

THE PHENOMENON OF COMPLIMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK CULTURES

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INGLIZ VA O'ZBEK MADANIYATLARI KONTEKSTIDA ILTIFOT FENOMENI

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Ingliz tili amaliy aspektlari kafedrası

O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti

Toshkent, O'zbekiston

ФЕНОМЕН КОМПЛИМЕНТА В КОНТЕКСТЕ АНГЛИЙСКОЙ И УЗБЕКСКОЙ КУЛЬТУР

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For citation (iqtibos keltirish uchun, для цитирования):

Jabbarov I. The Phenomenon of Compliment in the Context of English and Uzbek Cultures// O'zbekistonda xorijiy tillar. — 2025. — 11-jild, № 2. — B. 86-101.

<https://doi.org/10.36078/1746092356>

Received: February 21, 2025

Accepted: April 17, 2025

Published: April 20, 2025

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Abstract. This article explores the cultural nuances of compliments within English and Uzbek societies, highlighting both the similarities and differences in their usage and significance. Compliments, defined as positive attributions made towards others, serve as essential tools for nurturing social connections and enhancing interpersonal communication. In Uzbek culture, compliments — known as "xushomad" or "iltifot" — embody respect and gratitude, reflecting deeply rooted societal norms and traditions. Conversely, in English-speaking countries, compliments are frequently used in casual conversations to establish connections and convey positive emotions. The paper cites numerous language experts who have contributed to the understanding of this phenomenon while also addressing the challenges associated with complimenting and the social constraints tied to the acceptance or rejection of compliments. Furthermore, it delves into the complimentary expressions found in the works of Oscar Wilde and Said Ahmad, examining their cultural significance during their respective periods. This study categorizes various types of compliments, emphasizing their stylistic features through comparative and contrastive analyses in both English and Uzbek languages. The comparative investigation of compliments in the works of Oscar Wilde and Said Ahmad reveals that Uzbek compliments often highlight moral qualities, whereas English compliments tend to focus on appearance and intellect, with both cultures employing elements of sarcasm and implicit meanings in their expressions.

Keywords: compliments; stylistic devices; linguacultural specifics; cultural differences; speech acts; phenomenon; Uzbek culture; English culture; linguistics; social bonds.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek jamiyatlaridagi iltifotlarning madaniy nuanslari ko'rib chiqilib, ularning qo'llanilishi va ma'nosidagi o'xshashlik va farqlar ko'rsatilgan. Boshqalarga nisbatan ijobiy munosabat sifatida belgilangan maqtovlar ijtimoiy aloqalarni saqlab qolish va shaxslararo muloqotni yaxshilash uchun muhim vosita bo'lib xizmat qiladi. O'zbek madaniyatida "xushomad yoki iltifot" nomi bilan mashhur bo'lgan iltifotlar chuqur ildiz otgan ijtimoiy me'yor va an'analarni aks ettiruvchi hurmat va minnatdorchilikni bildiradi. Aksincha, ingliz tilida so'zlashadigan mamlakatlarda maqtovlar ko'pincha norasmiy suhbatlarda aloqalarni o'rnatish va ijobiy his-tuyg'ularni yetkazish uchun ishlatiladi. Maqolada ushbu hodisani tushunishga hissa qo'shgan ko'plab til mutaxassislari keltiriladi, shuningdek, iltifot bilan bog'liq muammolar va iltifotlarni qabul qilish yoki rad etish yuzasidan ijtimoiy cheklovlar ko'rib chiqiladi. Shuningdek, tadqiqotda Oskar Uayld va Said Ahmad asarlarida uchraydigan qo'shimcha iboralar ham ko'rib chiqiladi va ularning tegishli davrlardagi madaniy ahamiyati o'rganiladi, iltifotlarning turli turlari tasniflanadi, ularning uslubiy xususiyatlari ingliz va o'zbek tillarida qiyosiy va qarama-qarshi tahlil orqali yoritiladi. Oskar Uayld va Said Ahmad asarlaridagi iltifotlarni qiyosiy o'rganish shuni ko'rsatadiki, o'zbek tilidagi komplimentlar ko'pincha axloqiy fazilatlariga urg'u beradi, ingliz tilidagi komplimentlarda esa tashqi ko'rinish va aql-zakovatga e'tibor qaratiladi, bunda har ikki madaniyat ham o'z ifodalarida istehzoli va shamaviy ma'nolardan foydalanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: iltifotlar; stilistik vositalar; til va madaniyat xususiyatlari; madaniy farqlar; nutq aktlari; fenomen; o'zbek madaniyati; ingliz madaniyati; tilshunoslik; ijtimoiy aloqalar.

