

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **I.1 Background of the Study**

Language and culture are two interrelated aspects. Language cannot be separated from the culture of its speakers. Language reflects culture, and culture also reflects the language spoken by a community. Through language, we can understand someone's culture and background. With language, understanding between speakers and listeners can be achieved. By achieving understanding in communication, peace and tranquility can be created within a society or small groups within the society, such as the realm of the household. One of the goals of a household is to create harmony among its members. To achieve this, many elements are needed, one of which is language understanding. Language is a fundamental aspect of human communication and serves as a vehicle for conveying meaning and understanding between speakers. However, the way language is used and interpreted is shaped by a variety of social and cultural factors that fall within the domain of pragmatics.

Compliments are a fundamental aspect of social interaction and are commonly used to express positive evaluations of another person's characteristics, such as their appearance, abilities, or accomplishments. However, the way compliments are given and received can vary depending on a variety of factors, including cultural norms, social status, and the relationship between the speakers. One

important factor that can influence the use and interpretation of compliments is gender.

Gender is a significant social and cultural factor that influences how compliments are given and received. Studies have shown that men and women use and respond to compliments differently, and there are gender-based differences in the types of compliments that are given and received (Holmes, 1995; Wolfson and Manes, 1980). Gender roles and stereotypes may shape the way in which compliments are expressed and interpreted, and social norms may dictate the appropriate ways in which compliments should be given and responded to.

One potential source of data for studying gender-based differences in compliments and compliment responses is popular culture, particularly television shows. Television shows are a rich source of language data that can provide insights into how language is used in everyday interactions, and how gender differences are reflected in language use. "How I Met Your Mother" (2005) is a popular TV series that features a diverse group of characters with distinct personalities and gender roles, and it has been noted for its depiction of gender-based differences in communication and relationships.

"How I Met Your Mother" is a popular American sitcom that aired on CBS\Y7K from 2005 to 2014. The show is set in Manhattan and follows the lives of a group of friends in their late 20s and early 30s: Ted, Robin, Barney, Marshall, and Lily. The main premise of the show is that Ted is telling his children the story of how he met their mother, but the series also explores the relationships and antics of the other

characters. Throughout the show, the characters engage in various social interactions, including complimenting each other. Compliments are a common feature of social interactions, and they serve to maintain and enhance relationships between individuals. However, previous research has shown that gender plays a role in the way compliments are given and received. In the context of "How I Met Your Mother," the main characters are all different genders, which provides a rich source of data for studying gender-based differences in compliments and compliment responses. By analyzing the compliments and compliment responses used by the characters, this study aims to explore how gender influences the way compliments are given and received in a contemporary American TV series.

Previous research on gender and compliments has primarily focused on face-to-face interactions in real-life settings. While this research has provided valuable insights into how gender influences compliments, it is limited in its ability to examine the nuances of language use in a controlled and systematic way. This study addresses this gap by analyzing a corpus of scripted interactions from a popular American TV series, "How I Met Your Mother". By focusing on scripted interactions, this study allows for a more systematic examination of the language used in compliments and compliment responses, as well as the context in which they are used. Additionally, previous research on gender and compliments has primarily focused on the English language. This study expands on this research by analyzing compliments and compliment responses in English-language media, but specifically in the context of a TV series. The study also focuses on a specific TV series, "How I Met Your Mother," which has not been extensively studied in the

context of gender and compliments. By examining the language used in compliments and compliment responses in a scripted TV series, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how gender influences compliments in contemporary American media. The study also seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of language in social interactions, particularly in relation to gender.

## **I.2 Research Problems**

The present study aims to investigate gender-based differences in compliments and compliment responses in the popular TV series 'How I Met Your Mother (2005)', in order to shed light on the ways in which gender norms and stereotypes are reflected in language use. To guide the study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. what are the types of compliments strategies that are used by male and female characters in "How I Met Your Mother" (2005) TV series?
2. what are the compliment response strategies that male and female characters used to respond to compliments in "How I Met Your Mother" (2005) TV series?
3. how is the representation of gender-based differences in the selection of compliment strategies and compliment responses strategies in "How I Met Your Mother" (2005) TV series?

### **I.3 Objectives of The Study**

The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how gender-related dynamics are portrayed in language use, as exemplified in 'How I Met Your Mother (2005)', and how these portrayals may influence or be influenced by societal norms and expectations. In pursuit of comprehensive understanding, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. to explain the types of compliment strategies used by male and female characters in TV series How I Met Your Mother (2005). This involves categorizing and comparing the compliment strategies employed by characters of different genders within the series.
2. to explain how male and female characters in TV series 'How I Met Your Mother (2005)' respond to compliments. This includes identifying and comparing the compliment response strategies employed by characters of different genders, shedding light on potential gender differences in responding to compliments.
3. to explain whether the TV series portrays any gender-based differences in the selection of compliment strategies and compliment responses, consider whether the characters' behaviors align with or challenge traditional gender norms.

