The difference lies in the choice of response strategies (see Table 4.7 in section 4.7). Around 80% of the females in the South reported that they were happy about the compliment but they felt slightly shy when it was given by a man in this setting (the man whom the woman doesn’t know well, stepping towards the coffee shop stage, giving flowers to the woman, and then giving her a compliment on her violin performance). For the females in the North, this number was smaller, only accounting for 55% of the total. This result was interesting as the females in the South sounded more shy than the females in the North in receiving such a compliment from a man in such a setting. One thing that marks a difference between two regions was that the females in the South tended to express their shyness by appreciating the complimenter (60%) rather than ignoring the compliment (20%); whereas, the females in the

North frequently expressed their shyness by ignoring the compliment (35%) rather than appreciating the complimenter (20%). This finding was interesting as it indicates that the females in the North would ignore the compliment if they felt shy about the compliment given by the man while the females in the South would express an appreciation for the complimenter.

None of the females in the South chose to express their pleasure explicitly though they felt happy about the compliment from the man. In contrast, 30% of their Northern counterparts felt happy about the compliment and so chose to signify their pleasure explicitly. This result suggests that the females in the North were quite explicit and confident in receiving the compliment from the man.

As regards the flirty compliment, we can see a small difference between regions (see Fig 4.8 in section 4.8). A total of 100% of the females in two regions expressed positive feelings about the compliment. Most of the females in the South (80%) and in the North (90%) reported that they felt happy about the compliment though they were slightly shy in receiving such a compliment from the man. This result was interesting as it shows that the females in both regions perceived the flirty compliment which aimed to earn the woman's love and affection as a positive act. We know that it was common for men to compliment women on ability (Holmes, 1988; Wu; 2008; Rees-Miller, 2011). However, some cross-sex compliments that may presume an intimacy (Holmes, 1988) or be interpreted as a sexual advance (Parisi & Wogan, 2006) like the flirty compliment in this situation can be seen inappropriate in some cultures. The findings in the present study were not in agreement with these previous findings. The females in both regions of Vietnam were happy to receive such a compliment.

The difference lies in the strategies used to express their positive feelings (see Table 4.8 in section 4.8). The females in both regions were similar in using 'smile' as a way to hide their

real positive feelings about the compliment. However, the females in the South differed from the females in the North in making a joke, the strategy showing that some Southern females (30%) were feeling shy. In contrast, such strategies as explicitly negating the compliment (20%) and appreciating the complimenter using different forms of thank-you (20%) show that the Northern females were feeling shy.

6.2.1.3. Summary

To sum up, the results of the sociolinguistic interviews run counter to previous findings of CRs in Vietnamese that native speakers of Vietnamese tend to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty and politeness (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016). Concerning regional variation, we can see that there were certain differences between the regions. However, it is worth noting that the degree of variation may vary greatly from setting to setting.

In answering RQ1a, which focuses on the way the Southern and the Northern men responded to compliments given by a woman, we found that the degree of variation differed greatly between two compliment scenarios (see section 6.2.1.1). We could see a small difference in the case of the thank-you compliment but we were able to see a dramatic difference in the case of the encouragement compliment. As discussed in section 6.2.1.1, the men in both regions perceived the thank-you compliment as a positive act. The difference was that the Northern men were more humble than the Southern men, because the Northern men attempted to minimize the force of the compliment to a greater extent. However, we can see a contrasting result in the case of the encouragement compliment. It was viewed as a positive act by the Northern men but was perceived as both a positive and a negative act by the Southern men. It is also interesting to note

that modesty, a common social value in Vietnamese culture (Ellis, 1995; Nguyen, 2007), was not an influential factor in this situation. The men in two regions did not respond to the compliment negatively or reject the compliment as a way to show modesty as claimed in many previous studies of Vietnamese CRs (Nguyen, 2007; Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016).

In answering RQ1b, which explores the way the Southern and the Northern men responded to compliments given by a man, we found that the degree of variation may vary from setting to setting (see section 6.2.1.1). The compliment in a sports setting was considered more appropriate in the South while as many as 45% of the Northern men expressed negative feelings about it. According to these Northern men, the complimenter was expected not to say out the compliment in a sports setting. One of the most interesting findings was that in this compliment scenario, the Southern men showed much more modesty than the Northern men. However, different from previous studies (Nguyen, 2007; Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016) that concluded that modesty in Vietnamese culture was to reject or downgrade compliments, the present findings showed that the Southern men felt happy about the compliment. For the joking compliment at the workplace, we were only able to see some small differences between regions. Though the men in both regions tended to view it as positive, the men in the South were more humble as 40% of them still attempted to minimize the praiseworthiness of the compliment. As such, we can conclude that in a sports setting and in the working environment, the Southern men were supposed to be more modest than their Northern counterparts about receiving compliments on ability, irrespective of the fact the Southern men viewed the two compliments as positive. The Northern men, in contrast, felt happy about the compliment and would choose to express their pleasure in the responses.

In answering RQ2a, which examines the way the Southern and the Northern women responded to compliments given by a woman, the results showed that the degree of variation differed greatly from setting to setting (see section 6.2.1.2). We could see regional variation in the congratulation compliment scenario but we were only able to see some small differences in the flattery compliment scenario. The Southern women perceived the two compliments as positive. The difference lies in that the Southern women were not humble in receiving the congratulation compliment but they were very humble in receiving the flattery compliment. The Northern women, in contrast, viewed the congratulation as negative but interestingly, perceived the flattery compliment as positive. In receiving the positive compliment, the Northern women were inclined to show their pleasure rather than modesty.

In answering RQ2b, which investigates the way the Southern and the Northern women responded to compliments given by a man, again we saw that the degree of variation may vary from setting to setting (see section 6.2.1.2). Though the women in both regions viewed the two compliments given by a man as positive, we were still able to see small differences about the choice of response strategies between the Southern and the Northern women in the two compliment scenarios.

In general, the above findings of the present study do support the importance of context in dealing with compliment data and in interpreting the responses as well. As we discussed above, depending on the context of the compliment, what was considered appropriate in the South may not be appropriate in the North and vice versa. The degree of regional variation may vary greatly from setting to setting.

6.2.2. Gender Variation

This section further discusses and interprets CRs and gender variation in Vietnamese according to the third research question: *Do compliment responses in Vietnamese differ across genders? If yes, how do compliment responses in Vietnamese differ across genders?* as presented in the beginning of Chapter 3 of the present study. As we can see in the section *Gender variation* in Chapter 4, due to the fact that there were no gender differences found in responses to the two compliment scenarios (thank-you compliment & flirty compliment), this section mainly focuses on discussing and interpreting CRs and gender variation of the other six compliment scenarios. We do not always see gender variation in both regions; we sometimes can only see gender variation in the South or in the North. Thus, this section is organized according to three subsections: Gender variation in the South, Gender variation in the North, and Gender and regional variation.

6.2.2.1. Gender Variation in the South

In regard to the encouragement compliment scenario, we can only see gender variation in the South. There was a dramatic difference between the Southern males and the Southern females in responding to the encouragement compliment (see Fig 4.9 in section 4.10). A half of the males in the South reported a feeling of happiness when receiving the compliment while a much higher 90% of the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment in this situation. Only a small number of the females (10%) expressed negative feelings, whereas for the males, this number was 50%. This result suggests that the females in the South viewed this compliment more as a positive act, while the males perceived such a compliment as both a positive and a negative act. This finding supports the claim by Holmes (1988) that women tend

to perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, while men may perceive them as FTAs.

Nearly 80% out of 90% of the females and 50% of the males reported that they felt happy and found solace when they received the compliment in this situation (see Table 4.9 in section 4.10). The responses that show the recipient's modesty only scored 10% for the females and 0% for the males. This result completely rejects previous findings of CRs in Vietnamese that the Vietnamese tend to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016). Also, this finding was not in agreement with Pham (2014) that compliment rejection keeps compliment receivers 'safe', especially when they are not sure whether the compliment is sincere or not. Only 5% of the females and 15% of the males expressed some doubt about the compliment (see Table 4.9 in section 4.10). Though they were not certain that the compliment was sincere, they still felt happy and comforted when receiving the compliment in this situation.

6.2.2.2. Gender Variation in the North

For the three compliment scenarios including sport session-ending compliment, joking compliment, and flattery compliment, we can only see gender variation in the North. This section will discuss each of the scenarios in more detail.

In terms of the sport session-ending compliment, the results showed that there were some small differences between two genders (see Fig 4.10 in section 4.11). Over a half of the males (55%) and a much higher 60% of the females reported a feeling of happiness. Forty five percent of the males expressed no feelings about the compliment while 40% of the females described a lack of interest in the compliment. This result suggests that both the males and the females may

perceive this compliment more as a positive act, although the difference was not so dramatic. This finding supports the claim by Holmes (1988) that women tend to perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, but it contradicts Holmes' (1988) conclusion that men may perceive compliments as FTAs. Though the difference would not be so dramatic, we still can see that the Northern males viewed the compliment in this situation more as a positive act.

The larger difference lies in the choice of response strategies. As many as 35% of the males responded to the compliment with pleasure while for the females, this number was smaller (25%) (see Table 4.10 in section 4.11). In contrast, only 20% of the males but a much higher 35% of the females responded to the compliment with modesty. This result points out a dramatic difference between two genders in responding to this compliment scenario. Despite having positive feelings about the compliment, the females were more humble than their male counterparts. The males, by contrast, did not care very much about modesty. This result makes sense as in a sport setting, males were often expected to express pleasure in receiving the compliment on their ability.

As regards the joking compliment, although the two genders perceived the compliment as a positive speech act, there existed some small differences between the two. Only 60% of the males reported a happy feeling about the compliment while for the females, this number was 85% (see Fig 4.11 in section 4.12). This result was completely in line with Holmes' (1988) finding that the females tend to perceive the compliment more as positively affective speech acts. Although the males in this situation did not perceive the compliment as FTAs as claimed in Holmes (1988), there were still 40% of them viewing the compliment as negative.

Leech's (1983) notion of modesty (minimize praising of self, maximize dispraise of self) has not received very much attention in this situation. Both the males and the females wanted to

express their pleasure more than modesty (see Table 4.11 in section 4.12). This result makes sense as the compliment giver was a staff member while the compliment receiver was the office head. However, the two genders differed in using strategies to show their pleasure. In order to show their pleasure about the compliment, 40% of the females agreed with the compliment with pride while for the males, this number was 15%. These findings run counter to Pham's (2014) result about CRs in Vietnamese that the Vietnamese find it unacceptable and even impolite to verbally agree with compliments regardless of how they think of themselves. Although 'smile' was used frequently among females (25%) and less often among males (10%), the males could express their pleasure in different forms of thank-you (15%), by creating mutual pleasure (5%) or responding to the compliment humorously (5%). Thus, the above conclusion by Pham (2014) needs to be attenuated.

For the flattery compliment, we can see a considerable difference between the two genders. Seventy percent of the females expressed positive feelings about the compliment while as many as 65% of the males expressed negative feelings (see Fig 4.14 in section 4.14). This result indicates that the males and the females perceived the same compliment very differently. For the females, the flattery compliment was considered positive. The males, in contrast, viewed the flattery compliment as negative. This result strongly supports Holmes' (1988) claim that women tend to perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, while men may perceive compliments more often as FTAs. Only 35% of the males expressed positive feelings about the compliment.