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются культурные нюансы комплиментов в английском и узбекском обществах, подчеркиваются как сходства, так и различия в их использовании и значении. Compliments, определяемые как позитивные атрибуции, сделанные по отношению к другим, служат важными инструментами для поддержания социальных связей и улучшения межличностного общения. В узбекской культуре комплименты, известные как «хушомад» или «илтифот», олицетворяют уважение и благодарность, отражая глубоко укоренившиеся общественные нормы и традиции. Напротив, в англоязычных странах комплименты часто используются в неформальном разговоре для установления связей и передачи положительных эмоций. В статье цитируются многочисленные эксперты по языку, которые внесли определенный вклад в понимание этого явления, а также рассматриваются проблемы, связанные с комплиментами, и социальные ограничения, касающиеся принятия или отклонения комплиментов. Кроме того, в ней рассматриваются комплиментарные выражения, встречающиеся в работах Оскара Уайльда и Саида Ахмада, и изучается их культурное значение в соответствующие периоды. В этом исследовании классифицируются различные типы комплиментов, подчеркиваются их стилистические особенности посредством сравнительного анализа как в английском, так и в узбекском языках. Сравнительное исследование комплиментов в произведениях Оскара Уайльда и Саида Ахмада показывает, что

узбекские комплименты часто подчеркивают моральные качества, тогда как английские комплименты, как правило, фокусируются на внешности и интеллекте, причем обе культуры используют элементы сарказма и неявные значения в своих выражениях.

Ключевые слова: комплименты; стилистические приемы; лингвокультурная специфика; культурные различия; речевые акты; феномен; узбекская культура; английская культура; лингвистика; социальные связи.

Introduction

An analysis of the phenomenon of compliments reveals intriguing cultural similarities and differences within the contexts of English and Uzbek societies. Although the manner in which compliments are expressed and received may vary between the two cultures, they serve as a significant tool for fostering stronger interpersonal connections and enhancing social interactions.

A compliment is a speech act that explicitly or implicitly attributes a positive quality — such as traits, skills, or other commendable characteristics — to an individual, typically without the addressee responding directly. This acknowledgement is mutually valued by both the speaker and the listener [Holmes 1988: 450].

In the Uzbek language, compliments are referred to as “**xushomad**” or “**iltifot**”, and they play an essential role in expressing respect, admiration, or gratitude for an individual's attributes, actions, or possessions. Such expressions are integral to interpersonal communication within Uzbek culture, as they often transcend mere small talk. Compliments contribute to the maintenance of harmony within communities, promote social ties, and convey a sense of respect. P. Brown posits that since compliments address the listener's intrinsic desire to feel appreciated and valued, they can be regarded as effective strategies of constructive politeness [Holmes 1987: 92].

In everyday discourse, compliments serve a crucial role in English by fostering rapport, enhancing social connections, and expressing shared joy. Depending on the context and prevailing cultural norms, compliments — verbal expressions of respect, appreciation, and admiration — can manifest in various forms. The manner of delivery, content, and level of formality may also differ. Social conventions, interpersonal relationships, and strategies for politeness significantly influence the use of compliments in English-speaking environments.

The act of receiving a compliment can be complex; accepting it may be perceived as self-aggrandising, while rejecting it can be viewed as disrespectful. Consequently, compliments can represent “problematic” speech acts, as they create pressure on the recipient to respond in a socially acceptable manner [Leont'ev 2002: 202].

In contexts where relationships must be developed or sustained, compliments reinforce social bonds by signalling to the recipient that the speaker values and respects them as distinct individuals, thus fostering the growth of positive interactions. This notion is supported by scholarly

perspectives, such as that of J. Holmes, who posits that one of the primary functions of a compliment is to facilitate social cohesion as an affirmative communicative act [Brown 1987: 91–98].

