Positive evaluative speech acts from the perspective of sincerity criterion

Natalia Bigunova – Chen Shaoxiong – Ievgenii N. Stepanov

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Abstract
The purpose of the article is to analyse the positive evaluative speech acts from the perspective of sincerity criterion. The data has been collected from English literary fictional discourse and feature film discourse. The data includes 1400 literary discourse episodes and 700 film discourse episodes in which personages express positive evaluation of certain objects. According to the results of the research, sincerity should be regarded as a paradigm condition for the felicity of evaluative speech acts. The authors arrive at a conclusion that production of an evaluation speech act may be characterized by a certain gap between an evaluative cognitive judgement and an evaluative utterance. The absence of such a gap is declarative of a sincere speech act. If the gap transforms a negative evaluative judgement into a positive evaluative utterance, the evaluative speech act is considered insincere. The research has shown that a positive evaluative utterance can be caused by the etiquette requirements, by a direct demand on the part of the interlocutor, or by the speaker's manipulative intentions, in which cases the speaker's degree of sincerity can be questioned. Thus, sincerity of evaluative utterances has been defined as an oppositely structured continuum, within which evaluative utterances are located beginning with utterly sincere ones up to those utterly insincere. The utterances that are in non-final points of the scale are considered indefinite according to their degree of sincerity: the reader / viewer can interpret them as more or less sincere judging by the extralinguistic context.
Key words: evaluation, speech act, sincerity, approval, praise, compliment, flattery

Introduction

In recent years, the key purpose of linguistic studies in the field of pragmatics has been identifying the speaker's intentions in a communicative exchange. Quite often, for different reasons, speakers tend to hide their real intentions; sometimes what they say is not what they think: this is where the criterion of sincerity comes to the foreground.

This paper approaches the criterion of sincerity in the context of positive evaluation. According to A. Prihodko, "an evaluative utterance may not reflect fully the entire process of communication and can only represent a definite single step of participants of this communication, which is aimed at achieving a certain (predetermined) target" (Prihodko, 2016: 277).

The sincerity of evaluative utterances has not been among the priorities in linguistics so far, however, the concept of sincerity itself has provoked the interest of a number of American, Australian, Belgium, British, Swedish, Russian and Ukrainian linguists (Trilling, 1972; Searle and Vanderveken, 1985; Plotnikova, 2000; Goddard, 2001; Morozova, 2015; Stokke, 2014; Marsili, 2014; Kivenko, 2015).

It is noteworthy that in real communication sincerity criterion is not evident to the observer. Only the speaker knows whether his / her utterance is sincere or insincere, while the addressee, as well as a researcher, can only guess how sincere the speaker is. However, in the reproduced discourse, such as literary fictional discourse, sincerity criterion is explicit in the author's speech, describing the personages' non-verbal behavior, as well as in the personages' inner speech. In feature film discourse sincerity criterion becomes explicit by means of the personages' non-verbal behavior

and the off-screen voice. Thus, it stands to reason that literary and film discourses have become the data resource for the present research, focused on the sincerity criterion manifestation in evaluative speech.

Therefore, the ***object*** of the investigation is the evaluative speech of the personages of English literary fictional discourse and English feature film discourse.

The ***subject*** of the study includes the sincerity criterion manifestation is personages' evaluative speech.

The main ***purpose*** of the paper is to analyse the positive evaluative speech acts from the perspective of sincerity criterion.

To achieve the purpose of the study the following ***tasks*** have been resolved:

- to provide a positive evaluative taxonomy of approval, praise, compliment, and flattery speech acts;
- to define the concept of sincerity;
- to apply the sincerity criterion to positive evaluative speech acts, produced by the literary and film discourse personages;
- to establish the reasons for sincerity degree variation;
- to classify the markers of sincerity / insincerity in English literary fictional discourse and English feature film discourse.

Material and Methods. The ***material*** under analysis is presented by 1400 speech episodes taken from English literary fictional discourse in which personages express their positive evaluation of certain objects. Another data set includes 700 episodes taken from English feature film discourse in which film personages express positive evaluation of certain objects.

The linguistic analysis of the selected data has been based on the application of the following ***general scientific methods***: the method of synthesis and analysis that promoted the holistic research of the literary discourse; the method of observation that enabled finding out the peculiar characteristics of the investigated data; the descriptive method that was helpful to identify variant and invariant characteristics of the investigated data, and ***specific linguistic methods***: the contextual-interpretational method used to identify the pragmatic properties of evaluation speech production, as well as the component analysis used to establish how sincere the speaker is in each communicative situation of positive evaluation production.

Research

1. The positive evaluative speech act taxonomy

In the conception that N. Bigunova has been working out approval, praise, compliment, and flattery are incorporated in a taxonomy of positive evaluative speech acts whose major illocutionary aim is to express positive evaluation of certain people, things, state of affairs, ideas; while their common perlocutionary aim is to persuade the addressee to agree to the speaker's judgement (Bigunova, 2017; Bigunova, 2018).

Prior to concentrating on the sincerity factor in relation to these speech acts, it seems reasonable to provide their definitions. ***Approval*** is considered a positive evaluative expressive syncretic speech act, its evaluation object being inanimate things, ideas, phenomena that do not refer to the addressee's sphere of interests. The latter fact makes approval different from the other evaluative speech acts. Another difference lies in the fact that approval's recipient and its evaluation object never overlap. Approval evaluation theme is that feature of the evaluated objects, which attracts the addresser's attention. These features are determined by the speaker's evaluative stereotypes and presuppositions. Approval speech act illocutionary aims have been defined as 1) the intention to express the speaker's emotional state by referring to the object's features as being adequate/good, 2) the intention to establish contact with the interlocutor and to make a positive emotional impact on them, 3) the intention to mitigate refusal or criticism and thus save the interlocutor's face, 4) the intention to change an undesirable topic and thus save the speaker's own

face (Bigunova, 2017).

