



A Stylistic Study of Compliment Speech Act in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

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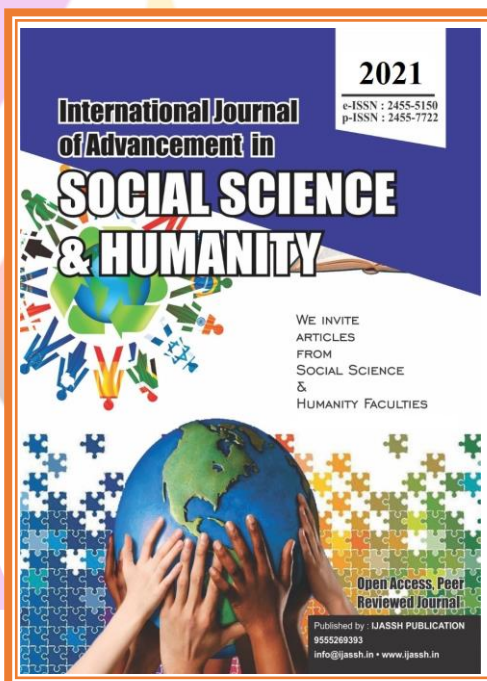
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ABSTRACT

The present research investigates the speech act of 'compliment' in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" stylistically. The paper aims at finding what kinds of compliments are employed in the play and what syntactic types of sentences utilized for showing the act of compliment in the targeted text. The study is limited to the speech act of 'compliment' and the text of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" as well. The problem of the study is that most Iraqi EFL learners find it challenging to test the speech act of compliment with the Felicity Condition rules. Also, they might confuse the speech act of compliment with other similar related speech acts such as 'praising'. From this point, the present paper has been conducted to answer the research questions that are: 1) What is the speech act of compliment, 2) What are the structures of the speech act of compliment used in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar", and 3) What kinds of compliments (direct or indirect ones) that Shakespeare has mastered in his play "Julius Caesar". Regarding the hypothesis of the research, it is hypothesized that the employment of the speech act of compliment in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" meets or satisfies the *Felicity Conditions* of speech act. The paper ends up with some findings and conclusion, some of which are that the use of direct compliment becomes part of the rhetorical ability of the characters to persuade the hearer and convince him to behave in a certain way, and Shakespeare utilizes more direct compliments compared to the indirect ones due to the consideration that this act is face-saving act.

Keywords: *Felicity Conditions, Illocutionary Force, Dramatic Decorum, Linguistic Deviation.*

INTRODUCTION

Researchers have dedicated considerable efforts in studying the speech act of compliment, but the present paper has tackled it from different perspective. Pragmatically speaking, Austin (1962: 159) categorizes the speech act of 'compliment' within *behabitives*. Other scholars like Manes and Wolfson (1981) assumed that the act of compliment as behaviour in American

English confirming that the function of compliments in various speech acts are similar to *thanking, praising, and greeting*. France (1992: 11-15) tackles the origin of the word "compliment" as an act expresses *gratitude*. Whereas Kasper and Schmidt (1996:446-448) defined the speech act of compliment in term of the relation between the users of language. Some other studies attempted to concentrate on the pedagogical aspect of the use of this act by students as in

the recent study by (Vaneva and Ivanovska ,2018). This current paper attempts to fill this gap by analyzing the use of the speech act of compliment in the Shakespearian tragedy of *Julius Caesar*. As mentioned earlier the aim of this study is to find out what kinds of compliments utilized in this play, and to investigate whether the playwright has resorted to direct or indirect types of compliments in portraying his characters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Problem

The present researcher was basically written to clear up the following problems:

- A. *Most of Iraqi EFL Learners confuse the speech act of compliment with praise due to the closer interrelatedness between them.*
- B. *Most of Iraqi EFL Learners might not be fully aware with the types of the compliment speech act used by Shakespeare in his tragedy masterpiece ‘Julius Caesar’.*

Research Limits

The present research is limited to:

- A. *Analyzing the speech act complement*
- B. *Analyzing the play of William Shakespeare’s ‘Julius Caesar’ textually.*

Research Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that

1. *Shakespeare utilized direct compliments more than the indirect ones in his play ‘Julius Caesar’.*
2. *Most of the speech act of compliment structures are semantically statement.*

Research Questions

The present study has been conducted as an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. *What is the speech act of compliment.*
2. *What are the structures of the speech act of compliment used in Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar”.*
3. *What kinds of compliments (direct or indirect ones) that Shakespeare has mastered in his play “Julius Caesar”.*

Research Significance

The present researcher could be of a specific significance to the readers of English literature as well as to Iraqi EFL Learners who are not fully aware of how Shakespeare utilizes the speech act of ‘compliment’ in his tragedy of ‘Julius Caesar’.