Literature review. Researchers from linguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and cross-cultural communication have significantly enhanced our understanding of how compliments function in interpersonal interactions by examining the body of scholarly work on the topic. Given that compliments are crucial for etiquette, social interactions, and cultural expression, interest in this area has increased.

This article references the works of notable scholars in the field, including Anita Pomerantz [Pomerantz 1978], who conducted some of the first and most impactful studies on compliments, and Janet Holmes [Holmes 1988], who performed extensive research on the influence of gender on complimenting behavior. Additionally, Robert Herbert's [Herbert 1990] investigations into the cross-cultural variations of complimentary expressions, Brown and Levinson's [Brown & Levinson 1987] "Politeness Theory," and Manes and Wolfson's [Manes & Wolfson 1981] analysis of compliments based on their syntactic structure provided a foundation for this research.

Sadikov [Sadikov 2022] observed that in Uzbekistan's communication culture, compliments are mainly focused on internal moral attributes such as generosity, strong family values, modesty, and humility. In contrast, English communicative culture tends to highlight compliments related to intellectual skills, kindness, humour, and wit [Sadikov 1978: 78].

According to K. Ju. Dyakova, in a distinct category of speech etiquette, a compliment is distinguished by the positive traits or aspects of appreciation which encompasses praise for an individual's inner attributes (such as talents, character, intelligence, and spiritual qualities) as well as their external features (like appearance, clothing, and hairstyle) [Dyakova 2015: 42].

Bartosh and Nechaeva stated that a positive way to initiate a discussion when encountering someone is by offering a kind remark to the other person and show speaker's interest in them by giving a little compliment [Bartosh 2008:139].

V. V. Leontiev explored the roles of compliments, flattery, and praise within various categories of speech acts. The aim of the researcher is to differentiate between the similarities and distinctions among compliments, flattery, and praise. Flattery is defined as the intention to praise or encourage the recipient, motivated by politeness or the desire to foster agreement in the relationship. In contrast, a compliment aims to persuade the listener to undertake actions that are advantageous to the speaker [Pomerantz 1978: 82]. Compliments can be categorized into two types: initiative and forced, based on the presence of illocutionary oppression. Additionally, compliments can be divided into direct and indirect types, depending on how the speaker's intentions are conveyed [Issers 2008: 288]. Like other well-accepted linguistic phenomena, compliment words are specific to each and every language that is spoken across the world. This is because categories of reality-expressing techniques that are dependent on language often appear in micro settings.

Compliment words are entirely syntactic and do not originate at the morphological or phonetic levels [Qodirova 2002: 33].

N. A. Ladonina cited in her work that in contrast to speech acts like greetings, expressions of gratitude, and apologies, compliments are not passed down through generations as a component of linguistic etiquette [Ladonina 2022: 177].

Researchers Jeffrey T. Hancock and Philip J. Dunham explored whether children, in this initial stage of communication growth, exhibit a bias akin to that of adults when understanding ironic criticism and ironic compliments [Hancock 2000: 229].

Methodology. A compliment can be made at any point in a conversation and may not relate to the previous discussion. In various settings—such as formal dinners, social gatherings, or workplaces — it is common for participants to pause briefly to offer a compliment, which helps promote positive communication. One of the most striking and vital aspects of compliments in our society is their frequent occurrence [Wolfson & Manes 1980: 394]. When developing a methodology for the topic “The phenomenon of compliments within English and Uzbek cultures,” it is crucial to understand the variations in compliment patterns, techniques, and cultural contexts across the two languages. This methodology, emphasizing the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic aspects of complimenting, can incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research methods. By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, the research will adopt a comparative cross-cultural perspective. This approach will facilitate an in-depth analysis of the linguistic structures, pragmatic functions, and social contexts surrounding compliments in the works of Oscar Wilde and Said Ahmad, as well as their application in both Uzbek and English cultures. In this research article, a comparative analysis of compliments in both cultures is studied, and their distinctive differences are exposed.

