



## Differences of using Compliments in Sichuan Dialect

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**Abstract:** It is a very common language phenomenon that compliments are widely used in social communication. It is inevitable that there will be some gender differences in the specific use of compliments. Through questionnaires, it is found that there are some similarities between men and women in the use of compliments in Sichuan dialect, mainly in their cognitive functions and ways of compliments, but there are also some differences, which are mainly reflected in the frequency and motivation of the use of compliments, the specific content of compliments, the attitude towards compliments, compliments and compliments, occasion and so on.

**Keywords:** Compliment; Sichuan Dialect; Differences

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Compliment is an indispensable speech act in social communication. There are some gender differences in the use of compliments, which has been recognized by many scholars. In Language and Gender, Jane Sunderland elaborates on the specific differences between language and gender and the social reason. In Gender, Language and Discourse, Ann Weatherall deeply explores the differences between boys and girls and between men and women in conversation. She believes that men and women will have different speech variations in specific speech communication, and there are also some differences in the way of language expression used in communication. Sichuan dialect, as a dialect with a large number of speakers, will also produce certain gender differences in specific communication situations. This paper explores the differences between men and women in the use of compliments in Sichuan dialect through questionnaires.

### 2. INVESTIGATION METHODS AND CONTENTS

Relevant data were obtained by questionnaire survey. During the survey, 100 questionnaires were sent out and 100 were recovered. The effective rate was 100%. Among them, 60 were males and 40 were females. The respondents were all proficient users of Sichuan dialect in Sichuan University of Science & Engineering. The main contents of the questionnaire include six aspects: the frequency of compliments used by men and women, the specific content of compliments used by men and women, the words used by men and women when complimenting each other, the attitudes of men and women towards compliments, the differences of compliments used by men and women, and the differences of compliments used by men and women in compliments occasions and specific compliments.

### 3. SURVEY CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. Differences in Frequency and Motivation of Compliment use between Men and Women

There is a great difference in the proportion of compliments used by men and women when communicating. Only 4.5% of the women surveyed often use compliments on their own initiative, which indicates that most women do not use compliments on their own initiative in communication activities. While men use compliments more frequently, the survey data show that 50% of the men surveyed will take the initiative to use compliments to communicate.

Take the popular social appellations "handsome young chap" and "beauty" as examples. 34.1% of the women thought that "handsome young chap" was only a common appellation in communication.

31.8% of the them thought that only when they wanted someone else to call him "handsome young chap", while only 2.3% of the women deliberately called him "handsome young chap". And 80% of men think that the "beauty" is only a general term, and 20% of them call "beauty" when they ask for help from others. Thus, it can be seen that women call each other "handsome young chap" with certain utilitarian purposes. As far as the motivation of using compliments is concerned, 56.8% of women and 60% of men think compliments are necessary to establish friendly interpersonal relationships, which indicates that both men and women pay more attention to the great social role of compliments in communication. 54.5% of women use the word "handsome young chap" as a fashionable buzzword, and 70% of men use it in daily communication because "beauty" is a fashionable buzzword. Among them, 45.5% of the women thought that it was because the men in communication were called "handsome young chap" because they were tall and handsome, and 30% of the men were called "beauty" because they were really charming. This shows that social appellations such as "handsome young chap" and "beauty" have the nature and characteristics of compliments to a certain extent.

### 3.2. Differences in Specific Contents of Compliments between Men and Women

There are also some differences in the specific content of compliments between men and women. The topic of compliment focuses on three aspects: achievement, appearance and clothing. However, there is a certain difference exists between male and female. Generally speaking, the female gets more compliments in the field of personality and appearance, including hair style, clothes and figure. This isn't related with the social status of female. It all depends on the social role of female. Of course, females are accustomed to the compliments of their appearances towards each other. For example:

Hi, Jennifer, you look nice, and your eye make-up is brilliant and unique.

The proportion of women complimenting men' s conduct was 77.4%. The other compliments are sense of humour, knowledge, personality charm, social status, etc. Besides, Men complimented more on women's ability and temperament, both of which accounted for 70%. The other are women's character, knowledge, appearance, etc. In addition, the specific content of compliments between women also includes clothing, cosmetics, appearance, temperament, ability, figure, hairstyle, wealth and children. This reflects that women have a deeper understanding of compliments and the use of compliments among women is wider.

### 3.3. Differences in the use of Other words in Compliments between Men and Women

There are also some differences between men and women in the use of other words when complimenting, mainly in the use of pronouns, interjections, appellations and auxiliary words. 43.2% of the women surveyed thought that women preferred to praise others in the first person and the second person, such as, "Wow, your skirt is so beautiful!" While 60% men preferred to use the third person or non-personal structure to praise.

Interjections are used in compliments to attract attention, including those complimented and others present, such as "Oh, my dear!" and "OMG!". 43.18% of the women surveyed used interjections. 56.82% did not use interjections. 70% of the men surveyed used Interjections and 30% did not use them. Males use more interjections than females.

Address forms in compliments are both respectful and direct. They are usually used between peers or old friends. In terms of kinship terms, it generally promotes the seniority of the other party, and uses them in combination with demonstrative pronouns, such as "this master" and "this old man". There are also generic terms, generally in relatively formal occasions. Among the women surveyed, 43.18% used address terms and 56.82% did not use them. Seventy percent of the men surveyed used address terms and 30 percent did not use them. Men use more address terms than women. Eighty percent of the women surveyed used auxiliary language to refer to factual situations related to compliments, and 20 percent did not use auxiliary language. Sixty percent of the men surveyed used auxiliary language and 40 percent did not use it. Women use more auxiliary words than men.