We consider ***praise*** a positive evaluative expressive syncretic speech act, its evaluation theme being the moral and intellectual traits, skills and actions of the interlocutor or a person who is not present during a speech exchange but is praised by the speaker. If praise is aimed at the interlocutor's traits or actions, its recipient and evaluation object overlap. If the person whose traits or actions are praised is not present at the moment of speech, the speech act recipient and the evaluation object are different. It must be taken into account that in the latter case a third person's *appearance* can also serve an evaluation theme. It would be unwise to assume that positive evaluation of the third person's appearance can be defined as a compliment. The illocutionary aims pursued by praise speech act addressers are largely determined by the fact whether the interlocutor and the object of praise are one and the same person. If they are, the illocutionary aims of praise speech act are 1) the intention to qualify the evaluation object's actions or features as being adequate/good and 2) the intention to comfort and reassure the recipient, who is the object of evaluation, as well as to "save his/her face". If the speaker praises a person who is not present at the moment of speech and thus the interlocutor is the recipient of a message, but not an object of praise, praise is still aimed at qualifying the evaluation object's actions or features as being adequate/good, but it also involves 3) the intention to defend the third person, who is the object of evaluation, from the interlocutor's negative evaluative statements.

Compliment is seen as a positive evaluative expressive syncretic speech act, characteristic of the addressee and the evaluation object overlapping. The main fact about compliment is that it is always exaggerated, which is presupposed by the speaker's main intention: he/she wishes to please the recipient by means of positive evaluation of his/her appearance or accomplishments. The theme of evaluation in a compliment speech act is the hearer's appearance, possessions, and accomplishments. The illocutionary aims of compliment speech acts are the following: 1) the intention to show the hearer kindness, to do them a courtesy or to reassure them, which is caused by politeness strategies or a wish to maintain good interpersonal relationships with them, 2) the intention to express the speaker's emotional state by qualifying the evaluation object's features as being adequate/good (the object of evaluation being the interlocutor or the people who are close to him/her), 3) the intention to express gratitude to the addressee for their actions, and 4) the intention to comfort and reassure the object of evaluation, "save his/her face".

Flattery is considered a pseudosincere positive evaluative manipulative expressive syncretic speech act, characterized by forethought, by a certain strategy, and also, by its addressee and evaluation object being the same person. Flattery evaluation themes are the addressee's appearance, their moral and intellectual traits, skills, accomplishments, and actions. The speaker flatters the addressee not being motivated by some feelings but wishing to gain some benefit. The illocutionary aims pursued by flattery speech act addressers who admit to their status or role dependence upon the addressee are the following: 1) the pseudosincere intention to please the addressee, to improve their emotional state by qualifying their own (or their relatives') traits or actions as being good, 2) the intention to persuade the addressee of the addresser's sincerity, 3) the latent intention to gain benefit, material or immaterial, 4) the latent intention to encourage the addressee to do things that are beneficial for the addresser (Bigunova, 2017).

As for flattery, its insincere character is obvious. On the other hand, most linguists claim that praise speech act is invariably sincere, while compliment is said to have etiquette character and therefore its relationship with the criterion of sincerity is open to question. Approval, which does not refer to the addressee's sphere of interests, must, on the surface, be quite sincere, but what about speech situations where it is used to mitigate criticism or refusal? Thus, the sincerity status of positive evaluative

speech acts should be reconsidered. There is a clear need to probe more deeply into this area by examining various types of speech exchange in fictional discourse, which allows the researcher to see beyond the words, to penetrate into the speakers' inner world, to come to know their genuine intentions, which, in fact, are contrived to imitate real-life interaction.

2. The concept of sincerity

In the framework of modern anthropocentric scientific paradigm the theory of speech acts based on the ideas of Grice, Searle, Austin and others occupies its own niche. One of the criteria applied in Speech Act Theory is ***sincerity criterion***. It was introduced by J.L. Austin who claimed that effectiveness of a speech act is achieved if it fulfills certain felicity conditions. One of these conditions is speaker's sincerity which specifies that the communicants must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions, as specified in the procedure. If the sincerity condition is violated, that is a case of what Austin calls an 'abuse' (Austin, 1962).

J. Searle and D. Vanderveken state that a speech act is sincere only if the speaker is in the psychological state that her speech act expresses (Searle, 1985).

One cannot but agree with L. Trilling who says that "sincere refers primarily to a congruence between avowal and actual feeling. The essence of sincerity lies in the avoidance of being false to any man through being true to one's own self" (Trilling, 1972: 5).

The concept of sincerity has also been analysed by C. Goddard, who points out that "most dictionary definitions focus exclusively on the component "I say it as I think" inherent in the meaning of sincerity, without mentioning that people only speak of sincerity in relation to speech acts which are seen in a positive light" (Goddard, 2001: 669).

S. Plotnikova interprets insincerity as a discourse strategy of a language personality (of which the latter is fully aware), based on the expression of peculiar personality content, the essence of which involves the replacement of true propositions with the false ones. The scholar points to a gap between the speaker's knowledge and the knowledge output. "The speaker takes control of the truth, hiding it, measuring it and carrying out other manipulations" (Plotnikova, 2000: 52).

It seems advantageous to compare the concept of insincerity to the concept of lying. According to the standard philosophical definition of lying, the crucial condition is an intention to deceive, as it is, for instance, in J.E. Mahon's definition: "lying is to make a believed-false statement to another person with the intention that that other person believes that statement to be true" (Mahon, 2008: 227). But while lying very often does involve an intention to deceive, several philosophers (Carson, 2006; Sorensen, 2007; Fallis, 2012, Marsili, 2014; Morozova, 2015) have argued that an intention to deceive is not a necessary condition on lying. They no longer believe that insincerity condition requires that the speaker believes his /her statement to be false. Consequently, a person who lies is not necessarily insincere: he/she may have wrong presuppositions or wrong background knowledge. On the other hand, A. Stokke suggests that an utterance is insincere if and only if it communicates a piece of information that does not correspond to the speaker's conscious attitudes (Stokke, 2014: 297). Therefore, an insincere utterance always implies conscientious lying.