Modesty, one of the most important sociocultural values in Vietnamese culture that may show an individual's traits (private self) and social relationships (public self) (Nguyen, 2007) has not received lots of attention in this situation. Only 10% of the females appeared humble while

as many as 60% chose to express their pleasure (see Table 4.14 in section 4.14). We can neither observe any modesty responses in the male data. Again, this finding goes against the previous findings of CRs in Vietnamese that male and female native speakers of Vietnamese tended to reject or downgrade compliments as a way to show modesty (Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014). This finding was also in conflict with Nguyen's (2016) result that despite accepting compliments, the way the Vietnamese accepted compliments was supposed to show modesty. Due to limitations in their research methodologies, as discussed in section 2.2.1, such findings about Vietnamese CRs in previous studies need to be attenuated.

As discussed above, only a small number of the females (30%) and a much higher number of the males (65%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment. The responses under 'lack interest' outnumbered the ones under 'pretend interest' even though the difference was not dramatic (females, 20% vs. 10%; males, 35% vs. 30%). This result shows that both males and females favored a more 'straightforward' approach (Guo et al., 2012) in expressing their negative feelings about the compliment. This result was interesting as it is known that the Vietnamese Northerners who were supposed to be very much like their Chinese neighbors preferred a "detour approach" which is characterized by "indirectness" (Guo et al., 2012, p. 364). However, the present finding proves that the Northern males and females were relatively direct in expressing negative feelings about the flattery compliment. This result makes sense to us, because in this compliment scenario, the compliment giver was a receptionist while the compliment receiver was a sales department head. A big gap in social status between the compliment giver and receiver may account for such an interesting result in this compliment scenario.

6.2.2.3. Gender and Regional Variation

As regards the congratulation compliment and the admiration compliment, we can see gender variation in both regions, Southern Vietnam and Northern Vietnam. This section will discuss the relationship between gender and region in responses to these two compliment scenarios.

In the context of the congratulation compliment, we can see a small difference about gender in the South but we can see a big difference about gender in the North. Almost 65% of the males but a much higher 90% of the females in the South reported a feeling of happiness in receiving the compliment (see Fig 4.12 in section 4.13). This result indicates that both genders perceived the compliment given on the shop opening as a positive act, even though the difference would be so dramatic between the females and the males (90% vs. 65%). This result confirms Holmes' (1988) claim that women tend to perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, but disapproves Holmes' (1988) argument that men may perceive compliments as FTAs. The finding in this study shows that both genders viewed the compliment in this scenario as positive. Only a small number of the females (10%) and of the males (35%) expressed negative feelings about the compliment.

The two genders were similar in not being humble in the responses. Modesty responses accounted for a very small percentage, 5% for the females and 10% for the males (see Table 4.12 in section 4.13). This result indicates that modesty, one of the most important constituents of self-image (Chen, 1993; Nguyen, 2007), did not have a big impact on the responses to this compliment scenario. In contrast, both the males and the females in the South tended to show much pleasure in their responses. As many as 85% of the females showed much pleasure in their responses using such strategies as signifying pleasure (30%), creating mutual pleasure (30%),

and agreeing with the compliment with pride (25%). The males used ‘signifying pleasure’ more often (40%) than creating mutual pleasure (10%) and agreeing with the compliment with pride (5%). Such differences in the choice of response strategies between the two genders show that the females were happy to receive the compliment. They could express their appreciation for the compliment or return the compliment to make the compliment giver happy too. Some also felt proud of the compliment. These findings conform to previous findings (Holmes, 1988; Hertbert, 1990; Lee, 2009) that women tend to receive compliments. Based on the findings of this compliment scenario, we can say that women tend to receive the compliment with pride and pleasure. Using ‘signifying pleasure’ more often than the other two strategies, the males had a tendency to show their pleasure by saying thank-you to the complimenter; the males appeared less direct in expressing their pride of the compliment.

Another difference between the two genders lies in the way they expressed negative feelings about the compliment. It was interesting to note that the males were more explicit in expressing negative feelings than the females (see Table 4.12 in section 4.13). Twenty percent of the males explicitly negated the compliment and 5% were silent when they perceived the compliment as negative. The females (10%), by contrast, were not interested in the compliment but attempted to disguise their lack of interest with a courteous thank-you. These findings were interesting as they show that the Southern males appeared more direct in expressing negative feelings while as discussed above, being less direct in expressing positive feelings. The Southern females, in contrast, were more direct in expressing positive feelings and less direct in expressing negative feelings. These findings in the present study run contrary to Danziger’s (2018) results about CRs in Israeli Hebrew that men were more likely to show a happy expression when accepting a compliment than women, who tended to show a more embarrassed emotion. In this

compliment scenario, the present study found that both males and females in the South felt happy about the compliment, but the way they expressed positive and negative feelings differed greatly.

In the North, we can see a considerable difference between two genders. There was a high tendency for the males to report happy feelings about the congratulation compliment (see Fig 4.13 in section 4.13). Only a small number of the males (20%) reported not being interested in the compliment. In contrast, over a half of the females (60%) showed a lack of interest in the compliment. This result indicates that the Northern males viewed the congratulation compliment more as a positive speech act while the Northern females perceived it more as a negative act. This result points out a big difference in the perception of compliments in the two regions of the country. As discussed earlier on in this section, both males and females in the South tend to perceive the compliment in this scenario as a positive act, while in the North we can see such a big difference between two genders. The males in the two regions were similar in perceiving the same compliment as positive, whereas the females in the two regions viewed the same compliment very differently. Again, this result confirms Sidraschi's (2014) argument and our argument in the present study that compliments can be interpreted very differently within cultures. As Sidraschi (2014) argues, what is good in one region may not be good in another cultural region.

In the North, the two genders were also similar in not showing much modesty in the responses. The pleasure responses greatly outnumbered the modesty ones (see Table 4.13 in section 4.13). This result again supports the fact that modesty, one of the most traditional values in Vietnamese culture, has not received lots of attention in both regions. As discussed earlier on in this section, both males and females in the South tended to show much pleasure in their responses. The males and the females in the North tended to express pleasure in the responses.

Due to interpreting the same compliment very differently, we can see that the Northern males and the Northern females responded to the same compliment very differently (see Table 4.13 in section 4.13). Nearly 60% of the females reported a lack of interest in the compliment, while for the males, this number was only 20%. It was also very interesting to note that both males (20% over 20%) and females (50% over 60%) in the North attempted to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment. This marks a big difference between the two regions. While the males in the South, as we discussed above, were very direct in expressing negative feelings, the males in the North appeared less direct in expressing negative feelings as 15% chose to return a similar compliment and 5% responded with a formulaic thank-you in order to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment. The females in both regions were similar as both were not direct in expressing negative feelings. The Northern females used different forms of thank-you (30%), gave an explanation (15%), or responded with 'uh ah' to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment. These results were interesting as we can see big differences in interpreting and responding to the same compliment between genders and regions.

In the context of the admiration compliment, we can see a dramatic difference about gender variation in both regions. In the South, we found a big difference between males and females (see Fig 4.15 in section 4.15). A large number of the females (80%) expressed positive feelings about the compliment, while for the males, this number was much smaller (only 45%). This result indicates that in the eyes of the females, the admiration compliment was considered positive. In contrast, the males perceived the compliment in this scenario as a negative act as over a half of them (55%) expressed negative feelings about it. As we reviewed in section 2.1.3, Holmes (1988) reported that in New Zealand English, women give and receive more compliments than men do. She also added that women tend to perceive compliments as

positively affective speech acts, while men may perceive them more often as FTAs. In American English, Herbert (1990) found that male-female compliments were more often accepted than male-male compliments. Holmes (1988) and Herbert (1990) yielded such results, because their data were collected from different settings and so we cannot conclude which specific settings their findings would apply to. In the present study, we found similar results due to the particular context of this compliment scenario. The man (i.e. the compliment giver) paid a compliment on the ability of playing violin in front of many people on the stage of a coffee shop. The compliment was given as a way for the man to approach the compliment receiver and win his/her affection. It was also crucial to note that the compliment was given simultaneously with the action of giving flowers to the compliment receiver. This particular context may account for why we found that the females viewed the compliment as positive while the males perceived it as negative.

This particular setting also helps to explain why we can see that the responses under the happiness category were associated with a feeling of shyness (see Table 4.15 in section 4.15). Despite feeling slightly shy, those recipients were happy to receive the compliment. One thing worth of mention was that the Southern males and the Southern females greatly differed in the choice of response strategies. The females favored appreciating the complimenter (60% out of 80%) more than ignoring the compliment (20%). The males, in contrast, chose to ignore the compliment (45% over 45%). This result makes sense as the context where the compliment was given was considered inappropriate to the male recipients. In goal-oriented settings, Rees-Miller (2011) found that men received far more compliments than women and the topics of compliments given in goal-oriented activities mostly concerned the performance. The compliment given in our current context concerned the recipient's outstanding performance of

playing violin. However, due to a quite different setting between our present study and Rees-Miller's (2011) study, we can see very different results in the two studies.

The context also helps us to explain why the Southern males (55%) feigned to be interested in the compliment although they were not honestly interested in it (see Table 4.15 in section 4.15). Both males (55%) and females (10%) pretended to be interested in the compliment by responding to the compliment with different forms of thank-you. This result makes sense as showing an explicit lack of interest in the compliment was viewed as a possible threat to the complimenter's positive face in such a public setting.

In the North, we can see a big difference between males and females. Most of the females (90%) reported a feeling of happiness in receiving the admiration compliment while for the males, this number was only 35% (see Fig 4.16 in section 4.15). This result indicates that the females in the North viewed the compliment in this scenario more as a positive speech act. The males, in contrast, perceived it more as a negative act, as the other 65% of the males expressed negative feelings about the compliment (60% lack-of-interest, 5% embarrassment). We thus far can see that the females in both regions were very much similar in viewing the compliment in this scenario as positive, whereas the males in both regions tended to perceive it as negative. To account for this finding, we again look at the context of this compliment scenario. As discussed above, the compliment paid in this scenario was considered inappropriate to the males recipients, because the compliment was given suddenly on the coffee shop stage along with the action of giving flowers to the receiver. This particular context may explain why we found that the females in both regions viewed the compliment as positive while the males in both regions perceived it as negative.

As regards response strategies, we still can see big differences about gender and region in this compliment scenario. In the South, the responses made by the males and the females who perceived the compliment as positive were associated with feelings of shyness, because for the Southern participants, the compliment in this scenario was given suddenly, along with the action of giving flowers in front of the crowd. In the North, we found quite different results. Perceiving the compliment as positive, 35% of the Northern males would signify pleasure with a formulaic thank-you instead of expressing feelings of shyness as their Southern counterparts did (see Table 4.16 in section 4.15). Although 55% of the Northern females expressed shyness in their responses, the other 30% chose to signify their pleasure. These results show that the Northern participants felt happy about the compliment and wanted to let the complimenter know that they were feeling happy. The Northern males felt happy about the compliment because the complimenter recognized and enjoyed their talent. The Northern females also reported that they were happy because the complimenter knew and enjoyed their talents. This marks an important difference between males and females in two regions. In the case of perceiving the compliment as positive, the Southern participants seemed to be more focused on the context of the compliment, while their Northern counterparts paid much more attention to the content of the compliment.