### 3.4. Differences in Attitudes towards Compliments between Men and Women

The attitudes of men and women towards compliments are slightly different. Women's attitudes towards the use of compliments mainly include thanks (52.3%), appreciation (34.1%), self-

depreciation and modesty (9.1%) and indifference (9.1%). Men's attitudes towards compliments were gratitude (60%), appreciation (40%), suspicion (30%) and self-depreciation (10%).

According to the survey data, men and women have the same attitude towards compliments, and the attitude of gratitude and appreciation accounts for the largest proportion. 9.1% of women took an indifferent attitude toward compliments, while 30% of men questioned were skeptical.

### **3.5. Differences in Specific Compliment Styles between Men and Women**

52.3% of the women surveyed liked to place their complimentary counterparts in the group to compliment them, for example, "You are great bullies!" 22.7% of the women surveyed liked to use colloquial expressions to praise them. 15.9% of women like to compliment through empathy. 50% of the men surveyed liked to compliment by self-depreciation, 20% liked to compliment by empathy, and 10% used colloquial metaphors and placed the complimentary counterpart in the group to compliment. It can be seen that there are great differences between men and women in the specific ways of compliment. Women tend to place the other side of compliment in the group to compliment, while men tend to compliment through self-depreciation. Therefore, women's speech is more in line with the requirements of "politeness principle" than men's speech, more satisfied with people's face needs than men's speech, and more conscious than men's maintenance of politeness.

### **3.6. Cognitive Differences of Compliments between Men and Women**

Both men and women have a high degree of consistency in the recognition of compliments, and both believe that compliments can close the distance between the two sides of communication and open the topic. In addition, 27.3% of the women surveyed believed that compliments could encourage others and exaggerate others' achievements, thus giving people confidence.

18.2% thought compliments had the function of pleasing others, 15.9% thought compliments had the function of greeting, 9.1% thought compliments could repay others' help, and praised each other's behavior and effect. Ten percent of the men surveyed believed that compliments could ease contradictions and divert topics, while 20 percent also believed that compliments could be used to please others.

### **3.7. Differences in the use of Compliments between Men and Women in Complimentary Situations and Specific Compliments**

Compliments are mainly expressed by individual and group compliments, direct and indirect compliments, positive and negative compliments. 65.9% of the women surveyed preferred individual compliments and 34.1% preferred direct compliments. Both individual and direct compliments were preferred by 50% of the men surveyed. The proportion of men and women complimenting positive language on other people's hobbies, expertise and accomplishment is close, 68.2% and 70% respectively. The proportion of using irony to praise someone or something in a specific speech environment and context is also very close, with 31.8% of women and 30% of men. The percentage of women using indirect compliments was 52.3% and that of men was 60%. The proportion of women using direct compliments was 47.7% and that of men was 40%. The survey data show that there is no significant difference between men and women in the specific ways of compliments. The types of Chinese implicit compliments used by homosexuals are as follows: men prefer to use implicit compliments than women, and they prefer indirect compliments around topics compared with analogical methods; women, on the contrary, prefer indirect compliments around topics.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

There are certain gender differences in language use, which is an indisputable objective fact. As an important speech act of human beings, compliment will inevitably produce certain gender differences in daily communication. There are many similarities between men and women in the use of compliments. They always compliment people with a positive attitude of thanks and appreciation. In actual communication, both men and women use certain interjections, appellations and auxiliary words to compliment. Moreover, men and women have the same understanding of compliments, that is to say, compliments have the function of closing the distance between the two sides of communication, so that communication can proceed smoothly. At the same time, compliments also

play a utilitarian role in pleasing and utilizing others. As far as the way of compliment is concerned, both men and women like individual compliments and indirect compliments, and they like to give positive compliments to other people's hobbies, expertise, cultivation and other advantages.

According to the survey data, the following conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, under the influence of Chinese traditional culture, the proportion of women using compliments actively in daily communication is far lower than that of men. In people's traditional impression, women should be gentle and elegant. They should not be too active in communication. Otherwise, they are not stable and reserved. The deep-rooted traditional ideology and culture still have an undeniable influence on modern women's communication. Relatively speaking, men are more active and not bound by some inherent rules of society. Secondly, women have certain utilitarian purposes when communicating with compliments. Taking the popular appellations "handsome man" and "beautiful woman" as examples, this paper draws a preliminary conclusion: a large number of women call them "handsome man" when they want men, while most men regard "beautiful woman" as a general appellation. Thirdly, women's compliments are more widely used than men's, involving all aspects of life. This shows that women are better at using compliments to further improve interpersonal relationships and maintain harmonious and friendly interpersonal relationships. Men, on the other hand, pay more attention to women's abilities, temperament, appearance, personality, wealth and social status. Fourthly, the proportion of women complimenting others with colloquial expressions and metaphors is higher than that of men, while the proportion of men improving others' value through self-depreciation is higher than that of women.

Through questionnaires and individual interviews, the universality of the theory of active community is confirmed. Activity societies refer to groups gathered together to engage in a certain activity. For example, in some specific occasions and group activities, men and women often use more consistent Sichuan dialect compliments to communicate. Compliment a girl's beauty, men and women like to use "好巴适 (hao ba shi)", "好乖哦 (hao guai o)", "乖惨了 (guai can le)" and other compliments to communicate. To compliment a person on his good looks, they all like to use Sichuan dialect words such as "称抖 (chen dou)", "称展 (chen zhan)", "精神 (jing shen)".

The use of compliments has certain gender differences, and it is also related to the specific situation of communication and the specific content of activities. In some specific communicative occasions, men and women have some commonalities in the use of compliments. In a word, through the comparison of the survey data, it is found that there are some differences between men and women in the use of compliments in Sichuan dialect.

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