The cognitive content of a deceitful utterance is determined by a communicative situation, which can be objective, correlating with the outward for the communicants' surroundings, or subjective, characterizing the speaker's inner world (Morozova, 2015).

3. Sincerity of positive evaluative utterances

3.1. Sincerity of evaluative utterances as an oppositely structured continuum.

In this section we address two interrelated issues: first, the status of the notion of sincerity and second, the relationship between sincerity and non-verbal behavior of the speaker.

The observations upon the research data have been helpful to find out that an evaluative speech act production can be characterized by a certain gap formed between a speaker's evaluative cognitive judgement and a corresponding evaluative utterance. If there is no such gap, an evaluative utterance should be treated as a sincere speech act. If such a gap transforms a negative evaluative judgement into a positive evaluative utterance, an insincere evaluative speech act is produced. As R.L. Bezugla rightly points out, the speaker has a hidden perlocutionary goal of deceiving the recipient displaying itself in his intention to set the utterance in a form that isn't different from a sincere one (Bezugla 2015: 30).

In our view, this hidden perlocutionary goal of the speaker does not always imply manipulation or hypocrisy but can be caused by etiquette regulations (when the speaker tries to be polite and co-operative) or the "addressee-to-be" himself forces an evaluative speech act directed at his/her features (by asking the interlocutor directly "Do I look nice?"). As A. Pease and B. Pease put it, lying is the oil that greases our interactions with others and lets us maintain friendly social relationships (Pease & Pease, 2006).

In fictional literary discourse, according to the author's conception, the personages can express insincere positive evaluation of a certain object in order to save their own or the addressee's "face" or a third person's "face"; they may be trying to avoid a conflict or an undesirable topic; they may be trying to manipulate the addressee in their own interests.

Our idea is that sincerity of evaluative utterances should not be perceived as dichotomous value (yes/no), it should be regarded as an oppositely structured continuum, within which evaluative utterances can be presented beginning with utterly sincere ones up to utterly insincere, false, deceitful ones. The utterances that are in non-final points of the scale are indefinite according to their degree of sincerity: the reader/viewer can interpret them as more or less sincere judging by the extralinguistic context.

As O. Dmytruk believes, the speakers' non-verbal behavior is suggestive not only of their emotional state and the degree of closeness to other characters, but it also informs the viewer about the degree of sincerity of what they are saying, and can identify any possible attempts to manipulate other characters' behavior (Dmytruk, 2018: 199).

In literary discourse the sincerity factor can be analysed judging by the verbal context of a discourse: the comparison of a character's utterance to their inner speech and their non-verbal behavior description (Stepanov, Trần Thị Xuyến, 2017).

In film discourse a viewer cannot rely on the author's description, in most films characters' inner speech is not voiced. Here the key for analysis is the characters' non-verbal behavior. Language and gesture units interact with the film context. In a communicative situation face expression of film personages, gestures and body movements can play the crucial part in explicating the speakers' aims, communicative presuppositions, and sincerity factor manifestation.

When film personages express insincere positive evaluation, they use the face expression and gestures that psychologists have defined as insincere. For instance, it's common knowledge that one of the insincerity signs is shifty eyes. According to A. Pease and B. Pease's theory, attempts to deceive the addressee are often accompanied by the following "lying gestures": covering the mouth with the hand, touching one's nose, rubbing the eyes and the area below the nose, giving a split-second frown before answering (Pease & Pease, 2006). These gestures are widely used by movie actors to portray insincerity.

On the other hand, the non-verbal markers of sincere positive evaluation are certain face expressions (bright eyes, beaming face), voice transformations (lowering the voice, cracking of the voice) and bodily movements (jumping, hugging, kissing, and gentle touching of the addressee). Let us follow them up in the non-verbal behavior of discourse personages that express approval, praise, compliment and flattery.

3.2. Sincerity of approval speech act.

If the speaker's intention is to express his/her emotional state by referring to things, ideas, natural phenomena as being adequate/good, such approving act should be considered sincere. Here is an example of an approval speech act, in which approval is produced on meeting a person (Dana). The sincerity of approval becomes obvious to the discourse reader due to the non-verbal markers, namely facial expression of the speaker, described by the author (*His face lit up*):

His face lit up when he saw Dana.

"Miss Evans! ***I'm so pleased to see you"*** (Sheldon, 2012b:74).

After her guests leave, Agatha expresses approval of two objects: the party she has had and the very idea of being back home after a journey. Her sincerity becomes explicit by means of the author's description of her face as "radiant".

*It was late when they all left with the exception of Mrs. Bloxby. "****What a home coming!****" said Agatha, her face radiant. "****It's so good to be back****"* (Beaton, 1997: 2050).

When approval is caused by such illocutionary aims as the intention to establish contact with the interlocutor, to mitigate refusal / criticism, or to change an undesirable topic, the sincerity of the speaker is lowered.

In order to "save their face" speakers often opt to "put on a mask" and express feelings they may not actually experience: understanding, solidarity, support, as it is in a speech episode, in which Agatha, a middle aged lady, who has set her cap at a new handsome neighbour, Paul, is shocked to know that he is married and his wife is very attractive and twice as young as she is. To "save her own face" Agatha has to role-play joy on meeting Juanita:

"Agatha, my wife, Juanita. Darling, this is my neighbour, Agatha Raisin."

*"****How nice to meet you****," said Agatha with a crocodile smile. Juanita was young, possibly in her early thirties, and that was young to the likes of Agatha Raisin. Her golden skin glowed with health and her wide brown eyes were fringed with thick lashes. The only consolation – and it wasn't much – that Agatha could notice was that her long black hair was thick and coarse* (Beaton, 2009: 25).

As the provided example shows, the form in which approval is framed is not different from sincere approving utterances, but the personage's thoughts provided by the author point to the insincerity of the voiced approval. The only flaw in Juanita's appearance, which is a consolation for Agatha, is her coarse hair. The non-verbal sign of insincerity is Agatha's «crocodile smile», known as a false one.

To illustrate one more approving utterance which is characterized by insincerity here is a speech situation from another novel of the series with Agatha Raisin:

"Where are we going?" asked Agatha.