It was also interesting to note that the females in two regions differed slightly in the choice of strategies to show their feelings of shyness. The Southern females favored ‘appreciating the complimenter’ (60%) more than ‘ignoring the compliment’ (20%) (see Table 4.15 in section 4.15). In contrast, the Northern females tended to ‘ignore the compliment’ (35%) to ‘appreciating the complimenter’ (20%) (see Table 4.16 in section 4.15). When the Southern

females were shy, they would say thank-you. In contrast, if the Northern females felt shy, they would ignore the compliment.

The compliment setting helps us explain why the Northern males (60%) feigned to be interested in the compliment although they were not actually interested in it. Over a half of the Northern males (60%) pretended to be interested in the compliment. This result makes sense as showing an explicit lack of interest in the compliment was viewed as a possible threat to the complimenter's positive face in such a public setting.

6.2.2.4. Summary

To sum up, the results of the present study do support the importance of context in dealing with compliments and in interpreting the responses as well. The men and the women may perceive the same compliment very differently depending upon the context in which the compliment was given.

In the South, we found that there was a big difference between men and women in perceiving and responding to the encouragement compliment (see section 6.2.2.1). The women viewed the compliment in this scenario as a positive speech act while the men perceived it as both a positive and a negative act. The women felt happy and found solace when receiving the compliment. For the men, 50% found solace while another 50% reported no feelings about the compliment.

In the North, we were only able to see very small differences about gender variation in the sport session-ending and the joking compliment scenarios. However, we could see a considerable difference about gender in the context of the flattery compliment. As discussed in section 6.2.2.2, both the men and the women in the North viewed the sport session-ending

compliment as positive. As could be expected, the men tended to express pleasure in receiving the ability compliment in a sports setting, whereas the women showed much more modesty. For the joking compliment, as we expected, the men and the women were similar in perceiving it as a positive act but differed in using strategies to show their pleasure. Given in the context of the flattery compliment, we could see a contrasting result. The women perceived the compliment in this scenario as a positive act, while the men viewed it as negative. Nonetheless, as this compliment was given by the receptionist to the sales department head, we can see a big gap in social status between the compliment giver and receiver. Moreover, although the compliment in this scenario contained several compliment turns, the compliment itself mainly concerned appearance. Thus, it is little wonder that most of the women chose to express pleasure when receiving the compliment while 65% of the men expressed negative feelings.

With regard to the congratulation compliment and the admiration compliment, we can see both gender and regional variation. As discussed in section 6.2.2.3, in the context of the congratulation compliment, we were only able to see a small difference about gender in the South but we could see a big difference about gender in the North. As discussed in section 6.2.2.3, in the South, the men and the women were similar in perceiving the congratulation compliment as a positive speech act. We only found some small differences between two genders in the choice of response strategies. However, in the North we can see a considerable difference between the men and the women. While the men viewed the congratulation compliment as positive, the women perceived it as negative.

Given in the context of the admiration compliment, we could see a big difference about gender variation in both regions. As discussed in section 6.2.2.3, in the South, the men perceived this compliment as negative while the women viewed it as positive. In the North, the men also

viewed the compliment as negative, whereas the women perceived it as positive. Though the women in both regions were similar in perceiving the compliment in this scenario as positive and the men in both regions were similar in perceiving it as negative, the men and the women in the two regions, as we discussed in section 6.2.2.3, differed greatly in the choice of response strategies.

In general, the differences between men and women in perceiving and responding to the compliments was not only due to a difference in the gender of the compliment giver but may also depend upon the context in which the compliment was given. The common claim by Holmes (1988) about CRs in New Zealand English that women tend to use and perceive compliments as positively affective speech acts, while men may perceive them more often as FTAs was not strongly supported in the present study. In the South, our results showed that the women tend to view compliments as positive speech acts; however, whether the men perceived the compliment as a positive or negative act would depend on the context in which the compliment was given. To illustrate, the Southern men could view the congratulation compliment as positive but perceive the admiration compliment as negative. For the encouragement compliment, the result showed that half of the Southern men viewed it as positive and another half viewed it as negative. This is also the case we may have seen in the North. The Northern women perceived some compliments (e.g., sport-session ending, joking, flattery, admiration) as positive but viewed the congratulation compliment as negative. In the eyes of the Northern men, though the compliments like flattery and admiration were negative speech acts, the ones such as sport-session ending, joking, and congratulation were seen as positive ones. Again, these findings of the present study showed us the importance of context to the study of compliment and response speech acts.

6.2.3. Contributions to Existing Research and New Insights

The findings of the sociolinguistic interviews contribute to the knowledge in the study of compliment and response speech acts and in the field of pragmatics in general. Previous compliment and response studies that focused on people's actual performance generally assumed that one form would not perform more than one function (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990) and so one response token would usually receive a single consistent semantic interpretation based on its linguistic forms (Lee, 2009; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Danziger, 2018). In the present study we found that one form could differ in interpretation, depending upon the speakers' reported feelings about the compliment and the scenario in which the compliment was given. As presented below, the same response strategy had different meanings, which provides empirical evidence that speakers' reported feelings about compliments may help researchers to interpret the responses more appropriately. Meanwhile, with people's interactions in their own regions and based upon the speakers' feelings about the compliments, we can discover different forms and functions that may contribute to providing a fuller picture of this speech act in Vietnamese and in other languages in general. Our findings also contribute to the fact that context does matter very much in dealing with compliment data and in interpreting the responses. The same response strategy may receive very different interpretations in different compliment scenarios. The findings called our attention to the importance of non-verbal metalinguistic signs in interpreting the responses.

Employing sociolinguistic interviews as a method of data collection (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 for detail) and analyzing CRs based on the speakers' feelings about compliments and according to sequences of verbal and non-verbal behaviors (see section 3.4 for detail), the

present study provides empirical evidence that calls into question some previous results about CRs.

In Vietnamese, collecting CRs from audio-recorded Naturalized Role-plays, it is certain that Tran (2010) would have lacked access to the non-verbal metalinguistic signs which play an important part in understanding the illocutionary force of speech acts (Gumperz, 1999). Further, since she could not access the speakers' feelings about the compliments, Tran (2010) interpreted compliment returns, such as the one below, as a strategy to downgrade the compliment:

VF1: Trời ơi hôm nay VF2 đẹp quá ta. ('Gosh you look beautiful today.')

VF2: **Trời ơi đâu đẹp bằng cô đâu.** ('Gosh not as beautiful as you are.')

(Tran, 2010, p. 118)

However, when we consider the interview data from participants in this study, we find that a compliment return can be a strategy to create mutual pleasure because it coincided with the participant's report of happiness about the compliment. SF13's comment below shows that the 'smile' signifies the receiver's pleasure and a 'return' is not a sign of modesty as interpreted in the above example of Tran (2010). A 'Return' strategy in this study was associated with the receiver's pleasure and desire to make the giver happy:

CC: "Em gái. Trời ơi, hôm nay đẹp quá à! Hoàn tráng quá!"
(**Younger sister. Oh my god, today you look very beautiful! Very glorious!**)

SF13: [Cười] Nhưng em đâu có xinh bằng chị.
('[Smile] But I am not as pretty as you are.')

"Được khen thì em cũng thấy vui. Em sẽ khen lại để chị ấy cũng vui."

(' When being complimented, I feel happy. I'll pay her a return compliment to make her happy too.')

Combining the non-verbal sign 'smile' and the speaker's reported feelings about the compliment, we can conclude that a smiling return was not a strategy to downgrade the compliment nor would

it represent the spirit of modesty. In contrast, the participants used a smiling return to create mutual pleasure.

Without access to non-verbal behaviors and speakers' reported feelings about compliments, Tran (2010) interpreted the Disagreement and Downgrade combination as a strategy to downgrade the object of the compliment, as we can see below.

VF1: *Chà chà. Cái áo của bạn thật là hết sảy.*
(‘Wow. Your dress is really fancy.’)

VF2: **Đâu có. Coi vậy chứ mình hàng dờm lắm. Giá cũng rất là rẻ.**
(‘It's not. It looks like that but the material is very bad. The price is also very cheap.’)

(Tran, 2010, p. 116)

Some CR studies in other languages that elicited the data using DCTs (e.g., Moalla, 2013; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010), through field observation (e.g., Holmes, 1988), or recording of language in interaction (Ruiz & Cuest, 2015) have considered Disagreement (e.g., ‘I don’t think so’, ‘I thought I did badly’, ‘I’m afraid I don’t like it much’) as a way of rejection. However, in the present study the analysis of CRs based on the speakers’ reported feelings and sequences of verbal and non-verbal behaviors found that Disagreement could be associated with both positive and negative feelings. Positively, as we can see in the following examples, though using a Disagreement (in bold), SF15’s response included ‘laughing’, ‘smile’, and a ‘return’:

FL: “Uhm. Em nói thiệt nè. Trong phòng kinh doanh có chị trưởng phòng Quỳnh Lan là đẹp nhất nè.
(‘Uhm. I’m telling the truth. In the sales department, the head Quynh Lan is the most beautiful.’)

SF15: [Haha] **Em đừng nói vậy.** Chị thấy em cũng xinh mà. Có thua kém gì chị đâu [Cười mỉm]
(‘[Laughing]. You shouldn’t say that. I see you are pretty too, not less than me. [Smile slightly].’)

“Trong lòng thay vui.”
(‘Feel happy inside.’)

SF10: [Cười] Cảm ơn em. Chị thấy chị cũng bình thường.
(‘[Smile] Thank you. I feel I am normal.’)

“Ngoài miệng nói vậy nhưng thấy vui trong lòng.”
(‘My mouth is saying that, but my heart is very happy.’)

SF10 downgraded the force of the compliment; however, her response included a ‘smile’ and an appreciation token, which according to her comment, was to show her pleasure in a modest way. Based on their comments, SF15 and SF10 perceived the flattery compliment as a positive speech act. Responding with a Disagreement or Downgrade was not meant to reject the compliment as argued in many previous studies (Tran, 2010; Holmes, 1988; Moalla, 2013; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Ruiz & Cuest, 2015). In contrast, the use of these strategies was to show the speakers’ pleasure in a modest way. The receivers felt happy about the compliment and tended to show their pleasure modestly. What they needed to do was to appear humble (Chen, 1993), in order to hide the sense of satisfaction in their heart.

In some cases, the present study found that ‘Disagreement’ was associated with negative feelings, indicating a lack of interest or bad feelings. To illustrate, SM17 explicitly negated the joking compliment since to their thoughts, the compliment in this context was not sincere.

SM17: [Gãi đầu] Mày khùng hả.
(‘[head scratch] Are you crazy?’)

“Em không thích vì lời khen này không thật lòng.”

(‘I don’t like the compliment because it is not sincere.’)

Some females (e.g., SF6, SF7) reported that the encouragement compliment made them feel bad. According to the following comments, the compliment was supposed to be inappropriate because such a compliment made the recipients (e.g., SF6, SF7) feel upset.

SF6: Chắc mọi người chỉ đang an ủi mình thôi [Im lặng]
(‘Everybody is possibly comforting me [silent]’)

“Sẽ cảm thấy buồn hơn vì khi em buồn em chỉ muốn tự mình vượt qua. Không muốn ai làm phiền. Càng nói mình chỉ càng thấy buồn hơn thôi.”

(‘I felt more upset because when I was in a bad mood, I always wanted to overcome it by myself. The more she talked, the more I felt upset.’)

SF7: Thật hả? Nhưng mà thôi em đừng khen nữa. Anh biết anh đang ở đâu.
(‘Really? But you shouldn’t compliment me. I know where I am.’)