This research methodology will involve an in-depth analysis of selected plays by Oscar Wilde and Said Ahmad to contrast and assess their representations of compliments. The objective of this study is to uncover the cultural values and communication strategies related to compliments in both English and Uzbek cultures by examining their linguistic, cultural, and social contexts.

A detailed study of the selected plays will be conducted to pinpoint instances of compliments, the linguistic features employed to express them, and the social and cultural environments in which they are situated. The discourse analysis will focus on the language and rhetorical techniques used by the playwrights to convey compliments, including elements like irony, satire, and humour.

Thematic analysis will be employed to recognize repeated themes and patterns in the way compliments are portrayed in the plays. These themes might include aspects such as politeness, social hierarchy, gender interactions, and cultural identity.

This research will emphasize the similarities and differences in the expression, perception, and utilization of compliments to accomplish

social objectives by contrasting concepts from English and Uzbek literary works.

The examination will take into account the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the plays in order to comprehend how the depiction of compliments mirrors the values and standards of each culture.

Through these research approaches, this study aims to enhance comprehension of the cultural and literary significance of compliments within English and Uzbek societies. By performing a comparative examination of the plays by Oscar Wilde and Said Ahmad, this study will illuminate the changing nature of compliment behaviors and their influence on social exchanges and cultural identity.

Results/Discussion. The literature review underlines significant contributions from linguists and sociolinguists regarding how gender and cultural differences influence complimenting behaviour.

I. Jabbarov stated some problems related to accepting compliments, namely, low sense of self-worth, unnatural self-image, high expectation anxiety, and humble appearance [Jabbarov 2023: 117]. Herbert discussed the comparative analysis of gender-based distinctions in the formulation of English compliments and the frequency of various types of compliment responses. He discovered that compliments from men are typically well-received, particularly by female recipients. In contrast, compliments from women tend to elicit responses that differ from simple acceptance. That observation was part of a larger discussion about the differences in communication styles between men and women, as well as the sociology of complimenting behaviour. His study drew parallels between these gender-based differences and the variations in national dialects of English, especially regarding the purpose and frequency of compliments as speech acts, as well as the different types of responses generated by various uses of compliment formulas in conversation [Herbert 1990: 201].

Compliments are often expected in certain contexts and can arise spontaneously when expectations are low. This spontaneity is enhanced by using exclamative forms, which amplify the impact of the compliment [Manes & Wolfson 1981: 130].

In the analysed two literary works compliments were addressed towards females by males and mostly they are accepted. However, the responses that are given by the two genders are radically different from each other as they include social status and relations between them.

Hebert also made a taxonomy of compliment responses and subdivided them into the following groups in the table provided below:

Herbert's (1986) Taxonomy of Compliment Responses

[Herbert 1986: 78]

Response Type Example	Description	Example
A. Agreement	—	—
I. Acceptances		
1. Appreciation	This refers to the acceptance	Thanks; thank

Token	of the compliment	you; [smile]
2. Comment Acceptance	Here, the addressee accepts the complimentary force and offers a comment related to the topic	Thanks, it's my favorite too.
3. Praise Upgrade	Here, the addressee accepts the compliment, but states that the complimentary force is not adequate	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
II. Comment History	Comment Acceptance. However, the difference is that the comments here are impersonal, shifting the force of the compliment from the addressee	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.
III. Transfers 1. Reassignment	Here, the addressee accepts the compliment but transfers the complimentary force to a third person	My brother gave it to me.
2. Return	The addressee here agrees with the compliment assertion, but returns the complimentary force to the speaker	So's yours
B. Nonagreement I. Scale Down	The addressee here doesn't agree with the compliment, pointing some flaw in the object complimented or stating that the praise is an overstatement	It's really quite old.
II. Question	The addressee here questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of the compliment	Do you really think so?
III. Nonacceptances 1. Disagreement	The addressee here claims that the object is not worth complimenting	I hate it.
2. Qualification	The addressee here also shows disagreement, but it is weaker in that the recipient qualifies the addresser's claim using though, but, well, etc.	It's all right, but Len's is nicer.
IV. No Acknowledgement	Here, the addressee seems unaware of the compliment and responds by giving either an irrelevant response or no response.	[silence]
C. Other Interpretations I. Request Interpretation	Here, the addressee, deliberately or not, interprets the speech act not as a compliment but rather as a request	Do you want to borrow this one too?