"The Marsh Goose in Moreton."

*"****Nice****," said Agatha but reflected gloomily that there was no smoking except in the coffee lounge* (Beaton, 2009b: 31).

In the example above Agatha is invited to a pub. She does not want to sound picky or nagging, i.e. she tries "to save her face", so she expresses approval (*Nice*), but her thoughts (provided by the author) reveal the discrepancy between the evaluative judgement (which is negative) and evaluative utterance (which is positive). Thus, the approval speech act should be considered insincere.

In the film *He's just not that into you* the bar owner Alex (Justin Long) had a brief fling with his employee Kelli Ann (Busy Philipps). The following day she comes into his study and shyly offers to go out together. The viewer knows from the film context that Alex is not in love with Kelli Ann. Moreover, he is beginning to fall in love with another girl. But being a polite person, he approves the time they spent together before refusing her offer. The insincerity of the approval is obvious due to the contextual clues and the non-verbal markers: Alex's eyes shift, he nods his head too fervently and his hands keep tugging things on the table which unveils his nervousness and unease:

- *So I was thinking.....after work we could.... You know....*
- *Look, Kelli Ann,* ***what happened between us the other night was fun. It was definitely fun****. But we're way understaffed tonight. I even have to man the bar. So that's why I scheduled you. To work. So....* (He's just not that into you, 2009).

It should be mentioned that if an evaluative positive utterance has an ironical or sarcastic character, its exact degree of sincerity can be hard to pinpoint: the reader or viewer can interpret such utterances as more or less sincere judging by the extralinguistic context. Here is a situation from the literary discourse, in which a speaker who expresses approval of the household seems to be, at first glance, quite sincere but irony accompanying the voicing of approval disables the researcher to label it as utterly sincere. A better option would be to position it in some non-final point on the sincerity continuum:

*"****Like Buckingham Palace****," said one woman who had been called to arrange flowers for some family occasion. "****Only rather better. I think that the Queen lives a bit more simply than those people in there****"* (Smith, 2010: 93).

The following film discourse situation involves two swindlers, a mother and a daughter, discussing their last fraud. Being asked about her wedding ceremony, the mother qualifies it as a beautiful one, ironically adding "Like all my weddings", which reminds the viewer that she has already had quite a lot of weddings in order to cheat men out of money:

- *How was the wedding?*
- ***Beautiful****. Like all my weddings* (Heartbreakers, 2001).

Thus, the film context, the reference to the viewer's background knowledge of the situation, and the non-verbal behavior of the speaker (she looks dreamingly into the distance, smiling cunningly) unveil the ironical colouring of the approval, which makes it less sincere. Beauty is not the quality that both the personages value, they are oriented towards the success of the fraud.

3.2. Sincerity of praise speech act.

As far as praise speech act is concerned, most linguists share the opinion that it is predominantly sincere. As A. Wierzbicka puts it, "rather than the speaker's wish to please the addressee or express an opinion, praising seems to have the expression of a positive judgement as its illocutionary purpose" (Wierzbicka, 1987: 199). Russian and Ukrainian linguists define praise as a manifestation of ***sincere***, disinterested positive evaluation of actions, character traits of the hearer or other people, known both to the speaker and the hearer (Leontiev, 2006; Klochko, 2003).

It goes without saying, that both literary and film discourse are characterized by a large number of communicative situations, in which praise expressed by the personages is sincere, as it is observed in the following typical example:

"You have emergency rose petals?" I say in disbelief.

"Sweetheart, I have every eventuality covered." She twinkles at me. "This is why you hire a wedding planner!"

*"Robin," I say honestly. "**I think you're worth every penny**." I put an arm round her and give her a kiss* (Kinsella, 2009: 395).

In the example above the sincerity of the speaker, a girl about to be married, who is praising her wedding planner, becomes explicit due to the author's description of the speaker's attitude (*honestly*) and the description of the speaker's non-verbal behaviour (*put an arm round her and give her a kiss*).

The sincerity of praise can be reinforced by the author's description of voice transformations that show the emotion of the speaker, such as lowering the voice, cracking of the voice, which can be observed in the episode where mother praises her son for being better with his autistic sister Natalie than she is:

"Maybe I should stay home." She tugs her glove off.

I hold my breath. I want my mom to stay home in the worst way. What if something goes wrong? "Would you?" I ask.

*She shakes her head. "**You're better with Natalie than I am**." Her voice cracks. She doesn't look at me.*

"I am?"

She nods, staring at the clasp of her purse [Choldenko 180]

In the film *The Angriest Man in Brooklyn* Henry (Robin Williams) comes to know that he is seriously ill and will die in ninety minutes. He starts to reappraise his life. Henry finds his son Tommy (Hamish Linklater) sitting alone in one of the dance studios. The two begin to dance, just like when Tommy was a little boy. At this moment Henry praises his son's dancing:

You're good. You should do this for a living (The Angriest Man in Brooklyn, 2014).

We interpret this praise speech act as absolutely sincere because Henry is crying and hugging his son when he is saying that.

Nevertheless, it would be unwise to ignore the speech episodes in which the sincerity of praise can be doubted: our observations upon literary and film praising contexts show that the degree of sincerity can vary. As J. Searle rightfully states, expressive speech acts (to which group praise belongs) are oriented towards social rituals and are expressed by certain formulae (Searle, 1976: 12). Thus, praising utterances like "Great!", "Fantastic!" in many communicative situations should be regarded as etiquette formulae serving contact establishing function; therefore, such utterances shouldn't be interpreted as entirely sincere. This Searle's thesis can be followed in a literary discourse communicative situation, in which praise is formal and is used to support a speech contact:

*"**You're so sweet to me, Barley**," said Doris, thinking of other things* (Weldon, 2011: 39).

The author's description of the speaker's thoughts *(thinking of other things)* reveals the praise lowest degree of sincerity.