“Khi buồn được khen thì em sẽ cảm thấy nửa vui nửa buồn vì lúc đó em đang trong cảm xúc lẫn lộn, chưa biết hướng đi tương lai của em thế nào; tương lai của em sẽ đi về đâu.”

(‘When I was in a bad mood, the compliment made me feel half happy and half sad because I don’t know what my future direction is? and where my future is going on?’)

As SF6 reported, she wanted to overcome the situation by herself. SF7 might not believe in the compliment as she was not sure about her future upon receiving the compliment.

In Vietnamese, Pham (2014) obtained the data through a structured interview with 120 Vietnamese native speakers. She interpreted credit shift, where complimentees shift the credit for which they are complimented to another person, luck, fate, or God (usually heavenly spirits) as a strategy of Evade, as in the following example:

E: Nhà chị ở chỗ này lý tưởng quá.
(Your house is in an ideal site)

F: Cũng nhờ trời cả. May hơn khôn thôi.
(It is all thanks to God. Luck helps more than wisdom.)

(Pham, 2014, p. 170)

Pham (2014) interpreted such a strategy as a way of deflection, as the complimentee found it inappropriate to accept or reject the compliment. Some CR studies in other languages that used different methods of data collection, such as DCTs (e.g., Tang & Zhang, 2009), role-play (e.g., Cheng, 2011), or field observation (e.g., Holmes, 1988) have classified the credit shift (e.g., ‘I got it from my mom’, ‘My mother knitted it’) into the category of Evade/Deflection. However, the present study in analyzing CRs based on the speakers’ reported feelings found that ‘credit shift’ was more often associated with the speakers’ positive feelings. As illustrated in the following examples, the speakers (SM11, NM4) shifted the praise to the complimenter.

SM11: [Im lặng] Tất cả là nhờ anh đó.
(‘[Silent] All is thanks to you.’)

“Em vui nhưng muốn tỏ ra khiêm tốn một chút.”
(‘I am happy but I want to appear humble a little bit.’)

NM4: [Im lặng] Cảm ơn anh. Là do em có một người thầy dạy tốt.
(‘[silent] Thank you. It’s because I have a good teacher.’)
“Được khen thấy vui và sẽ cố gắng đạt được mục đích tốt hơn. Tuy nhiên em vẫn muốn khiêm tốn khi trả lời.”

(‘I feel happy when being complimented and I will strive to achieve better goals. However, I still want to be humble in my response.’)

The comments indicate that SM11 and NM4 felt happy about the compliment but these speakers wanted to be humble in the response.

Most prior research has analyzed CRs without considering the speakers’ reported feelings about compliments in the contexts in which they occur, so any thank-you or agreement tokens such as ‘uh ah’ has been more often interpreted as an acceptance (e.g., Yu, 2003; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Cheng & Yang, 2010; Tran, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Guo et al., 2012), for example:

A1: Thank you! I like it, too! (Yu, 2003, p. 1689)
A2: Thank you for your compliment! (Cheng & Yang, 2010, p. 1956)
A3: Thank you very much! Not too bad yourself. (Tran, 2010, p. 109)

This present study found that ‘thank-you’ and agreement tokens like ‘uh ah’ meant different things, depending on the response sequences and speakers’ reported feelings about the compliments. For example, ‘uh ah’ (NF12), an emotionless return thank-you (NF10), and a courteous thank-you (NF2) were reported to be strategies that help to disguise the receivers’ lack of interest in the congratulation compliment:

NF12: Uh Ah.

“Uh ah cho qua chuyện vì em biết đây chỉ là khen xã giao không thật lòng.”
(‘Uh ah to let it go as I know this is only a congratulation compliment, not sincere at all.’)

NF10: Cảm ơn. Chị cũng xinh vậy.
(‘Thank you. You are pretty too, sister.’)

“Vì đây là buổi lễ khai trương nên khi có khách mời đến họ nhìn mình thấy thiện cảm, ấn tượng nên khen thì ít nhất mình cũng phải đáp lại và khen lại ạ chứ thật ra em cũng không thích lời khen này.” (‘As this is an opening ceremony, when the guests come seeing me and feel good and impressed by my appearance, at least I have to reply and return them a similar compliment. I honestly don’t like this compliment.’)

NF2: [Cười] Cám ơn chị. Mời chị vào trong. ([Smile]. Thank you, sister. Please come in.)

“Em không thích nhưng muốn tỏ ra thân thiện khách khí.” (‘I’m not interested but want to appear friendly and polite.’)

In other cases, ‘thank-you’ indicates that the speakers found comfort in the compliment. As we can see in the following examples, SM6 and SM10 reported that they felt a lot happier and much more comforted when receiving the encouragement compliment.

SM6: [Im lặng] Cám ơn em. Anh sẽ cố gắng hơn.
([silent] Thank you. I’ll try harder.)

“Em thấy vui hơn vì đang buồn có người khen nên thấy an ủi hơn.”

(‘I feel happier because when I am sad, a compliment makes me feel more comforted.’)

SM10: Cám ơn em [Im lặng]
(‘Thank you [silent]’)

“Khi buồn người khác khen sẽ vui hơn.”

(‘When I am sad, if somebody compliments me, then I will feel a lot happier.’)

The present study showed that ‘thank-you’ and agreement tokens like ‘uh ah’ could be associated with both positive and negative feelings. Depending on the speakers’ reported feelings in compliment scenarios, we may have different interpretations for ‘thank-you’ and agreement tokens.

‘Smile’ has been more frequently interpreted as a positive non-verbal response which indicates an acceptance in previous studies (e.g., Mustapha, 2011; Yu, 2003; Lee, 2009).

However, this present study showed that ‘smile’, on the one hand, was associated with positive feelings, but on the other hand could support negative feelings. Positively, the following examples illustrate that ‘smile’ may signify the speaker’s pleasure (e.g., NF17) or feelings of

shyness (e.g., SF10). As commented, SF10 was happy about the compliment; however, she was shy and so decided not to say anything in addition to smiling.

NF17: [Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Thấy vui khi được cô lễ tân khen nhiều như vậy.”

(‘Feel happy when the receptionist compliments me that much.’)

SF10: [Cười nhẹ] (‘[smile slightly]’)

“Em hơi ngại ngùng một chút. Trong lòng rất sướng nhưng không nói ra.”

(‘I am a little shy. In my heart I feel very happy but I don’t say it out.’)

On the other hand, ‘smile’ could support negative feelings like ‘pretend interest’ (e.g., NF14), embarrassment (e.g., NM11), or no feelings (e.g., SM16) about the compliment. Given that the flattery compliment was not sincere and its purpose was to butter someone up, NF14 chose to smile as a way to disguise their lack of interest in the compliment.

NF14:[Cười] (‘[Smile]’)

“Cười tỏ ra vui vẻ bên ngoài nhưng trong lòng không thích đâu vì biết họ đang khen để nịnh nọt thôi. Lời khen không thật nên không thích. Em không thích khen kiểu nịnh nọt như vậy.”

(‘Smile to appear happy outside but inside I don’t like it, because I know they are complimenting to flatter me. The compliment is not sincere, so I don’t like it. I don’t like such flattery compliments.’)

Situated in the context of the joking compliment, NM11 reported that he has never been in such a situation before. He was feeling embarrassed when being complimented as in this situation.

NM11: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em sẽ không làm để được khen như thế này được. Em chưa bao giờ rơi vào tình huống thế này.”

(‘I won’t let myself be complimented like this. I have never been in such a situation before.’)

SM16: [Cười] (‘[smile]’)

“Em thấy lời khen này chỉ nhằm động viên nhau. Em cũng không có cảm giác gì nhiều với

lời khen này nên em nghĩ không cần phải trả lời. Chỉ cười thôi là đủ rồi.”

(‘I think the purpose of this compliment is to encourage each other. I don’t have any feelings about the compliment, so I don’t need to respond to it. Just smiling is enough.’)

In the context of the encouragement compliment, SM16 chose to smile in reaction to the compliment because such a compliment did not require a response. A smile was supposed to be enough for this speaker in this situation.

To sum up, the findings of the sociolinguistic interviews may lead us to the conclusion that one form could receive different interpretations, depending upon the speakers’ reported feelings about the compliment. Assigning a certain semantic interpretation to a certain strategy (e.g., Disagreement as a way of rejection; Thank-you as an acceptance) as in many previous studies (Tran, 2010; Holmes, 1988; Moalla, 2013; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Ruiz & Cuest, 2015) is problematic. Overlooking non-verbal metalinguistic signs and failing to access speakers’ feelings about compliments may lead researchers to misinterpret responses.

Our findings have implications for developing a different analysis framework for CRs. Previous CR studies have put an emphasis on people’s actual performance and categorizations of CRs according to formal meanings of speech and linguistic forms of responses (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Zhang, 2013; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Danziger, 2018). As we discussed in section 2.2.2, there remain numerous problems associated with such existing CR taxonomies. The findings of the present study showed that functional aspects of compliments and responses interpreted based on the speakers’ reports about the compliments could help to interpret the responses more appropriately. Thus, the findings of the present study may contribute to building a new analytical framework for this speech act that would mainly focus on speakers’ feelings in specific language contexts.

6.3. CRs in Talk Show Discourse

As discussed in section 6.2, people's reported behavior through sociolinguistic interviews showed big differences in regional and gender variation. However, in the context of TV show settings, we did not find regional and gender variation across all contexts. This section aims to further discuss those findings in relation to context and regional variation, and context and gender variation.

6.3.1. Context and Regional Variation

The purpose of this section is to further discuss and interpret the influence of context on regional variation in Vietnamese CRs. The section aims to find an answer to Research Question 4 *What does the context of the show “Vui sống mỗi ngày” (‘Live Happier Every Day’) tell us about regional variation?*

As discussed in section 5.2, the main focus of the show “*Vui sống mỗi ngày*” (‘*Live Happier Every Day*’) was about beauty and living a happy life, so most of the compliments given in this show, as could be expected, were direct compliments addressing guests that mainly concerned appearance. The indirect compliments not addressing guests were very small in number (see section 6.1.2 for a detailed discussion). As could be expected, there was very little regional variation in the context of this show.

First, the results showed that Acknowledgment was the most dominant CR pattern in the context of this show (see Figs 5.1 and 5.2 in section 5.2.1). The tendency was for the females in both regions to respond to direct compliments nonverbally. For indirect compliments, we mostly could not observe the guests' reactions, which was mentioned in section 6.4 as one of the serious drawbacks in the present study. In this show, we found that most of the responses were

nonverbal (see Table 5.1 in section 5.2.1.1 and Table 5.2 in section 5.2.1.2). This finding conforms to the expectation of an appropriate response in the context of this show where the female host mainly used the compliments as the preface to a question in the show. Thus, it came as no surprise that most of the responses were non-verbal in order to not interrupt the host's ongoing action.

Pham's (2012) study about compliments and CRs among Vietnamese celebrities with their fans via online interaction found that Vietnamese celebrities had a tendency to accept compliments. The present study that investigated CRs in a TV show setting pointed out a contrasting and distinctive result. In a public setting like this TV show, explicitly accepting or rejecting compliments was considered not 'polite' or 'modest' in Vietnamese culture, so a good tendency was for the female guests in both regions to acknowledge the compliments nonverbally, as an expression of modesty (Leech, 1983) and also as a right way to avoid threatening the host's face. This current finding was completely appropriate in this media discourse setting where the job of the host was to compliment the guest and the guest's dilemma was to give a response that must satisfy both the host and millions of fans watching the show across the country. Rejecting the compliments would probably threaten the complimenter's face and upset millions of fans, but explicitly accepting the compliments would damage the guest's self-image (e.g., 'modesty' image) in public. Thus, the finding that the guests in both regions acknowledged the compliments nonverbally was supposed to be the most appropriate response in such a TV show setting.