### **I.4 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is centered on the investigation of gender-based differences in compliment strategies and compliment response strategies within

the TV series 'How I Met Your Mother (2005)'. The geographical and temporal focus is exclusively on this contemporary urban setting, offering insights into language use and gender dynamics within a Western cultural context. Data collection will be rigorously conducted by selecting specific episodes or scenes from the series, ensuring a representative sample. The primary analysis will revolve around male and female characters, by categorizing their compliment strategies and examining their responses to compliments. The study will also delve into the portrayal of gender-based differences and the reflection of societal norms and stereotypes within the TV series, by shedding light on the broader sociocultural context in which these language interactions occur. Employing qualitative methods, including content analysis, the study aims to provide a thorough understanding of how gender dynamics are depicted through compliments and responses in 'How I Met Your Mother,' acknowledging its limitations regarding the series' specific context and the temporal and geographical boundaries of the analysis.

### **I.5 Significance of the Study**

This study holds several important implications. Firstly, it contributes to the understanding of gender dynamics in language use, particularly in the context of compliments and their responses. By analyzing male and female characters in 'How I Met Your Mother (2005),' the study will reveal nuanced insights into how gender-based differences are reflected in these linguistic interactions. This has relevance not only for linguistic research but also for gender studies, providing a lens through which to explore the portrayal of societal norms and stereotypes.

Secondly, the study addresses a gap in the literature regarding the application of compliment and response strategies within popular media. By focusing on a well-known TV series, it offers a unique perspective on how language use and gender norms are portrayed in a widely consumed cultural product. This has implications for media studies, as it highlights how television and popular culture can both perpetuate and challenge gender stereotypes. Additionally, the findings of this research can be applied to sociocultural and communication studies, helping us better understand how language is used to convey gender-related messages and expectations. This knowledge may be valuable for scriptwriters, content creators, and media professionals seeking to develop more inclusive and authentic portrayals of gender dynamics. In a broader context, the study underscores the importance of examining language use in the portrayal of gender in popular culture and its potential influence on societal perceptions. By gaining insights into the language dynamics in 'How I Met Your Mother (2005),' the study contributes to ongoing discussions about gender representation and language use, ultimately enhancing our comprehension of the intersection between language, media, and societal expectations.

## **I.6 Previous Studies**

Aisyah and Intikhanah's study entitled "Transfer Pragmatics: Compliment Response Strategies Employed by English Department Students and Foreign Students (English Native Speakers)" in 2015 showed that there are differences between Indonesian and foreign students in responding to compliments. Strategies used by Indonesian students include acceptance, positive elaboration, neutral

elaboration, negative elaboration, denial, smiling, and no response. Meanwhile, "thank you" or "thanks" tend to be used by foreign students without providing reasons, backgrounds, or more detailed explanations.

Katsuta's study "The Role of Compliment Topics in Compliment Response" in 2012, examines the role of compliment topic by analyzing compliment responses by Japanese and American college students. The results shows a definite progressive relationship between changes in compliment topic and variations in compliment response ratios.

Keshavarz's study entitled "Pragmatic Features of the Speech Act of Compliment in a Turkish TV Drama" (2020) on compliments in Turkish culture focusing on the topics, functions, and characteristics of compliments with reference to the role of gender. The result showed that in Turkish culture, admiration is used to create a harmony in communication with others.

As for the research conducted by Nurhijannah (2021) entitled "An Analysis on Compliment Responses in English among Javanese People", it shows that men and women are more likely to accept compliments, while variations in responding to compliments depend on the topic of the compliments given.

According to Yusof and Tan's (2014) study entitled "Compliments and Compliment Responses on Twitter among Male and Female Celebrities" on compliments and responses in Twitter, there are distinct differences in the way men and women give and respond to compliments. Women are more likely to compliment someone's physical appearance, while men are more likely to praise their possessions. Additionally, when responding to compliments, women tend to

accept the compliment to maintain a positive image, while men tend to respond with comments.

In her thesis entitled "Compliment Responses on Facebook Status Used by Foreigners: Gender Perspective," Choironi (2013) conducted a study on compliments. Employing a Sociolinguistics approach, the research aimed to examine how male and female individuals differ in their responses to compliments on Facebook status updates. The objective was to describe the distribution of these differences in compliment responses.

Nevertheless, based on a preliminary study conducted by Cai (2012) entitled "Responding to Compliments: A Contrastive Study of Politeness Strategies Between American English and Chinese Speakers", it was discovered that Chinese female students are more inclined to receive compliments than their male counterparts. This discrepancy indicates the need for additional research on the relationship between compliments and gender.

Lastly, Morales's study entitled "Compliment Response Across Gender in Philippine Context" (2012), revealed that male and female participants in the study exhibited a consistent pattern in their responses, favoring Accept over Reject and Evade. Both groups showed a preference for two specific types of compliment response (CR) strategies: Appreciation Token and Return Compliment. Notably, males tended to use the implicit strategy of Informative Comment, while females opted for the implicit strategy of Shift Credit.

## **I.7 Writing Organization**

This study is elaborated in four chapters through the following organization:

**CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, previous studies, and writing organization.

**CHAPTER II : THEORY AND METHOD**

This chapter comprises the theoretical framework and research method.

**CHAPTER III : RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter shows the result by providing tables and explanation.

**CHAPTER IV : CONCLUSION**

This chapter contains the inference based on the result of analysis in this study.