Moreover, praising cannot be perceived as absolutely sincere, when it comes to children. As A. Wierzbicka justfully observed, parents frequently praise children for doing something which hardly deserves praise. "We would actually be praising the effort rather than the result" (Wierzbicka, 2004: 258). It can be observed in a communicative situation below, where praise of the children's relatives for their performance precedes some cautious criticism (*Couldn't hear a word of it, though perhaps you'll let Grandmamma help with the selection next year*). One of the characters, Hannah's father, being asked about his opinion, cannot contrive an appropriate praise and (feeling guilty) avoids looking at his mother:

At that moment the door opened and Hannah, Emmeline and David spilled into the room, faces still lit with exhilaration. The girls had changed from their costumes and were back in matching white dresses with sailor collars.

*'**Jolly good show**,' Lord Ashbury said. 'Couldn't hear a word of it, **but jolly good show**.'*

*'**Well done, children**,' Lady Violet said. 'Though perhaps you'll let Grandmamma help with the selection next year?'*

'And you, Pa?' said Hannah eagerly. 'Did you enjoy the play?'

Mr. Frederick avoided his mother's gaze. 'We'll discuss the more creative parts later, eh?' (Morton, 2015: 126).

On the whole, praising children involves manipulating. Manipulation in discourse is seen as "intentional deception of one's addressees by persuading them of something that is foremost in one's own interest through the covert use of communicative devices that are not in agreement with generally acknowledged critical standards of reasonableness" (Dmytruk, 2018: 194). Praising children is a form of manipulation because parents and teachers want them to behave in a certain way on all the future occasions, as it is in the episode with Miss Temple, Jane's teacher:

"I have been wrongly accused; and you, ma'am, and everybody else, will now think me wicked."

*"We shall think you what you prove yourself to be, my child**. Continue to act as a good girl**, and you will satisfy us"* (Bronte, 2006: 49).

Furthermore, the application of the contextual-interpretational method to the research data has been helpful to identify the reasons for praise insincerity. First of all, praise can serve as a "face-saving" tactics, when the speaker wishes to hide his negative attitude, to encourage the addressee. Here is a literary episode to illustrate the speaker's desire to "save the addressee's face" (in this case the "hairdresser's face"):

She suffered dismally under the ministrations of the energetic Garry. He had been bad enough before, but now he was worse. She looked sadly at her bouffant hair-style.

*"**Very nice**," she said bleakly. She tipped him again, paid Josie and went out into the High Street* (Beaton, 2009b: 31).

The fact that the speaker's cognitive evaluative judgement (negative) does not check with the evaluative praising utterance (positive) and thus lacks sincerity is obvious due to author's description of the speaker's thoughts (*suffered dismally, he was worse*) and her non-verbal behavior (*said bleakly*).

In another speech situation a teenager praises his friends' musical performance, but his thoughts (*when Piper opens her mouth, it's scary*), the author's description of the effort he makes (*to pretend I really liked their performance*) and his false smile (*trying hard to smile sincerely*) testify the speaker's complete insincerity.

Annie sits at the piano, waiting for her cue. She is an able piano player and she can sing okay. But when Piper opens her mouth, it's scary. Pretty as she is, her singing sounds like the noise the can opener makes. My mom grinds her teeth and pinches her hand every time Piper tries for a note. It isn't just the high notes she misses either.

When Annie and Piper are finished and they've taken their bows to resounding applause by everyone except my mother, I head outside the front door to wait for them. All I'm thinking about right now is how to pretend I really liked their performance.

"How were we?" Piper asks when she and Annie finally make it outside, giddy and flushed from all the attention.

*"**Great**," I tell them, trying hard to smile sincerely, "just great"* (Choldenko, 2006: 130).

So far our considerations touched upon praise directed towards the interlocutor. As far as praise of a third person is concerned, we claim that it is predominantly sincere. If a third person's qualities are discussed, there seem to be no point for the speaker to give insincere opinion of him/her (unless he/she has some special pragmatic reasons). If the speaker opts for praising a third person, the praise is

usually sincere, as it is when an old lady talks about her late husband, or when Claire talks about her friend:

1) *"It sounds strange* ***but he was a marvelous husband in so many ways, such good company, loyal as anything and he gave me a wonderful life****." She smiles gently. "That counts for a lot"* (Williams, 2010: 304)
2) *"You have to know him," Claire went on. "****He's a good man. I'd trust him with my life****."*

Loren nodded and then looked at Erik (Coben, 2007: 117);

The third person might become an object of praise if the speaker considers him/her an ideal in a certain sphere and wants the interlocutor to follow his/her mode of behavior, which, without a doubt, presupposes genuine, sincere positive evaluation of a third person's traits or actions. Here is an example to illustrate:

"I talked to your middle brother just the other day."

"Willie."

*"****He's a fine fellow - very active in Jewish life, too****," said Sandor. "Not like that macher, Alexander. Always some scandal about him"* (Bellow, 2012: 75).

Next we turn to the intention of praising a third person in order to "save his/her face", to defend him/her from the interlocutor's negative evaluative statements, which also implies sincere positive evaluation of a third person's traits or actions, as can be observed in the following speech exchange:

Caroline was watching Cressida critically.

"She thinks she's in bloody Wimbledon or something," she said disparagingly. "Very funny. Just look at her," she persisted, watching as Cressida neatly put away a backhand volley. "Thinks she's a bloody pro."

*"****She's got a nice technique****," said Patrick. "****We could all learn from her****"* (Wickham, 1996: 82).

However, sincere praise of a third person can be caused not by the intention to express the speaker's emotional state by referring to the object's features as being, but by an intention to hurt the interlocutor, to mock or reproach him/her, as he/she does not possess the praised qualities. Whether praising as a manipulation tactics can involve sincere positive evaluation process or not is open to question. Let us provide an example of praising a person in order to hurt the interlocutor: Rona praises Lucinda to hurt Sadie, who is extremely jealous of her husband and Lucinda:

*"****She's a knockout, isn't she? What a figure. And she was surprisingly good on telly, I must say. Not just a pretty face****. Talking about how she teaches people how to leave bad marriages." She glances at me. "Very interesting."* (Williams, 2010: 240).