I. Jabbarov researched on the works of Oscar Wilde's "Importance of being Earnest" and "An Ideal Husband" and found different lexical markers, mostly adjectives which are *smart, short-sighted, perfect, generous, forgiving, charming, modern, morbid, best, pretty, marvellous, nice, sweet, refined, extraordinary, perfect, impetuous, sweet, great, delightful, clever, secretive, noble, highest, kind, trivial, romantic, horrid, unnatural, genius, beautiful, thoughtful, extravagant, sensible, ideal, younger, right, wilful, simple, suitable, adverbs: quite, very, remarkably, perfectly, wonderfully, comparatively, extremely, charmingly, immensely* [Jabbarov 2023: 199].

With a focus on their linguistic forms and social contexts, the methodology proposes a comparative study of compliments found in the writings of Said Ahmad and Oscar Wilde. While both cultures utilize compliments as a means of expressing gratitude, the findings indicate a divergence in focus; English compliments tend to emphasize intelligence and attractiveness, whereas Uzbek compliments are more inclined to highlight moral attributes. The conducted research revealed that compliments in both languages predominantly target women, particularly regarding their appearance, personality, and intellectual capabilities. O. Wilde and S. Ahmad are recognized for their satirical employment of complimentary remarks in their works, and in this study, we examine the linguacultural and pragmatic characteristics along with their translation between English and Uzbek in the plays "The Importance of Being Earnest" and "Kelinlar qo'zg'oloni". We will analyse specific compliments from the aforementioned works and compile a table categorising them by type.

Here are some complimentary statements:

ALGERNON.

*[To Gwendolen.] Dear me, you **are smart!***

GWENDOLEN.

I am always smart! Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

JACK.

*You're **quite perfect**, Miss Fairfax.*

GWENDOLEN.

Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions [Wilde 2024: 312].

The term "**smart**" emphasizes Algernon's love for intelligence, style, and social skills in the aforementioned sentence. "**Dear me**" conveys a sense of surprise and sincere gratitude. The statement is straightforward and clear, demonstrating honesty and urgency. Gwendolen used a praise upgrade compliment response which means that the compliment she received was not enough and the rhetorical question "**Am I not?**" shows her need for confirmation and invites approval. Her focus on being "always smart" in the response emphasizes how Victorian society expected women to keep a pleasing look in that period. Below there are given detailed analyses of the given statements in terms of lexical, syntactical, and pragmatic aspects.

Lexical: "**Developments**": This word here implies personal growth and change. The irony of Gwendolen's response is that she immediately rejects the notion of being "**perfect**," as it would stifle her ability to evolve.

“Many directions”: This phrase suggests that Gwendolen sees herself as dynamic and ever-evolving, emphasizing her ambition and desire for progress.

Syntactical: The sentence structure is complex, with a mix of declarative and hypothetical phrasing (“*I hope I am not that,*” “*It would leave no room*”), which adds an air of sophistication to Gwendolen’s character. The use of “*I intend to develop*” suggests a personal agency that gives her an aura of modernity and ambition.

Pragmatic: Modesty and Self-Promotion: Gwendolen’s response is a form of modesty, though it simultaneously highlights her belief in her own potential for growth. She indirectly suggests that she is too important or multifaceted to be perfect, and that perfection would limit her opportunities for self-improvement.

JACK.

Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

GWENDOLEN.

*Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an **irresistible fascination**. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you [Wilde 2024: 315].*

The phrase “**irresistible fascination**” is a hyperbolic compliment that emphasises Gwendolen’s admiration of Jack, and the word “indifferent” shows that her feelings were even stronger before they met. Gwendolen’s ability to eloquently convey her feelings in the complicated sentence structure helps to preserve her self-possession and control. The syntax of the dialogue is structured to emphasize wit and irony through the manipulation of sentence length, punctuation, and word placement:

Inversion for emphasis: The sentence “*Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you*” by Jack is both comically awkward and meaningful. The repetition and broken syntax reflect his nervousness and self-consciousness, as he tries to express admiration while stumbling.