Second, the results showed that a great number of the nonverbal responses made by the female guests in both the South and the North clearly supported an acknowledgment as an acceptance. The nonverbal responses that were ambiguous and could be given different

interpretations were small in number. These findings correspond to expectations in the context of this TV show setting. As we discussed in section 5.2, most of the compliments given in this show were direct person-to-person compliments and the topics of the compliments were closely associated with the theme of the show that concerned beauty and appearance, so it was no surprise that the female guests in both regions acknowledged the compliments. Vietnamese culture allows the Vietnamese to give and receive compliments as long as those compliments are appropriate to the situation. The term ‘situation’ puts certain constraints on the topics of compliments in Vietnamese. In Spanish, a compliment on physical appearance may be seen as a sexual lead-on or a type of flirtation (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001), so such compliments are expected to be initiated only by Spanish males. In Tunisian Arabic culture, females are supposed to be envious of each other. Thus, a compliment about physical appearance (e.g., big beautiful eyes) from females may be believed to bring evil to other females (Moalla, 2013). However, Vietnamese people follow the tradition “trai tài, gái sắc” (‘men talented, women beautiful’), and so would appreciate compliments on men’s talent and women’s beauty (Nguyen, 2007). More specifically, the Vietnamese were keen on compliments on physical appearance (e.g., white skin, eyes, hair, clothes) through several old sayings in Vietnamese culture such as “cái răng cái tóc là gốc con người” (‘hair and teeth are human’s root’), or “nhất dáng nhì da thứ ba là tóc” (‘first figure, second skin, third hair’). As the compliments given in this TV show were between women and associated with those favorite topics among women, it was not surprising that a high number of the nonverbal responses made by the female guests in both the South and the North did support an acknowledgment as an acceptance. It may also account for the present finding that only a small number of the nonverbal behaviors made by the female guests in both regions were ambiguous.

6.3.2. Context and Gender Variation

This section further discusses and interprets the influence of context on gender variation in Vietnamese CRs. The section aims to find an answer to Research Question 5 *What does the context of the show “Chuyện của sao” (‘Story of Stars’) tell us about gender variation?*

As discussed in section 5.3, the main theme of the show “*Chuyện của sao*” (‘*Story of Stars*’) revolves around general stories of stars that often focus on performance, ability, and recent achievements rather than appearance. Thus, most of the compliments given in this show, as could be expected, were indirect compliments and mainly centered on such topics as recent achievements of guests or around outstanding performance of guests (see section 6.1.2 for a detailed discussion). In the context of this show, we were able to see very little gender variation.

First, it is worth noting that Acknowledgment was the most frequently used strategy by both genders. In this show, we found that most of the responses were nonverbal (see Table 5.3 in section 5.3.1.1 and Table 5.4 in section 5.3.1.2). This result came as no surprise as in this show the host mainly used the compliments as conversation strategies or as the preface to a follow-up question. Thus, it was little wonder that most of the responses were nonverbal in order to not interrupt the host’s ongoing action. This response tendency also conforms to conventional expectations rooted in this TV show setting which in Vietnamese culture, can be seen more as a ‘formal’ and ‘serious’ talk rather than an entertaining talk as in many English-speaking cultures. Moreover, though this show has no physical participation of audience members at the studio, it has millions of viewers from online or on TV. Accordingly, explicitly rejecting or accepting the compliments was considered not an appropriate response in this public setting. Nonverbally acknowledging the compliments perfectly conforms to expectations of an appropriate response in this TV show setting. Rejecting compliments or responding to the compliments negatively could

be viewed as a possible threat to the complimenter's face and would damage the guest's image in front of millions of fans, whereas verbally agreeing with the compliments on performance and achievements in such a setting was seen as not appropriate in Vietnamese culture. Hence, possibly to save the host's face and enhance their self-image, and also probably to show modesty, and most importantly probably to be safe as well, both the male and the female guests tended to acknowledge the compliments nonverbally. The current findings were completely appropriate in this particular setting.

Second, we found that a great number of the nonverbal responses made by both the male and the female guests were ambiguous (see Table 5.4 in section 5.3.1.2), although the difference between the males ($n=9$, 90%) and the females ($n=2$, 40%) are dramatic. There were two possible explanations for this finding. First, a great number of the compliments given in this show were not direct person-to-person compliments. Second, most of the compliments in this show were associated with the topic of the show that revolves around performance and achievements, so it was highly expected in Vietnamese culture that the guests including both the males and the females would not explicitly acknowledge such compliments in front of millions of fans. Although Vietnamese people would appreciate compliments on men's talent (Nguyen, 2007), it was still not acceptable for the men to boast about their achievements in such a public setting. This may account for the finding that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by both the male and the female guests in the show were interpreted as ambiguous and could receive different interpretations. To be modest (i.e., not accepting such compliments explicitly in front of millions of TV viewers) and not to threaten the face of the host (i.e., not rejecting immediately), it was of little surprise that most of the nonverbal responses found in the show were ambiguous.

6.3.3. Summary

As discussed in section 6.2, people's reported behavior through sociolinguistic interviews have shown big differences about regional and gender variation in Vietnamese CRs (see section 6.2.1.3 and section 6.2.2.4 for detail). However, in the context of TV show settings, the results showed that there was very little regional and gender variation. Situated in Southeast Asia, traditional Vietnamese cultural norms as claimed in many previous studies (Kieu, 2006; Tran, 2010; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2016) would lead to rejecting or downgrading compliments as a sign of politeness and modesty, which was very much similar to the traditional Chinese culture discussed in Chen's (1993) and Yu's (2003) study. In great contrast to these previous findings, the findings from the two shows indicated that Evading was not common across genders and regions. The guests in both shows tended to acknowledge both direct and indirect compliments nonverbally.

The most interesting finding was that there was a big difference in the way the guests acknowledged the compliments in the two shows. The results for the first show, as discussed in section 6.3.1, demonstrated that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by the female guests in both the South and the North did support an acknowledgment as an acceptance. In contrast, the results of the second show, as discussed in section 6.3.2, indicated that a great number of the nonverbal behaviors made by both the male and the female guests were ambiguous and could receive different interpretations. These findings contribute greatly to our argument in section 5.1 that in different shows we may have different expectations for compliments and responses. The two shows shared some similar features of media discourse and as a result we found Acknowledgment as the most common CR pattern in the two shows. Nevertheless, we still found a big difference in compliment behaviors (see section 6.1.2 for

detail) and CRs between the two shows, due to the particular features and main purpose of each show. Again, our findings in the present study stressed the importance of context in the study of compliment and response speech acts and in the field of pragmatics in general. The findings of the present study lead to the conclusion that what we see in the talk show data could not reflect certain dialects and people's interactions in media contexts were not the same as people's behavior reported through sociolinguistic interviews.

6.3.4. Contributions to Existing Research and New Insights

The responses obtained from the talk show data were distinctive as the majority of the responses were nonverbal. The present study that categorized CRs based upon observation of real language from a discourse-based perspective in the two TV shows, the setting with high expectations for compliments and appropriate responses in public, has suggested different interpretations of nonverbal responses. Our findings provide empirical evidence that one response form could perform more than one function and the same nonverbal responses may have different meanings.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, some studies (Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Cheng, 2011; Allami & Montazeri, 2012) that have attempted to analyze nonverbal responses, usually in isolation or occasionally in combination with verbal ones, have classified certain nonverbal behaviors into certain categories. 'Smile' and its combination were more often seen as positive strategies (Ruhi, 2006; Mustapha, 2011), and so were often put under the ACCEPT category (Lee, 2009; Allami & Montazeri, 2012; Cedar, 2012), as a compliment acceptance and a form of appreciation. If a response consisted of 'head nod' and 'smile', then it would be also classified as an acceptance (Herbert, 1990). In contrast, the non-verbal responses such as 'hisses

to show off' (Mustapha, 2011), 'silence' and 'laughter' (Ruhi, 2006; Cheng, 2011; Katsuta, 2012), or giggling (Cheng, 2011), were more often interpreted negatively as strategies of disagreement or evasion.

The findings of the present study run counter to those claims of previous studies. In the present study we found that the nonverbal behaviors like 'smile', 'head nod', or 'laughter' could support an acknowledgment and an acknowledgment was also meant as an acceptance (see Table 5.1 in section 5.2.1.1 and Table 5.3 in section 5.3.1.1). In the meantime, we also found that those nonverbal behaviors were ambiguous and could be given different interpretations (see Table 5.2 in section 5.2.1.2 and Table 5.4 in section 5.3.1.2). In this case, an acknowledgment was not necessarily meant as an acceptance. Although 'smile' in Vietnamese culture was more often recognized as an acceptance or a thank-you (Nguyen, 2007) and 'smile' in many other studies has usually been associated with a positive form of appreciation (Ruhi, 2006; Cedar, 2012; Allami & Montazeri, 2012), there was not enough contextual information to conclude whether 'smile' in SM1's smile plus head nod was associated with positive or negative meanings (see Fig 5.24 in section 5.3.1.2).

In general, the talk show data set contributes to the recent research trend that focused on collecting and analyzing compliments in certain contexts, especially discussing particular features of the context and how the context impacts the responses. Throughout the chapter, we found that the same nonverbal responses may have different meanings and context does matter very much in interpreting the responses. The assumption that 'smile' was a positive nonverbal response which indicates an acceptance or 'laughter' as a strategy of disagreement or evasion was not always true. Assigning a semantic interpretation to certain types of nonverbal behaviors as in many previous studies was a matter of concern.

The findings of the present study contribute to recent knowledge in the study of compliment and response speech acts and in the field of pragmatics in general. In the present study, we found dramatic differences in regional and gender variation through sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the two regions of the country. In the context of TV shows, we saw very small regional and gender variations. Throughout the present study, we see that the context does matter very much in giving compliments and interpreting the responses. Compliment behaviors differed from movie discourse to talk show discourse. Within movie discourse, compliment behaviors and CRs also varied from setting to setting. In talk show discourse, we could see considerable differences in compliment behaviors and CRs between two shows, which was not only due to the gender of the host but also relied on the particular features or the main purpose of each show. Thus, the findings of the present study may contribute to the recent research trend that focused on collecting and analyzing speech acts in certain contexts.

The findings of the present study may have implications for developing an analysis framework for CRs. Previous CR studies has followed the assumption that one form would not perform more than one function (Holmes, 1988; Herbert, 1990) and so one response token would most frequently receive a semantic interpretation based on its linguistic forms (Lee, 2009; Tang & Zhang, 2009; Chen & Yang, 2010; Cheng, 2011; Danziger, 2018). In the present study, the results of our sociolinguistic interviews do support the fact that one response form could differ in interpretation, depending upon the speakers' reported feelings about the compliment and the scenario the compliment was given. The results of our talk show data make the case stronger as we again found that one form could perform more than one function and the same nonverbal behaviors may have different meanings depending on its occurrence in the interactional context.

Thus, the findings of the present study may call our attention to developing a different analysis framework for this speech act.