Thus, it has been argued that praise is an invariably sincere positive evaluative act. It is to be noticed that praise can be formal and used to support a speech contact. Furthermore, it can be a means of manipulation.

3.3. Sincerity of compliment speech act.

As for compliments, they are generally intended to do the addressee a favour. A. Wierzbicka remarks that compliments are usually intended to make others feel good and are performed for maintaining good interpersonal relationships (Wierzbicka, 2004). N. Wolfson, too, notes that they serve as "social lubricants" (Wolfson, 1983: 89). Similarly, A. Henderson views complimenting as part of the "social negotiation" of relationships (Henderson, 1996: 195).

Therefore, compliments are considered to have etiquette character. They are rather conventional: there are quite a number of communicative situations which demand compliment production. If the speaker ignores such demands, he/she might be considered impolite or rude.

Trying to meet etiquette requirements and create a positive atmosphere for further communication does not require true sincerity; the speaker may use politeness as a mask, which might conceal a different attitude (Zvereva, 2013; Formanovskaya, 1993).

It should be mentioned that even if the speaker truly admires the addressee's qualities, exaggeration, which is usually present in compliment structure, does not allow to label this speech act as utterly sincere:

"Mr. Harlency, ***this is the best tea I've ever had and this is the most beautiful room in the whole world****"* (Mackay, 1995: 15).

However, N. V. Korobova and N. A. Tsybina claim that in English language culture sincere compliments are quite typical: in this case the addressee desires to verbalize positive evaluation without being nudged by some outer incentive. If an insincere compliment is produced, evaluation is conventional and does not reflect the speaker's emotional state, which can vary from impassionate attitude to negative evaluation (Korobova, Tsybina, 2018). This thesis leads to the acknowledgement of the fact that only the analysis of a compliment speech situation, the communicants' relationship, their social and situational statuses and roles can help to identify the degree of sincerity of the speaker. In fact, this view can be applied to approval and praise speech acts as well.

Therefore, a gap between an evaluative cognitive judgement and an evaluative utterance can be observed in compliment speech production, too. Compliment speech act can be qualified as utterly sincere (if there is no such gap), or there might be gradation (partially or utterly insincere compliments). In the provided below episode Ken's compliment to Kat's appearance appears to be sincere, which is made clear by the author's words (*he said admiringly*):

When Ken Mallory picked Kat up Saturday night, she had on a low-cut dress that accentuated her voluptuous figure.

*"****You look gorgeous****," he said* admiringly (Sheldon, 2012a: 79).

In the literary discourse sincerity of a compliment is usually highlighted by the author's description of the speaker's non-verbal behavior (*bright eyes, tears in the eyes, clapping hands*), as it is the following examples:

1) *"Oh," she said to James,* turning bright eyes on him. *"James Mallow!* ***I love your pieces. I agree with every word you say****."* (Trollope, 1992: 156).

2) *"****You look completely, heartbreakingly beautiful****, sis."* My eyes fill. *"****Look, you're making me go all soppy****." Georgia beams.* She knows it takes a lot for me to go all soppy. (Williams, 2008: 95);

3) *Enid* claps her hands. *"Girls! Goodness, look at you all.* ***What marvelous frocks!*** *Do come in, make yourselves at home."* (Williams, 2010: 306).

The degree of sincerity of a compliment reaches the highest point in the sincerity continuum when a compliment is combined with admiration. In such a case the author's words following a compliment have the verb *admire* and its derivatives *admiration, admiringly*, for instance:

1) *"In fact it was made for Mme de Pompadour."*
*"****How amazing****!" They stood and* admired *the bulbous, oddly diminutive desk-kingwood, was it?-with fronds of ormolu.* (Hollinghurst, 2005: 44)
2) *"I suppose you're used to lovely food like this all the time," continued Valerie. She gazed at Cressida* admiringly. *"****But you've got such a good figure. I expect you always eat a little of everything, to be polite****."* (Wickham, 1996: 92);
3) *"****This is a very nice house. So big, so beautiful****…" She gestured* admiringly (Wickham, 1996: 70).

The intention of a compliment addresser does not always imply improving the addressee's emotional state, it may shrink to voicing a few utterances presupposed by the etiquette requirements, as it is in the following example:

*"Annie!" She walks across the office, bottom out, nose forward, head moving ever so lightly backwards and forwards like a peahen. She air-kisses me. "****You look great!****"*

"Thanks," I say warmly. ***Compliments*** *on one's physical appearance are the conversational means of greeting here. I have learned not to take it personally* (Williams, 2008: 42).

The provided example unveils a wide-spread attitude to compliments at work: they are perceived as *conversational means of greeting*. Complimentees do not reflect over their sincerity.

As well as in real life, in fictional discourse it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between a sincere and a formal compliment. The reader or the viewer relies on the contextual clues. However, even in case a compliment is preordained by the etiquette, for example, when a guest is leaving a house, the compliment addresser may be quite sincere:

*"Thank you," I said before she could disappear, "****for showing me your beautiful home****"* (Morton, 2010: 109).

In the situation above Edith's gratitude and compliment are sincere, which is clear to the reader judging by the context: the description of Edith's inner speech during the visit unveils her attitude.

Let us address the so-called "forced" compliments. If a compliment is a response to a question, it is forced and its sincerity can be argued, as it is in the situation when Mrs. Forsyth is asked about her impression of the meringues the host has cooked:

"Now, Mrs. Forsyth, what did you think of my meringues?"

*"****So you did make them yourself – they were delicious****"* (Pym, 2009: 121).

In such a case the context seems to be the only key. The reader knows from the previous episode (when the meringues were eaten), which contained the description of Mrs. Forsyth's sensations while eating them that she really liked them. So her compliment addressed to Bason, despite of being "forced", should be interpreted as sincere.

The following example demonstrates a situation in which a "forced" compliment is insincere: the daughter does not want to upset her mother who applied too much blusher. Instead of saying it directly, she expresses a compliment, meanwhile wiping her mother's cheeks with a tissue:

"How do I look?" she says with a little laugh. "Smart enough for Claridges?"