Parallelism: Gwendolen’s line “*Yes, I am quite well aware of the **fact***” mimics the formal speech of her class, reinforcing her self-assurance and pride.

JACK.

Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don’t much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don’t think the name suits me at all.

GWENDOLEN.

*It suits you perfectly. It is a **divine name**. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations.*

JACK.

Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, a charming name [Wilde 2024: 320].

In this example, we can see the scale-down compliment response in Jack’s statement as Gwendolen used the “**divine**” for the description of the name Ernest which transforms the ordinary to a higher degree of beauty or greatness. However, Jack thinks that there are other nicer names that show

the importance of names in Victorian society, which is mostly underscored as they carry social implications. In Gwendolen's statement, words like "*perfectly*," "*divine*," and "*music*" suggest an idealization of the name and the phrase "*produces vibrations*" shows a feeling of emotional connection of the addresser towards the addressee. On the syntactical side, there are some structures used.

Parenthetical interruptions: Jack's phrasing "*I don't think the name suits me at all*" is an instance of an informal or parenthetical structure within otherwise formal dialogue, showcasing his discomfort and lack of confidence in the conversation.

In the stylistic point of view, we can see some usage of stylistic devices.

Exaggeration: Gwendolen's over-the-top description of the name "*Ernest*" as "*divine*" and capable of producing "*vibrations*" reflects Wilde's satirical style. This playful exaggeration emphasizes the absurdity of how seriously the characters take themselves.

Formal Register and Understatement: Jack's remark "*I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names*" is a casual undercut to the romanticized version of the name "*Ernest*" that Gwendolen holds. His understated, almost dismissive tone contrasts sharply with her dramatic reverence.

JACK.

*I will take very good care you never do. She is **excessively pretty**, and she is only just eighteen.*

ALGERNON.

*Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an **excessively pretty** ward who is only just eighteen?*

JACK.

Oh! One doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister [Wilde 2024: 325].

The complimentary phrase "*excessively pretty*" highlights an over-the-top standard of attractiveness, showcasing societal expectations. Also this choice emphasizes a quality that is almost exaggerated, aligning with the play's satirical tone. The expression "*only just eighteen*" highlights both youth and naivety. The emphasis on attractiveness and youth embodies the Victorian values related to femininity and desirability.

ALGERNON.

*Lane, you're a **perfect pessimist**.*

LANE.

I do my best to give satisfaction, sir [Wilde 2024: 329].

In this example, the word "*perfect*" is used ironically since it usually suggests perfection, but when paired with "*pessimist*", it takes on a negative implication. This contrast emphasizes the addresser's cleverness. The addresser's remark serves as both praise and criticism, indicating that although the addressee's pessimism is recognized, it is also appreciated to some extent for its steadiness. The addressee's response emphasizes the relationship between servant and master, illustrating his understanding of social roles. The given statements will be analysed in detail below.

Lexical Analysis: The word “*perfect*” is used ironically, as it typically denotes flawlessness, yet in conjunction with “*pessimist*,” it conveys a negative connotation. This juxtaposition highlights Algernon's wit. “*Pessimist*” indicates a person who tends to see the worst aspect of things, suggesting a cynical outlook.

Syntactical Analysis: The sentence is simple and declarative, emphasizing clarity and confidence in the statement. The use of “*you're*” establishes a direct address, reinforcing a personal connection.

Pragmatic Analysis: Algernon's statement functions as both a compliment and a critique, suggesting that while Lane's pessimism is noted, it is also somewhat valued for its consistency. The remark may also serve to lighten the mood, as it is delivered humorously.

Linguacultural Analysis: Pessimism was often viewed negatively in Victorian society, yet Algernon's light-hearted acknowledgment suggests a cultural acceptance of such traits in certain contexts, especially among the upper class. This reflects the societal norms where wit and humour are prized, even when discussing less flattering traits.

Stylistic Analysis: The tone is ironic and playful, characteristic of Wilde's comedic style. Algernon's characterization as witty and somewhat flippant is reinforced through this dialogue.

