

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research, including the research background, the connection to the key topics being examined, the objectives, and the expected outcomes.

1.1. Background of the Research

In the present day, the form of social interaction has changed due to technological and communication developments. The online community through social media is the platforms that allows individuals interact. Online platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, have emerged as a result of this development. Related to the online platform for interaction, there is an app called Weverse that can connect individuals, such as fans from different country and their idols. The app allows both parties to send updates and comments, which shows they are admiring each other, and it can be delivered through a compliment.

A compliment is a positive statement or expression that shows approval or admiration for someone or something. This definition aligns with the core functions of expressive speech acts, where the speaker's intent is to express their approval or admiration for something the hearer has done. This function also serves acknowledgment, which creates positive social interaction. It serves a much deeper purpose than simple praise; it also acts as a powerful tool for building and maintaining social connections.

In the context of idol-fan relationships, compliments are a common thing in this kind of relationship; compliments are one way to deliver the feeling of admiration. It is not only about making the idol feel appreciated but also about strengthening the fan's sense of belonging to a community, or in this case, a fanbase. Beyond the surface-level function of expressing approval or admiration, a compliment serves as a potent tool for social bonding, self-esteem enhancement, and negotiation of social status. One examples of delivering a compliment to foster social bonding between fans and their idols is when fans compliment their idol,

such as admiring an idol's performance or appearance, which reinforces the emotional connection between them.

The Weverse app serves as a platform for idols-fans interaction. It was developed by Weverse Company, a part of Hybe Corporation in South Korea (Sejati and Kusuma, 2021, p. 3). Weverse is not only used as a communication platform but also used by idols to provide entertainment content and sell merchandise. Due to these functions, Weverse is currently used by artists or idols, including the K-pop boy group Seventeen. According to Koivukoski (2023, p. 9), Seventeen is a South Korean boy group that debuted on May 26, 2015, with 13 members in total, Choi Seung Cheol or known as S.Coups, the leader of the group. Yoon Jeong Han also known as Jeonghan, Hong Ji Soo or known as Joshua, Wen Jun Hui also known as Jun, Kwon Soon Young or known as Hoshi, Jeon Won Woo, also known as Wonwoo, Lee Ji Hoon or known as Woozi, Xu Ming Hao or known as The 8, Kim Min Gyu, also known as Mingyu, Lee Seok Min or known as DK, Boo Seung Kwan, also known as Seungkwan, Choi Han Sol, also known as Vernon, and finally, Lee Chan or known as Dino. This boy group has a fandom called Carat; as a result, their Weverse community currently has 10 million members worldwide (as of November 2025). The number of fans who joined indicates that there is a large number of fans who want to interact with their idol.

Through Weverse, fans leave comments on their idol's posts, creating a sense of direct connection. When idols share photos, videos, or text updates, fans respond with supportive messages, inside jokes, or heartfelt reactions, often in the idol's native language or their own, which later the user can use the app's translate feature. Each group or artist has their own Weverse page on its own; as a result, only fans who have subscribed to the artist's Weverse account can read and participate in the interaction. Occasionally, idols read and also reply to these comments, making fans feel personally acknowledged. This level of accessibility makes Weverse unique compared to other platforms, as fans feel a genuine connection, fostering a sense of personal connection.

Furthermore, fans can interact with Seventeen's members through features like live streaming, where members share their activities. The group members frequently stream live during meals, commonly referred to as *Mukbang*. This live streaming attracts significant viewers, namely the fans, who actively engage by posting numerous comments in real time. Additionally, fans leave comments on the group's community posts outside of the live streaming. Thus, Weverse posts by the group's members usually have thousands of comments from fans; most of them contain admiration and compliments. The compliments in the form of comments are interesting to study using the expressive speech act approach. The comments Seventeen fan on Weverse is the object of this research due to the noticeable linguistic phenomena within it.

However, several previous studies have also explored expressive speech acts. The first one is research conducted by Kadhim and Ajam (2022) titled "A Socio-pragmatic Analysis of Speech Act of Complimenting, Its Topics and Responding Strategies in Wonder Movie." This research aims to analyze compliment expressions in movies. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. This research focuses on analyzing the contextual factors for complimenting, examining the compliment strategies, and determining the most frequently employed strategies for giving compliments using a socio-pragmatic approach.