*"****You look lovely, Mum! That colour really suits you****. Let me just…"*

I reach for a tissue, dampen it under the tap and wipe at her cheeks where she's copied Janice's badger-look approach to blusher. "There. Perfect" (Kinsella, 2009: 71).

When Robin shows Agatha his self-portrait, the only possible polite response in a harmonious communication should be complimenting him, which is what Agatha does – in this way his "face" is safe. The insincerity of the compliment becomes highlighted by the author's comment (*lied Agatha*):

"A self-portrait," murmured Robin Barley, spreading her long fingers in a deprecating gesture. "A poor thing but mine own."

*"****Looks great to me****," lied Agatha* (Beaton, 2009a: 108).

On the whole, a compliment as a responsive move is often intended as a "face-saving" means. An example below illustrates another forced compliment, which is obviously insincere (*with true Highland politeness*):

Then Eileen broke off singing and asked suddenly, "What do you think of my hair?"

*"****Very nice****," said Ailsa with true Highland politeness.*

"I hate it, hate it," said Eileen passionately. "I hate being dumpy, and I hate having grey hair."

"Then that is easily solved," said Ailsa. "We'll drop in at a hairdresser's in Inverness and you can get it done (Beaton, 1998: 75).

Moreover, Ailsa indirectly admits the insincerity of her compliment by offering to take Eileen to a hairdresser to have her hair dyed.

But another example is less transparent:

Saturday, Paige managed to get to a beauty salon. She went shopping and splurged on a new dress.

"Do I look all right? Do you think he'll like it?"

*"**You look sensational!"** Honey assured her. "I hope he deserves you."* (Sheldon, 2012a: 30).

The sincerity of the speaker in the provided speech exchange is not evident, the compliment addressee (Honey) is motivated by the intention to reassure Paige and the reader knows her sincerely good attitude to her but whether the dress really suited Paige or not remains unclear.

Compliment addresser's sincerity is argumentative when a compliment is preordained by the etiquette. Moreover, when speakers do not want the addressee to treat their compliment as an etiquette formula, or in order to prove the compliment sincerity, they may recede from it. Phrases like "that's not a compliment", "honestly", "it's true" precede or follow a compliment as an attempt to mitigate a possible distrustful response of the addressee. To illustrate this point, here is a speech episode, which takes place at a party thrown by a film director. Annie, one of the guests, compliments Ig, the director, and David, the producer, on their film. She uses the intensifier *honestly* to highlight the compliment sincerity:

"Well done, Ig. ***You and Dave have done brilliantly. I love Hatch. If I hadn't known David since he had braces and a Blue Peter badge collection, I would honestly be starstruck****." Ig laughs* (Williams, 2008: 34).

Let us provide an example of insincere compliment speech act from film discourse. The protagonist of the film *Bridget Jones's Diary* Bridget (Renee Zellweger) is a hopeless cook, so when she arranges a party, despite all the effort she takes none of the dishes is a success. Nevertheless, her friends eat the food and express compliments, motivated by the intention to save Bridget's "face":

Mark: ***Excellent.***

Tom: ***Delicious. Really – special.***

Mark: ***It's really – really – very good.***

Shazzer: ***Really, it's very nice****.*

(Laughter)

Mark: I really have to say this is the most incredible shit.

(Laughter) (Bridget Jones's diary, 2001).

The insincerity of the voiced positive evaluation of the food is obvious due to the non-verbal markers, used by the actors. All the addressers of the compliments to Bridget (Mark – Colin Firth, Tom – James Callis and Shazza – Sally Phillips) eat very slowly, taking evident effort to push each spoon or fork into theirs mouths. When Tom says how delicious the food is, he swallows a spoonful with exaggerated difficulty which his face expression shows (he pulls grimaces: makes a wry face, winces, wrinkles his nose). The friends make long pauses, seeking for praising words, their heads are lowered, their eyes are shifty, which has been long known as a sign of lying. This kind of non-verbal behavior results in the comedic effect. The episode ends with common laughter and jokes: false compliments have been declassified.

Ironical and sarcastic compliments should be positioned in non-final points on the sincerity continuum. For instance, if a person has pox, he cannot be sincerely considered *devilishly handsome*:

"I have pox," he says with great seriousness, as if to pre-empt any enquiries.

*"**But you are still devilishly handsome**," smiles Enid* (Williams, 2010: 351)

Finally, compliment can by no means be regarded as sincere if it is intended as a means of manipulation. If a positive evaluative utterance directed towards a recipient is contrived at manipulating them in order to get some personal benefit, such an utterance should be interpreted as a flattery speech act.

3.4. Sincerity of flattery speech act.

Needless to say, flattery speech act is invariably insincere, as it is intended to encourage the addressee to do things that are beneficial for the addresser, e.g.:

She said, "You think he did it, too. I can tell you do."

"Makes no difference in my pay either way."

*"**Your line of work, you can probably look once in somebody's eyes and know right off if they're lying. Mr. Perrone didn't fool you for a second, I bet**."*

Tool seemed immune to female flattery, a rare trait among men, in Joey's experience. She tried a different approach.

"How long have you been a bodyguard?" (Hiaasen, 2016: 240).

In the episode provided above Rose is keen on getting information from the guard, so she flatters him, which the author's description of her thoughts proves (*female flattery*). Moreover, the very fact that she is following a certain strategy, trying to manipulate Tool, also points to the insincere character of the positive evaluation (*She tried a different approach)*.

The implementation of the flattery addresser's intentions requires a very subtle communicative strategy. He / she intends to put the addressee in good mood and to persuade the them that a positive evaluative utterance is sincere, as well as to disguise a flattery as a praise or a compliment.

Reference should be made to A. Pease and B. Pease who differentiate between *white lying* (produced to make others feel comfortable) and *malicious lies* where one person deliberately sets out to deceive another for personal benefit (Pease & Pease, 2006). It is advantageous to view insincerity in the same way, i.e. proceeding from the insincere speaker's motives and intentions. White lying is what approval, praise, and compliment speech act addressers sometimes employ in order to be polite and meet the etiquette requirements, while malicious lying is applied by flattery speech acts addressers.