The findings of the present study also leave important implications for presenting and interpreting nonverbal responses, often neglected in prior CR research. In the present study, we presented nonverbal behaviors with visual illustrations, which we believe may provide a fuller picture of the nonverbal responses. In addition, previous studies usually claimed nonverbal behaviors such as ‘smile’ and ‘head nod’ as an acceptance (Herbert, 1990; Ruhi, 2006; Lee, 2009; Mustapha, 2011; Cheng, 2011; Cedar, 2012; Allami & Montazeri, 2012), or ‘laughter’ as a way of disagreement (Ruhi, 2006; Cheng, 2011; Katsuta, 2012). An acknowledgment in previous studies was often meant as an acceptance. Throughout the talk show chapter, we found that such a claim was not always correct. Our findings suggest that the same nonverbal responses may have different meanings. The nonverbal behaviors such as ‘smile’ and ‘head nod’ could support an acceptance or could be ambiguous. Assigning a semantic interpretation to certain types of nonverbal behaviors as in many previous studies was highly problematic. Our findings, thus, may have important implications for presenting and interpreting nonverbal behaviors in future research.

6.4. Limitations and Future Research

The present study is subject to some basic limitations. Though our sociolinguistic interviews and talk show data might give us fascinating insights into regional variation and gender variation in Vietnamese CRs, the sample size of the talk show data was still small. To make generalizations about region and gender differences, future research would need a larger sample size. Research on language variation between regions would also be interesting.

Moreover, the present study only focused on people's reported behavior through sociolinguistic interviews and interactions in media contexts. Thus, some of the findings of the present study could be genre specific. A study that uses a different context may yield very different results. Future research may also focus on a different group of informants (e.g., college teachers, poor-educated vs. well-educated people, etc.). The gender of the interviewer (also the researcher) could be a possible limitation in the present study as the gender of the interviewer could affect the way the recipients responded to the compliments. Further study may take this issue into consideration and may also delve into the reasons for those reported feelings and behaviors.

We also admit that the present study used broadcasted interaction, the researcher only has access to what the TV channel decides to reveal. For indirect compliments, the camera occasionally shows only one speaker, so viewers have no idea how the recipient is responding to nonverbally. When the camera shows both speakers, they are inside views from a distance, making it not possible to view facial expressions from time to time. In the present study, we dealt with this in the category "cannot observe" but this might be a serious drawback of this type of data and needs to be acknowledged or improved in future research.

Finally, in the present study, we gave more attention to nonverbal actions in media interactions. A study that focuses on patterns of nonverbal responses to compliments in TV show settings, not on regional or gender variation would also be very interesting. Attention to how participants themselves treat each other's actions and the sequential organization of compliments and compliment responses would make the analysis more valid and possibly contributing to the field. Despite these limitations, we believe that the present study brings a valuable contribution to the study of compliment and response speech acts and to pragmatics in general.

REFERENCES

- Adachi, C. (2011). *A sociolinguistic investigation of compliments and compliment responses among young Japanese* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK.
- Allami, H., & Montazeri, M. (2012). Iranian EFL learners' compliment responses. *System, 40*, 466-482.
- Azman, A. (1986). Malaysian students' compliment responses. Wellington, NZ: Victoria University of Wellington. (Unpublished terms paper).
- Barnlund, D., & Akari, S. (1985). Intercultural encounters: the management of compliments and Americans. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology, 16*, 9-26.
- Becker, K. (2013). The Sociolinguistic Interview. In Mallinson, Childs, & Herk (Eds). *Data collection in Sociolinguistics: Methods and applications*, pp. 91-100. London, UK: Routledge.
- Bieswanger, M. (2015). Variational pragmatics and responding to thanks - revisited. *Multilingua, 34*(4), 527-546.
- Billmyer, K. (1990). "I really like your lifestyle": ESL learners learning how to compliment. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, 6*(2), 31-48.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Cao, M. (2016). Backward pragmatic transfer: An empirical study on compliment responses among Chinese EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(9), 1846-1854.
- Cedar, L. (2012). Teaching American compliment responses to Thai undergraduate students. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 5(5), 393-403.
- Cedar, P. (2006). Thai and American responses to compliments in English. *The Linguistics Journal*, 1(2), 6-28.
- Chen, R. (1993). Responding to compliments: A contrastive study of politeness strategies between American English and Chinese speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 20, 49-75.
- Chen, R., & Yang, D. (2010). Responding to compliments in Chinese: Has it changed? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 1951-1963.
- Cheng, D. (2011). New insights on compliment responses: A comparison between native English speakers and Chinese L2 speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 2204-2214.
- Danziger, R. (2018). Compliments and compliment responses in Israeli Hebrew: Hebrew university in Jerusalem students in interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 124, 73-87.
- Ellis, C. (1995). *Culture shock! Vietnam*. Portland, OR: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.
- Eslami, Z. R., & Yang, X. (2018). Chinese-English bilinguals' online compliment response patterns in American (Facebook) and Chinese (Renren) social networking sites. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 26, 13-20.
- Farenkia, B. M. (2012). Compliment strategies and regional variation in French: Evidence from Cameroon and Canadian French. *Pragmatics*, 22(3), 447-476.

- Farghal, M., & Al-Khatib, M. A. (2001). Jordanian college students' responses to compliments: A pilot study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 1485-1502.
- Felix-Brasdefer, J. C. (2010). Data collection methods in speech act performance: DCTs, role plays, and verb reports. In Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan (Eds). *Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues*, pp. 42-56. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Golato, A. (2002). German compliment responses. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 547-571.
- Golato, A. (2003). Studying compliment responses: A comparison of DCTs and recordings of naturally occurring talk. *Applied Linguistics*, 24(1), 90-121.
- Golato, A. (2005). *Compliments and compliment responses: Grammatical structure and sequential organization*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Gregersen, F., Jorgensen, J. N., Moller, J. S., Pharaoh, N., & Hansen, G. F. (2018). Sideways: five methodological studies of sociolinguistic interviews. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 50(1), 1-35.
- Grieser, J. A. (2019). Investigating topic-based style shifting in the classic sociolinguistic interview. *American Speech*, 94(1), 54-71.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 237-257.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1999). The linguistic and cultural relativity of conversational inference. In J. J. Gumperz and S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Rethinking linguistic relativity* (pp. 374-406). New York: NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Guo, H. J., Zhou, Q. Q., & Chow, D. (2012). A variationist study of compliment responses in Chinese. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 22(3), 347-373.

- Han, C. H. (1992). A comparative study of compliment responses: Korean females in Korean interaction and in English interactions. *University of Pennsylvania Working Paper in English Languages*, 8(2), 17-31.
- Herbert, R. K. (1990). Sex-based differences in compliment behavior. *Language in Society*, 19, 201-224.
- Holmes, J. (1988). Paying compliments: A sex preferential positive politeness strategy. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12, 445-465.
- Hornoiu, D. (2017). Compliments and compliment responses in Romanian conversational discourse. *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics XIX*, 2, 93-108.
- Huth, T. (2006). Negotiating structure and culture: L2 learners' realization of L2 compliment-response sequences in talk-in-interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38, 2025-2050.
- Ishihara, N. (2010). Compliments and responses to compliments: Learning communication in context. In Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan (Eds). *Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues*, pp. 179-198. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Istifci, I. (2017). Comparison of Chinese and Turkish EFL learners on the use of compliment responses. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(2), 14-29.
- Jucker, A. H. (2009). Speech act research between armchair, field and laboratory: The case of compliments. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41, 1611-1635.
- Kasper, G., & Dahl, M. (1991). Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13(2), 215-247.
- Kasper, G., & Rose, K. (2002). *Pragmatic development in a second language*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

- Katsuta, H. (2012). *The role of compliment topics in compliment response* (Unpublished master's thesis). Portland State University, Portland, OR, USA.
- Kieu, T. T. H. (2006). Cách đáp lại lời khen trong tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt: Bình diện phân tích hội thoại [Responding to compliments in English and Vietnamese: A conversation analysis approach]. *Tạp chí ngôn ngữ [Language]*, 1, 32-43.
- Labben, A. (2016). Reconsidering the development of the discourse completion test in interlanguage pragmatics. *Pragmatics*, 26(1), 69-91.
- Lau, T. M. (2021, March). Compliment responses and regional variation in Vietnamese. Paper presented at the American Association of Applied Linguistics 2021 Virtual Conference, Houston, Texas, USA.
- Lee, C. L. (2009). Compliments and responses during Chinese new year celebration in Singapore. *Pragmatics*, 19(4), 519-541.
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London, UK: Longman.
- Li, X. T. (2015). *The effect of Australian culture on compliment responses of mainland Chinese speakers of English* (unpublished doctoral dissertation). Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.
- Lin, C. Y., Woodfield, H., & Ren, W. (2012). Compliments in Taiwan and Mainland Chinese: The influence of region and compliment topic. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44, 1486-1502.
- Lorenzo-Dus, N. (2001). Compliment responses among British and Spanish university students: A contrastive study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 107-127.
- Maíz-Arévalo, C. (2012). “Was that a compliment?” Implicit compliments in English and Spanish. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44, 980-996.

- Maiz-Arevalo, C. (2013). "Just click 'Like'": Computer-mediated responses to Spanish compliments. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 51, 47-67.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and politeness*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mir, M., & Cots, J. M. (2017). Beyond saying thanks: Compliment responses in American English and Peninsular Spanish. *Languages in Contrast*, 17(1), 128-150.
- Moalla, A. (2013). Who is responsible for successful communication?: Investigating compliment responses in cross-cultural communication. *Sage Open*, 1-13.
- Mustapha, A. S. (2011). Compliment response patterns among speakers of Nigerian English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 1335-1348.
- Nguyen, D. T. (2007). *Giving and receiving compliments: A cross-cultural study in Australian English and Vietnamese* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia.
- Nguyen, T. D. (2016). Different strategies in compliment responses between Vietnamese learners of English and English native speakers. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, 4(7), 592-599.
- O'Keeffe, A. (2006). *Investigating media discourse*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Parisi, C., & Wogan, P. (2006). Compliments topics and gender. *Women and Language*, 29(2), 21-28.
- Pham, T. H. (2012). Tiếp nhận lời khen của những người nổi tiếng qua hình thức giao lưu trực tuyến từ góc độ giới [Celebrities' responses to compliments through online exchanges from gender perspective]. *Tạp chí ngôn ngữ [Language Journal]*, 5, 66-76.

- Pham, T. H. N. (2014). Strategies employed by the Vietnamese to respond to compliments and the influence of compliment receivers' perception of the compliment on their responses. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 6(2), 153-176.
- Pichler, H., & Hesson, A. (2016). Discourse-pragmatic variation across situations, varieties, ages: I don't know in sociolinguistic and medical interviews. *Language and Communication*, 49, 1-18.
- Pomerantz, A. (1978). Compliment responses: Notes on the co-operation of multiple constraints. In Schenkein (ed.). *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction*, pp. 79-112. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Rees-Miller, J. (2011). Compliments revisited: Contemporary compliments and gender. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 2673-2688.
- Ruhi, S. (2006). Politeness in compliment responses: A perspective from naturally occurring exchanges in Turkish. *Pragmatics*, 16(1), 43-101.
- Ruiz, H. L., & Cuesta, A. R. (2015). Compliment responses in Peninsular Spanish: Exploratory and contrastive study conducted on women from Madrid, Valencia, Catalonia, Andalusia and Castile-Leon. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 212, 93-98.
- Salomaa, E., & Lehtinen, E. (2018). "Congratulations, you're on TV!": Middle-space performances of live tweeters during the FIFA World Cup. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 25, 132-142.
- Schilling, N. (2013). *Sociolinguistic fieldwork*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidraschi, D. (2014). Pragmatics and ethnolinguistics of compliment: Compliment responses in Novara and Grottaglie. *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 11, 225-239.