The second research was conducted by Lintang Putri Puspitasari (2022) titled "An Analysis on Compliment Expression Found in the Movie Entitled Afterlife of the Party." This research aims to analyze the compliment expression between the characters in the movie. This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method. Additionally, the research focuses on analyzing the linguistic forms of compliments, determining the topics of compliments, and examining the function of compliments.

The third previous research was conducted by Solodka (2018) titled "The Speech Act of Complimenting as Part of the Ukrainian, Russian, and English-Speaking Community: Ukraine and the USA." This research aims to analyze the speech acts of complimenting in Ukrainian and American cultures to inform the teaching of pragmatics to second-language (L2) learners. The research employs

an ethnomethodological approach and seeks to prevent misunderstandings and pragmatic errors by defining the methods of complimenting in Ukrainian, Russian, and American English.

The fourth previous research was conducted by Zhang (2013) titled “Compliments and Compliment Responses in Philippine English.” This research aims to explore the similarities and differences in how compliments are given and received in Philippine English. The research method used is a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and used Yuan (2002) compliment strategy theory. The result show that the most frequently used compliment strategy is the explicit semantic formula.

The researcher has conducted an in-depth literature review, examining undergraduate papers, journal articles, and theses. While many linguistic studies center on expressive speech acts, few specialize in their application within digital communication, specifically in fan-idol interaction. The difference between this research and the previous research lies in the object analyzed. In this research, the researcher used written interaction, namely comments from fans in the Seventeen Community on the Weverse App, as the object of this research.

The application enables the artist (group Seventeen) and their fans, Carat, to communicate by posting and leaving comments on the community page. This interaction occurs naturally as it is purely expressed by each individual. Furthermore, this research primarily focuses on how individual expresses their admiration through compliments and on the communicative event of the compliments in online interaction.

1.2. Statement of Problems

Based on the background of the problem, the researcher formulates the following research questions:

1. What are the compliments expressing categories used by Seventeen fans in the Seventeen Fan App Weverse?
2. How are the communicative event frame in the compliment expressions used by Seventeen fans in the Seventeen Fan App Weverse?

1.3. Research Purposes

Based on the research questions, the purposes of this research are:

1. To find out the expressing categories in the compliments used by Seventeen fans in the Seventeen Fan App Weverse.
2. To find out the communicative event in the compliment expressions used by Seventeen fans in the Seventeen Fan App Weverse.

1.4. Research Significance

The researcher hopes this research can provide benefits for readers studying pragmatics, especially expressive speech acts. The significance that can be obtained from this research is:

1) Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to provide further insight into the study of pragmatics, especially compliments as expressive speech acts in the Seventeen fan community service on the Weverse app. Furthermore, this research contributes to understanding the dynamics of language use in compliments within the fan communities on online platforms such as Weverse and other social media.

2) Practical Significance

This research is expected to give readers and users of online community greater insight into how expressive speech acts function within network communities and to raise awareness of the context within. The result of this research can serve as a reference for future research. In the field of the English Department, this study serves as an additional reference to help improve students' understanding of compliments as an expressive speech act and support further research in this field.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

This section provides several important terms for a deeper understanding. The terms are given as follows:

1) Speech Acts

According to Yule (1996), a speech act is an action performed through spoken words or utterances. According to Austin (1962, p. 45), speech acts represent utterances that perform actions rather than simply convey information.

2) Illocutionary Speech Acts

According to Leech (1983, p. 199), in basic terms, illocutionary acts involve not only speaking words but also performing actions through speech. Furthermore, Yule (1996, p. 48) explains, the true communicative power of the utterance lies in the illocutionary acts.

3) Expressive Speech Acts

According to Yule (1996, p. 53), an expressive speech act reflects the speaker's emotional state. It conveys psychological conditions such as pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow.

4) Compliment

According to Holmes (1986, p. 485), compliments are expressions of positive evaluation that explicitly or implicitly recognize and appreciate something valued.

5) The SPEAKING Model

The main purposes of Hymes' SPEAKING Model, which is part of the ethnography of communication, is to provide a framework for analyzing how people use language in a specific social and cultural context (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 232). The SPEAKING Model serves as a framework for analyzing how social context shapes meaning, revealing the detailed purposes behind interactions (Rahmawati, 2021, p. 93).

6) Seventeen Weverse

According to Milawati (2024), Weverse is an official app used by artists and fans to share content and enable direct communication between both parties. The app provides the latest updates about the activities of artists under HYBE Corporation.