When the pseudopositive evaluative speech act of flattery is produced, the evaluative utterance does not correspond to the evaluative cognitive judgement. The speaker is guided by his/her own exclusive lucrative inclinations. This discrepancy becomes obvious by means of the author's comment and the personage's inner speech in literary discourse, while in in film discourse the situation is different. Let us dwell on the following example from the film *What women want*:

- *Playing games versus playing--*
- *Sports?*
- *Yes! Thank you.*
- *Do you like any of this?*
- *A lot. l like the idea that you can be yourself on the road.*
- *I do too.*
- *Did l say that out loud? [Stammering]*
- *No, I was just--*
- *'Cause l was circling around the exact same thing,*
- *Which is great, We're on the same--*
- *Yeah.*
- *Sorry, I'm not thinking straight.*
- *My glands may be swollen.*
- *Maybe they should be more swollen. **You're doing great**. Nike. No games* (What women want, 2000).

Nick Marshall (Mel Gibson) is an advertising executive who has a magic gift to hear women's thoughts. In the provided episode he is listening to his new

female boss's thoughts and ideas, demonstrating understanding, solidarity and singing praises to her (Darcy – Helen Hunt). Judging by the context, the viewer knows that Nick's genuine purpose is to steal Darcy's ideas for a new Nike advertising campaign, so his praising of Darcy's ideas is taken as flattery despite the verbal (*You're doing great*) and non-verbal (devoted and admiring gaze straight into Darcy's eyes) means that are typical for praise.

All in all, it should be said that in film discourse flattery speech act is manifested in the same verbal and non-verbal form that is characteristic of praise or compliment; it is contextual elements that help the viewer to identify the insincere flattery speech act.

Conclusions

Thus, sincerity should be regarded as a paradigm condition for the felicity of evaluative speech acts.

An evaluation speech act production may be characterized by a certain gap between an evaluative cognitive judgement and an evaluative utterance. The absence of such a gap an utterance is seen as a sincere speech act. If this gap transforms a negative evaluative judgement into a positive evaluative utterance, an insincere evaluative speech act is produced. If a positive evaluative utterance is caused by the etiquette requirements or by a direct demand on the part of the interlocutor, a partially insincere evaluative utterance is produced.

We suggest viewing sincerity of evaluative utterances as ***an oppositely structured continuum***, within which evaluative utterances are located beginning with utterly sincere ones up to those utterly insincere. The utterances that are in non-final points of the scale are indefinite according to their degree of sincerity: the reader / viewer can interpret them as more or less sincere judging by the extralinguistic context.

The final negative point in the sincerity continuum is occupied by flattery speech act, the rest of the positive evaluative speech acts can be located in non-final points, being interpreted as more or less sincere judging by the speakers' aims, the communicative situation, described by the author of literary discourse, or shown by the personages' face expression, gestures and body movements in film discourse. With regard to compliment speech act, it should be pointed out that some slight degree of insincerity and exaggeration in its pragmatic structure is determined by its etiquette character which does not provoke negative attitude to a compliment. Praise of an interlocutor might have manipulative character and thus its sincerity should be questioned, while praise of a third person, who is absent at the time of speech interaction, is predominantly sincere.

Pragmatic, paralinguistic and contextual elements determine the degree of intensity of insincerity. The analysis of a speech situation, the communicants' relationship, their social and situational statuses and roles can help to identify the degree of sincerity of the personage who produces positive evaluation.

Literary and film discourse context often signals that the personages' feelings are ambiguous. While the verbal components of the utterance are characterized by positive evaluative character, the context of the situation, the speaker's inner speech and the author's clarification can serve to unveil the speaker's insincerity. The speaker's hidden perlocutionary goal of deceiving the recipient does not necessarily imply manipulation or hypocrisy. The ***reasons*** that evaluative utterances are not sincere or are less sincere may be varied, ranging from the speaker's desire to be polite, to keep up appearances, to save their own face, or the "face" of the addressee or a third person, to avoid a conflict, to the intention to change an undesirable subject of the conversation or to mitigate refusal or criticism. Moreover, positive evaluation as a means of manipulation suggests that praising children, for example, can hardly be viewed as sincere. Finally, positive evaluation

can be forced by the "addressee-to-be", when someone asks directly whether he/she has been good at something or looks good, which also prevents the reader from referring such praise or compliment to sincere speech acts.

The ***markers of sincerity*** of a positive evaluative speech act are woven into the author's comment. The speaker's attitude becomes explicit by the adverbs *honestly, sincerely, admiringly, etc.* that modify the verbs "say, tell, ask" and other verbs that describe speaking. The non-verbal markers of sincerity used in the author's words are verbalized kinemes that name facial expression (bright eyes, lit up, beaming face), voice transformations (lowering the voice, cracking of the voice), gestures and movements of the speaker (jumping, hugging, kissing, touching of the addressee) that reveal his/her positive emotional state. The ***markers of insincerity*** of a positive evaluative speech act are the verbs *lie, pretend* following the personage's direct speech, as well as the noun *flattery*; the adverbs of negative emotional colouring, such as *dismally, bleakly, gloomily, etc.* that modify the verbs "say, tell, ask" in the author's words following the positive evaluative utterance. The non-verbal markers of insincerity are the author's description of the speaker's smile as *false,* or *insincere,* or even *crocodile*. In feature film discourse these non-verbal markers are role-played by the actors.

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Professor Natalia Bigunova, DSc.
Odessa Mechnikov National University
French boulevard, 24/26, 65058
Odessa
Ukraine
natalbig@ukr.net
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9460-9700

Associate Professor Chen Shaoxiong, PhD
Huzhou University (China).
759, East 2nd Road, Huzhou, 313000
China
aljosha@126.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2101-9742

Ievgenii N. Stepanov, PhD
Head of the Russian language Department
Odessa I.I.Mechnikov National University
24/26, Frantsuzskiy blvd., Odessa, 65058
Ukraine
stepanov.odessa@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5441-9822