- Sifianou, M. (2013). The impact of globalisation on politeness and impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 55, 86-102.
- Tang, C. H., & Zhang, G. Q. (2009). A contrastive study of compliment responses among Australian English and Mandarin Chinese speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41, 325-345.
- Teng, S., Khong, K. W., & Goh, W. W. (2015). Persuasive communication: A study of major attitude-behavior theories in a social media context. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 14(1), 42-64.
- Tolson, A. (2010). A new authenticity? Communicative practices on YouTube. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 7(4), 277-289.
- Tran, G. Q. (2010). Replying to compliments in English and Vietnamese. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*, 30, 104-130.
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (7th ed). Oxford, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
- Woodfield, H. (2008). Problematizing discourse completion tasks: voices from verbal report. *Evaluation and Research in Evaluation*, 21(1), 43-69.
- Wu, H. C., & Takahashi, T. (2016). Developmental patterns of interlanguage pragmatics in Taiwanese EFL learners: Compliments and compliment responses. *Asian EFL Journal*, 18(1), 130-166.
- Wu, L. (2008). *Gender-based differences in compliments in the American comedy TV-series Ugly Betty*. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:224605/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Yu, M. C. (2003). On the universality of face: evidence from Chinese compliment response behavior. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35, 1679-1710.

- Yuan, Y. (1996). Responding to compliments: A contrastive study of English pragmatics of advanced Chinese speakers of English. *Proceeding of the Annual Boston University Conference in Language Development*, 20(2), 861-872.
- Yuan, Y. (2001). An inquiry into empirical pragmatics data-gathering methods: Written DCTs, oral DCTs, field notes, and natural conversations. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 271-292.
- Yuan, Y. (2002). Compliments and compliment responses in Kunming Chinese. *Pragmatics*, 12(2), 183-226.
- Yuhaida, S., Yusof, S., & Hoon, T. B. (2014). Compliments and compliment responses on Twitter among male and female celebrities. *Social Sciences and Humanities*, 22, 75-96.
- Yun, S. (2015). *Covert pragmatic transfer: Intercultural pragmatics among Korean learners of English as a Second Language* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, USA.
- Zanella, M. L. (2017). Investigating responses to compliments by Brazilian Portuguese speaking EFL learners: A contrastive analysis. *Advances in Language and Literacy Studies*, 8(1), 215-220.
- Zhang, J. P. (2013). Compliments and compliment responses in Philippine English. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 13(1), 25-41.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 04/18/2018
Application Number: AS-18-33
Proposal Title: Variation in compliment responses in different varieties of Vietnamese

Principal Investigator: Thu Lau
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: STEPH LINK
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-3377, irb@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh Crethar'.

Hugh Crethar, Chair Institutional Review Board



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Application Number: AS-18-33
Proposal Title: Compliment responses in Vietnamese: A variational pragmatics approach

Principal Investigator: Thu Lau
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: STEPH LINK
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Study Review Level: Exempt
Modification Approval Date: 05/30/2019

The modification of the IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46. The original expiration date of the protocol has not changed.

Modifications Approved:

Modifications Approved: Change title from "Variation in compliment responses in different varieties of Vietnamese" to "Compliment responses in Vietnamese: A variational pragmatics approach".

Change advisor from Steph Link to Carol Moder.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved.
2. Submit a status report to the IRB when requested
3. Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
4. Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the OSU IRB and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
5. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Sincerely,

Oklahoma State University IRB
223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078
Website: <https://irb.okstate.edu/>
Ph: 405-744-3377 | Fax: 405-744-4335 | irb@okstate.edu

APPENDIX B: EIGHT COMPLIMENT VIDEO SCENARIOS

WOMAN TO MAN (-Age)

Video 1. Thank-you compliment

Một người phụ nữ (Lan Anh) mặc đồ công sở đang chuẩn bị đi làm. Thật không may, xe của cô bị hỏng. Cô không thể khởi động động cơ xe máy của mình. Vào lúc đó, một người đàn ông (hàng xóm của cô), cũng đang mặc đồ công sở đang đi đến. Anh giúp cô sửa xe máy. Anh nói anh rất giỏi sửa xe. Vài phút sau, xe máy của cô hoạt động. Bây giờ cô có thể khởi động động cơ. Thay vì cảm ơn, cô cho anh một lời khen.

“A woman (Lan Anh) in business clothes is going to work. Unfortunately, her motorbike is broken down. She cannot start the engine of her motorbike. By then, a man (Hung, her neighbor), also in business clothes, is coming. He helps her fix the motorbike. He says that he is very good at fixing vehicles. Few minutes later, her motorbike gets to work again. She now can start the engine. Instead of saying thank-you to him, she gives him a compliment.”

Man: Ah. Cái này chỉ là bình yếu thôi chứ không có gì đâu. Ủa trong xe ⁽¹⁾Lan Anh có đồ nghề không?

(‘Ah. This is only because its battery is running weak. There is no problem. Do you have the repair tools here in your motorbike, Lan Anh?’)

Woman: Dạ có. *(‘Yes, I do.’)*

Man: ⁽¹⁾Lan Anh cứ yên tâm, mấy cái vụ xe cộ này ⁽¹⁾Hùng rành lắm. Nói thiệt chứ ⁽¹⁾Hùng còn tính mở thêm cái tiệm sửa xe nữa mà.

(‘Don’t worry, Lan Anh. I am very good at fixing vehicles. To be honest, I am going to open a motorbike repair shop.’)

Man: [Bắt đầu sửa xe]. [thở sâu]. Xong rồi đó.

(‘[start fixing the motorbike]. [deep breath]. Finished.’)

Woman: Dạ. *(‘Yes’)*

Man: [Thử khởi động lại động cơ xe, rồi tắt]

(‘[Try starting the engine, then turn it off]’)

Woman: Ah. Nổ rồi kìa. *(‘Ah. It works.’)*

Man: Rồi bây giờ Lan Anh đề lại đi.

(‘Now Lan Anh, you can restart the engine.’)

Woman: Dạ. *(‘Yes’)*

Man: Nhớ nha đề là tay ga nhẹ thôi. Đừng có dận quá là nó bị ngập xăng.

(‘Remember to start the engine by pulling the handbrake slightly. Pulling too tightly, the engine will be flooded.’)

Woman: Dạ [thử khởi động động cơ] Ah. Xe nổ rồi. **Anh giỏi thật đó!**
(*'Yes [try starting the engine] Ah. The engine works. You are very good!'*)
Man: _____.

⁽¹⁾In Vietnamese, the speaker usually refers to himself/herself as his/her name instead of the pronoun 'I'. Also, the speaker often addresses the other interlocutor as his or her name instead of the pronoun 'you'.

Video 2. Encouragement Compliment

Một người đàn ông đang buồn. Anh thất vọng về cuộc sống hiện tại, công việc hiện tại, và tương lai sắp đến. Một người phụ nữ (bạn anh) đến ngồi bên cạnh anh và cố gắng an ủi anh. Cô ấy nói mọi người bao gồm cô ấy nhớ anh rất nhiều.

"A man is in despair. He gets frustrated in his current life, current job, and upcoming future. A woman (his friend) comes and sits beside him, trying to encourage him. She says that everybody including her is missing him a lot."

Woman: Mọi người đang nhớ anh rất nhiều. (*'Everybody is missing you a lot.'*)

Man: Thiệt hả? Mọi người cần tôi thiệt hả? (*'Really? Does everybody really need me?'*)

Woman: Thiệt mà. **Anh vá xe giỏi lại tốt bụng.** Anh cố gắng lên đi, sau này mở một tiệm vá xe, vá thật nhiều xe. Mọi người cũng nhớ anh lắm đó. Bà Tư bán cà phê cũng hay nhắc anh nữa.

(*'Yes, that's true. You are good at repairing motorbikes and are a nice person. Try your best. You can open a motorbike repair shop in the future. Everybody is missing you. Uncle Four selling coffee usually talks about you.'*)

Man: _____.

MAN TO MAN (-Age)

Video 3. Sport session-ending compliment

Hai người đàn ông đang chơi quyền anh trong phòng tập thể dục. Sau một thời gian, một trong số họ (người đàn ông 1) muốn dừng lại.

“Two men are playing boxing in the gym. After a while, one of them (man 1) wants to stop.”

Man 1: Một, hai, một, hai. Lên gối. Cúi đầu. Đỡ đỡ. Okays, tốt lắm. Mình nghỉ nha. Không dạo này đánh khá lắm.

(‘One, two, one, two. Raise your knee. Lower your head. Avoid my shot. Okay, very good. Let’s stop. Khoi, recently you hit quite well.’)

Man 2 (Khôi): _____.

Video 4. Joking compliment

Một người đàn ông (người đàn ông 1, trưởng phòng) mang một bình hoa đến văn phòng của mình và nói chúc mừng năm mới với nhân viên. Một nhân viên nữ ở đó hỏi có phải anh ta mua bình hoa này cho vợ không. Anh nói: “Cái gì cũng biết hết. Nè mà phải nói nha mua được cái bình hoa này rất là khó khăn á.” Một trong những nhân viên nam của anh ấy ở đó (người đàn ông 2) dành cho anh ấy một lời khen ngợi về hành động này.

“A man (man 1, Office Head) brings a vase of flowers to his office and says happy New Year to his staff. A female staff member there asks whether he bought this vase of flowers for his wife (Ms Trang). He says: “Yes, you know me very well, but I have to say buying this vase of flowers is very difficult.” One of his male staff members there (man 2) gives him a compliment on this action.”

Man 1: [cười]. chúc mừng năm mới! [với bình hoa trên tay].

(‘[smile]. Happy New Year! [with a vase of flowers on his hand]’)

[Tiếng vỗ tay] (‘[Clapping]’)

Woman: Cha, hôm nay sếp Phúc ga lãng dữ ta. Chắc mua bình hoa tặng chị Trang chứ gì.

(‘Wow Mr. Phuc, today it is very gallant of you. Is it right that you bought this vase of flowers for Ms Trang?’)

Man 1: Cái gì cũng biết hết. Nè mà phải nói nha mua được cái bình hoa này rất là khó khăn á [bạc cười] *(‘You know everything. But I have to say buying this vase of flowers is very difficult [laughing]’)*

Man 2: Anh Phúc anh đúng là mẫu đàn ông lý tưởng để em học hỏi. Anh đúng là thần tượng của em luôn á. *(‘Mr. Phuc, you are an ideal man for me to learn from. You are truly my idol.’)*

Man 1: _____.

WOMAN TO WOMAN (-Age)

Video 5. Congratulation Compliment

Một người phụ nữ (phụ nữ 1) đang đứng trước cửa hàng mới của mình để chào đón khách vào ngày khai trương cửa hàng. Một người phụ nữ khác (người phụ nữ 2, bạn của cô) đến để nói lời chúc mừng. Khi nói “Em gái. Trời ơi, hôm nay đẹp quá à!”, người phụ nữ thứ 2 nhìn vào người phụ nữ thứ 1. Sau đó, cô ấy quay sang cửa hàng và nói “Hoành tráng quá”.