Komil. *Oyijon, bu kelinchak hali minilmagan toydek narsa, o'zingiz egarlab, og'ziga no'xta solib olasiz.*

Sotti (*o'zicha to'ng'illab*). *Minilmagan emish. Tavba!* [Said Ahmad 1970: 3]

In the example given above, the phrase “*minilmagan toydek*” is a metaphor that serves as a compliment to a third person, which means someone who cannot be controlled or ruled. The metaphor, which reflects societal views on marriage and women's duties in Uzbek culture, implies that the bride has to be disciplined or guided. It exemplifies the conflict in Uzbek society between modernization and tradition. On the syntactical side, the structure is complex, combining a comparison with an imperative tone, indicating urgency or importance. This statement alludes to the idea of controlling or taming something wild, reflecting cultural attitudes toward marriage and relationships. The metaphor suggests that the speaker believes the bride needs guidance or control. The metaphor of a “*minilmagan toy*” reflects societal views on women's roles and the expectations placed on them in relationships. It highlights the tension between tradition and modernity in the context of marriage. The conversational style is informal and relatable, enhancing the comedic aspect of the dialogue. The metaphor adds a layer of humour while also critiquing societal norms. It can be seen in the response to the given compliment's lexical, pragmatic, and syntactical aspects of it. “*Tavba!*” expresses surprise or disbelief, indicating a strong emotional response. The phrase “*minilmagan emish*” reflects a sceptical attitude. The statement is short and exclamatory, which conveys immediacy and emotional intensity. The use of “*emish*” introduces an element of doubt or sarcasm. This response serves to challenge the previous statement, adding levity and a playful critique of the metaphor used. It reflects a common conversational tactic where one speaker playfully undermines another's assertion. The use of exclamations like “*Tavba!*” is culturally significant, showcasing

emotional expressiveness typical in Central Asian dialogues. It underscores the communal nature of conversations where reactions are shared and amplified. The brevity of the statement contributes to its punchy, humorous effect. The colloquial tone makes the interaction feel natural and relatable.

To'xta. *Yig'lamang. Ammo-lekin bilasizmi, oyimning unvonlari qanaqa?*

Nigora. *Bilaman, shaharda u kishini **General kampir** deb atashar ekan.*

To'xta. *Yo'q, shaharda shunaqa deyishadi. Ammo mahallada u kishini **Marshal kampir** deyishadi-ya* [Said Ahmad 1970: 5].

Here we can see the usage of military titles served as compliments such as “**General kampir**” and “**Marshal kampir**” shows an amusing approach to discussing social hierarchy within the community and respect for the elder's status in Uzbek culture. “**General kampir**” conveys familiarity and humour, using a title that implies authority. The phrase suggests a playful view of authority figures. The statement is straightforward and assertive, reflecting confidence in the information shared. The use of a humorous title serves to add levity to the conversation while critiquing societal norms regarding age and authority. This reflects a blend of respect and humor in addressing elders.

Komil. *Oyim taslim bo'lyapti.*

Asqar. *Bu bir taktika. Oyim **arslonga o'xshab** ish tutadilar. Bir qadam orqaga chekinib turib, sakrab hamla qiladilar* [Said Ahmad 1970: 10].

This statement offers a strategy for overcoming obstacles and is a reflection of knowledge and experience since the metaphor of the lion draws on the cultural symbolism of strength that is prevalent in Central Asian folklore. This statement reflects wisdom and experience, suggesting a method of dealing with difficult situations. It adds depth to the character, portraying Asqar as observant and strategic. The use of metaphor adds a dramatic flair, enhancing the richness of the dialogue. The serious tone contrasts with the humorous elements of the surrounding dialogue, creating a dynamic interplay.

Mahkam. *Hakim, sen doktorsan. Bir shisha aroqni olib, qog'ozini ko'chirib tashla-da, lotincha bir balo deb yozib yopishtirib qo'y. Manavi sumkangda kelsa oyim bilmaydilar. Ko'rsalar ham dori deb o'ylaydilar.*

O'rinboy. *Bu masalada **ustasi farangsan**-da.*

Ma'mur. *Obbo siz-ey. Doim shunaqa **suv qo'shilmagan gaplarni** topasiz.*

Mahkam. *Ha, endi, akasi... Ko'pni ko'rganmiz-da. Zarur bo'lgan paytda xotiniga chap berib, arokdan klizma qilganlarni ham ko'rganmiz.* [Said Ahmad 1970: 13].