“A woman (Woman 1) is standing in front of her new shop to welcome guests on the opening day of her shop. Another woman (Woman 2, a friend of hers) comes to say congratulations. When saying “Trời ơi, hôm nay đẹp quá à!” (“Oh my god, today you look very beautiful”), Woman 2 is looking at Woman 1. Woman 2 then turns to the store and says “Hoành tráng quá” (“Very glorious”).”

Woman 2: “Em gái. Trời ơi, hôm nay đẹp quá à! Hoành tráng quá!”
(*Sister. Oh my god, today you look very beautiful! Very glorious!*)

Woman 1: _____.

Video 6. Flattery Compliment

Một người phụ nữ (phụ nữ 1, Quỳnh Lan) đang đi từ cửa chính đến quầy lễ tân. Cô lễ tân (người phụ nữ 2, đồng nghiệp của người phụ nữ 1) gọi cô lại để nhắc cô về kỷ niệm mười năm sắp tới của công ty họ. Cô lễ tân nghe nói rằng giám đốc của công ty họ dự định sẽ tổ chức một bữa tiệc rất lớn vào ngày đó.

‘A woman (Woman 1, Quynh Lan) is walking from the main door to the front desk. The receptionist at the front desk (Woman 2, her colleague) stops her to remind of the upcoming tenth anniversary of their company. The receptionist heard that the director of their company is going to celebrate a very big party on that day.’

Woman 1 (Quỳnh Lan): Có gì mà kêu chị vậy? (*Why did you stop me?*)

Woman 2: Chị biết không sắp tới 10 năm ngày thành lập công ty rồi đó. Nghe nói giám đốc sẽ tổ chức một bữa tiệc thật là hoành tráng luôn. Chị biết tại sao không? Tại công ty mình ăn nên làm ra quá mà, mà công đầu là do phòng kinh doanh của chị.

(*You know the tenth anniversary of our company is coming. I heard that the director is going to celebrate a big party on that day. Do you know why? Because our company is doing very well, the first merit is due to your sales department.*)

Woman 1: [nhìn vào cô lễ tân mỉm cười và nháy mắt]. Công là công của công ty chứ không phải riêng phòng kinh doanh của chị đâu.

([look at her smiling and winking]. The success is due to the contribution of all the members in the company, not only due to my sales department.)

Woman 2: [thở dài]. Công ty của mình là công ty môi giới về nhà đất, đề án, công trình. Nếu mà phòng kinh doanh không đưa được những hợp đồng lớn về công ty thì công ty đâu có ăn nên làm ra như bây giờ. Mà em công nhận đó nha, phòng kinh doanh của chị toàn là nữ mà cô nào cũng đẹp ơi là đẹp luôn.

([deep breath]. We are a brokerage company about real estates, projects, and construction. If the sales department cannot bring many big contracts to our company, our company cannot develop as it does today. I have to admit that the staff in your sales department are all females, and very beautiful.)

Woman 1: [mím cười]. Nè, có mới nói đó nha. *([smile]. Just say something you thought is true.)*

Woman 2: Uhm. Em nói thiệt. Nè trong phòng kinh doanh có chị trưởng phòng Quỳnh Lan là đẹp nhất nè. *(Uhm. I'm telling the truth. In the sales department, the head Quỳnh Lan is the most beautiful.)*

Woman 1: _____.

MAN TO WOMAN (-Age)

Video 7. Admiration Compliment

Một người phụ nữ đang chơi đàn vi ô lông trên sân khấu một quán cà phê. Hai người đàn ông và một người phụ nữ khác đang ngồi trong quán đột nhiên nhận ra cô là một trong những đồng nghiệp của họ. Sau khi cô ấy kết thúc bản nhạc, người đàn ông thứ nhất bước lên sân khấu quán cà phê và tặng hoa cho người phụ nữ. Người đàn ông này sau đó khen ngợi khả năng chơi vi ô lông của cô ấy

“A woman is playing violin on the stage of a coffee shop. Two men and another woman sitting in the coffee shop suddenly recognize her as their new colleague. After she finishes the song, Man 1 steps towards the coffee shop stage and gives flowers to the woman. This man then compliments her ability of playing violin.”

Man 1: Sao là cô ấy? *(Why is that her?)*

Man 2: Tôi cũng đâu biết. *(I don't know.)*

Woman: [Đang chơi violin trên sân khấu của quán cà phê]
([Playing violin on the coffee shop stage])
[Tiếng vỗ tay khi cô hoàn tất bản nhạc]
([clapping when she finishes the song])

Man 2: [Nói với bạn gái bên cạnh] Cô ấy đàn hay ha em.
([Say to his girlfriend next to him] She plays violin very well, honey.)

Man 1: [Bước về phía sân khấu và tặng hoa cho cô gái]. Cô đàn hay lắm. Tôi có thể yêu cầu cô đàn một bài được không?
(*['Step towards the coffee shop stage and give flowers to the woman]. You play the violin very well. Can I invite you to play a song?'*)

Woman: _____.

Video 8. Flirty Compliment

Một gia đình nghèo gồm một người phụ nữ lớn tuổi (mẹ của cô gái), một người đàn ông lớn tuổi (Bác Tư của cô gái), và cô gái tên là Diệp đang ăn tối cùng nhau. Họ đang ăn tối với một người đàn ông là bác sĩ của người phụ nữ lớn tuổi đồng thời cũng là bạn của Diệp. Chàng trai khen ngợi khả năng nấu nướng của Diệp.

“A poor family including a young woman (Diep), an old lady (Mom of Diep), and an old man (Uncle Four of Diep) are eating dinner. They are having dinner with a young man (Diep’s friend) who is also the doctor of the old lady. The young man compliments Diep on cooking ability.”

Old man: Ông bác sĩ ăn có ngon không? (*‘Mr. Doctor, are you enjoying the meal?’*)

Young Man: Dạ, ngon lắm ạ. (*‘Yes, very tasty.’*)

Old man: Vậy hả? Bác sĩ mà ăn ở đây cũng giống như nhà vua mà đi vi hành vậy đó. Ăn tương chao rau cải của người dân nghèo lại thấy ngon hơn là cao lương mỹ vị đúng không? Có biết tại sao không? Bởi vì ông vua ông ăn cao lương mỹ vị quen rồi, ăn hoài riết rồi cũng ngán cho nên ông ăn tương chao của người dân nghèo ông thấy lạ miệng cho nên mới thấy ngon, đúng không?

(‘Really? A doctor like you eating dinner here is like a king is travelling. Eating ‘tuong’, ‘chao’, and ‘vegetables’ of poor people tastes better than delicacies, right? Do you know why? ‘Cause the king gets accustomed to good foods and eats good foods so often, when eating ‘tuong chao’ of poor people he feels a new taste, feeling that the food is good, right?’)

Young Man: Dạ, không phải vậy đâu chú Tư. [Nhìn vào người phụ nữ và nói]. Con thấy ở đây ngon là vì Diệp nấu ăn ngon.

(‘No, it isn’t, Uncle Four [Look at the woman and say] I feel tasty when eating here because Diep cooks very well.’)

Young woman (Diep): _____.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are you from the North or the South of Vietnam? Where is your hometown?
Bạn đến từ miền Bắc hay miền Nam Việt Nam? Nguyên quán bạn ở đâu?
2. Where did you grow up? Is that a city or a rural area?
Bạn lớn lên ở đâu? Thành phố hay nông thôn?
3. How long have you been living in the North of Vietnam? How long have you been living in the South of Vietnam?
Bạn đã sống ở miền Bắc được bao lâu rồi? Bạn đã sống ở miền Nam bao lâu rồi?
4. Are you a college student? At which university are you studying? What is your major?
Bạn hiện có phải là sinh viên đại học? Bạn đang học trường đại học nào? Bạn đang theo học ngành gì ở trường đó?
5. Depending on the participant's responses to the eight situational videos, some in-depth questions in relation to the participant's responses may be asked.
Tuỳ vào câu trả lời của người tham gia trong 8 tình huống video, một vài câu hỏi liên quan đến câu trả lời của người tham gia sẽ được hỏi để có cái nhìn sâu sắc hơn về các câu trả lời đó.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM AND RECRUITMENT METHODS

Adult Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Variation in compliment responses in different varieties of Vietnamese

INVESTIGATOR:

Thu M. Lau

Graduate Student, OSU English Department

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of two macro-social factors (region and gender) on the act of compliment responses in two varieties of Vietnamese, Northern Vietnamese and Southern Vietnamese.

PROCEDURES

First, you will be presented with the eight situational videos containing compliments and asked about how you respond to the compliments in those videos. Then, the investigator will ask a little about yourself and your responses to those compliments. Altogether, this study will take about 30 minutes of your time.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:

There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain an appreciation and understanding of pragmatic changes in varieties of Vietnamese.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include any information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password-protected computer and only the investigator responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed two years after the last publication of these results.

COMPENSATION:

There is no compensation for this study.

CONTACTS:

You may contact the Investigator, Thu M. Lau at the following email address and phone number should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: Thu M. Lau | thulau@okstate.edu | 405-334-9685

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to NOT answer individual questions or withhold any information you don't feel comfortable sharing. You're also welcome to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Recruitment Script

Dear potential participant,

I am investigating the differences in responding to compliments in two varieties of Vietnamese, Northern Vietnamese and Southern Vietnamese. If you are first or second-year college students who come from either the North or the South of Vietnam, please consider participating in this study.

The study consists of one **30-minute interview**. You'll be presented with eight situational videos containing the compliments in Vietnamese and asked about how you respond to those compliments. Then you'll be asked a little about yourself and your responses to those compliments.

In this study the investigator is not at all interested in "right" or "wrong" and would never refer to the results of this research this way. Instead, the investigator is fascinated with how language changes from region to region and the study will contribute to the scientific knowledge of those changes. I would be happy to discuss the objectives of this research at any point before, during, or after the interview.

Thank you,

The Researcher

Participation Information

Title: Variation in compliment responses in different varieties of Vietnamese

Investigator

Thu M. Lau

Graduate Student, OSU English Department

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of two macro-social factors (region and gender) on the act of compliment responses in two varieties of Vietnamese, Northern Vietnamese and Southern Vietnamese.

What to Expect

First, you will be presented with the eight situational videos containing compliments and asked about how you respond to the compliments in those videos. Then, we'll ask a little about yourself and your responses to those compliments. Altogether, this study will take about 30 minutes of your time.

Risks

There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain an appreciation and understanding of pragmatic changes in varieties of Vietnamese.

Compensation

There is no compensation for this study.

Your Rights and Confidentiality

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to NOT answer individual questions or withhold any information you don't feel comfortable sharing. You're also welcome to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include any information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password-protected computer and only the investigator responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed two years after the last publication of these results.

Contact

You may contact the Investigator, Thu M. Lau at the following email address and phone number should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: Thu M. Lau | thulau@okstate.edu | 405-334-9685

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

If you choose to participate: We will need your informed written consent before we proceed to looking at the eight situational videos mentioned above.



04/18/2018
AS-18-33

VITA

Thu Mong Lau

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: COMPLIMENT RESPONSES IN VIETNAMESE: THE INFLUENCE OF
GENRE AND CONTEXT ON GENDER AND REGION

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in English at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2022.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in TESOL Methodology at Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in 2012.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in English Linguistics and Literature at Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in 2008.

Experience:

Rater of International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Test

Graduate Teaching Associate

Writing Center Consultant

English instructor