In these examples, the phrases “**ustasi farang**” and “**suv qo'shilmagan gaplar**” imply wisdom, flexibility and authenticity respectively. The usage of these colloquial expressions makes communication feel natural and relatable. “**Ko'pni ko'rganmiz**” suggests experience and wisdom, while “**chap berib**” introduces a character trait of getting away with the situation.

Farmon. *Iya, shundaymi? Hoy, Sottiniso, dasturxon yoz. Tezda choy-poy olib kel. Bo‘lmasa, o‘g‘lim, men aytay, siz yozing.*

*Kelinginam **biram mo‘min, biram qobil**. Hamma ishni o‘zi qiladi. Pazandaligini aytaysizmi?* [Said Ahmad 1970: 16]

The phrases “**mo‘min**” and “**qobil**” both denote positive traits, emphasizing admiration.

Additionally, the phrase “**pazandaligini**” (cooking skills) highlights domestic abilities, which are culturally valued. The structure is descriptive, combining affirmations with a question, enhancing engagement and curiosity. The parallelism in “**biram mo‘min, biram qobil**” creates rhythm and emphasis. This statement serves to praise the bride while inviting further discussion about her skills, reflecting cultural values around marriage. The focus on domestic skills aligns with traditional views on gender roles in Central Asian societies. This reflects societal expectations regarding women and their contributions to family life.

In the table below there is a breakdown of complimentary statements into specific categories:

Name of the works	Compliments to appearance (in number)	Compliments to personality (in number)	Compliments to intellectual ability (in number)	Compliments to possession (in number)
Oscar Wilde “Importance of Being Earnest”	3	1	1	1
Said Ahmad “Kelinlar qo‘zg‘oloni”	—	5	1	—

As demonstrated in the previously mentioned examples, compliments within Uzbek culture primarily focus on personality traits and utilize stylistic devices such as metaphor and personification, whereas, in English culture, compliments tend to centre around physical appearance and typically do not incorporate any stylistic elements. A commonality in both contexts is the sarcastic employment of compliments, which often lack sincerity and carry underlying meanings.

Conclusion

The importance of compliments in social interactions and cultural representation is highlighted through the comparison of Uzbek and English cultures. Though compliments play a role in fostering and sustaining relationships across cultures, their emphasis and usage differ, mirroring distinct communication styles and cultural norms. Uzbek compliments place greater emphasis on moral character and respect, in contrast to English compliments, which predominantly focus on intellectual achievements and physical attractiveness. This comparative analysis

enhances our understanding of the role of compliments in communication, underscoring the necessity of cultural awareness in interpersonal interactions. Recognising these cultural differences improves intercultural communication and strengthens connections among individuals from diverse backgrounds. The nature of compliments and the historical context in which they were used are interconnected. For instance, the works of Oscar Wilde and Said Ahmad reflect the influences of their respective eras. In the Victorian period, compliments regarding physical appearance were particularly prevalent. Often, compliments were utilised to gain favour or to leverage situations that could facilitate the attainment of the desired person's trust or affection.

The study examines compliments in English literature, particularly in the works of Oscar Wilde, which often highlight attributes such as intelligence, appearance, and wit. These expressions reflect the Victorian ideals of femininity and societal expectations. Wilde's use of irony and satire adds layers of humour and critique, while the responses to compliments frequently demonstrate modesty, revealing the complexities of gender interactions during that era.

In contrast, Uzbek culture, as depicted in Said Ahmad's works, emphasizes moral and domestic qualities. Compliments often reflect traditional values, including respect for elders and domestic skills, particularly within the contexts of marriage and family. The metaphorical nature of these compliments underscores societal expectations placed on women and navigates the tension between tradition and modernity.

Both English and Uzbek compliments serve as essential social tools that facilitate communication and reinforce social hierarchies. These expressions carry deeper social meanings, reflecting broader societal values. This comparative research enhances our understanding of the linguistic and cultural dimensions of complimenting in both contexts, illustrating how compliments evolve while remaining central to human interaction.

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