SPEECH ACT THEORY

Basically, Speech Act Theory (SAT) was first formulated by Austin (1962). To

further illustrate this theory, the communication process between the participants within this theory has to be addressed. Communicators usually perform actions through their statements in which they attempt to express themselves by initiating utterances of different grammatical structures. These actions apply to different types of verbs depending on the communicative intent of the speaker in the production of utterance. The speaker usually supposes that his communicative destination will be known by the listener. Both the speaker and the listener receive assistance with this process from the surrounding circumstances. These circumstances include, among other things, a speech event. This verbal event determines, in many ways, the interpretation of spoken language. It is possible that the same utterance could be interpreted as representing two types of verbs. That is also because the interpretation of a verbal action carries more than what can be found on its own. First, there is the locutionary act, which is the event of phonemic verbs or the meaningful linguistic expression. The second dimension or event implies in the illocutionary act. The event implied in the saying is performed through the communicative power of the word commonly known as *the communicative power of the word*. In general, it is the force involved in saying a word. Speakers

do not create a word that has a function without an effect. Such an effect is the third dimension called *Perlocutionary Act*. A certain utterance will be uttered depending on the circumstances assuming that the hearer will realize the effect it meant. How can speakers assume that the event in the saying will be recognized by the listener? This question was raised with two considerations in mind: *The illocutionary force indicating devices* and the *felicity conditions* (Yule,1996). In this theory, there are certain conditions for a verbal act to be intentional (Kaburise,2004). The following section presents an idea of the concept of felicity condition.

FELICITY CONDITIONS

There are definite predictable and appropriate conditions known technically as "Felicity conditions" to accomplish a verbal act in order to be considered intentional. Sometimes, the performance will be unsuccessful in case the speaker is not a specific person in a particular context (for example, in uttering a judgment the speaker has to be a judge in the courtroom). There are preconditions for actions to speak (Yule,1996).

There are common conditions on the partners, for example, that both the speaker and the hearer know the language used and that they do not manufacture, then there are terms of content. For instance, in case of

warning and promises, the content of the speech should be about something happening in the future. For example, the preparatory conditions for warning considerably differ from those of promise. When someone utters a warning, there are the following preparatory conditions: the speaker thinks that the event will occur and will not have a positive effect on the hearer. It is not clear that the listener knows that the event will happen. Whereas, when someone promise to do something, there are two preparatory conditions. The first is that the event will not happen by itself. The second is that it will have a beneficial effect on the hearer. These conditions also include the sincerity ones, which is that the speaker who promises something sincerely intends to complete future work. In case of warning, the speaker sincerely believes that the future event will not have a positive effect on the hearer. Finally, the essential condition in that by keeping the promise, the speaker obligates himself to complete the work in accordance with the promise. Searle (1969) indicates that a certain set of felicity conditions must be satisfied for a speech act to be felicitous. These conditions include preparatory, sincerity, essential and proposition ones.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF SPEECH ACTS

Since the beginning of speech acts theory, there have been a lot of classification of speech acts. The most important ones are those that were initiated by Austin (1962), Searle(1969) and Vanderveken (2001). According to Austin (1962:150-162) *illocutionary acts* are categorized into five types taking into account the English verbs including *Verdictives*, *Commissives*, *Exercitives*, *Behabitives*, and finally *Expositives* in which reasons or arguments are clarified. Similarly, Searle (2002) presented his own classification but using different terminologies for the same acts. Austin (1962) renamed *Behabitives* as *Expressives* in which the speaker expresses his feelings and emotions. As for *Exercitives*, Austin renamed it into *Directives* where the speaker tries to make the hearer do something. Yet, he kept the name of *Commissives* when we commit ourselves to do something. The other categories of Searle are: *Representatives* in which a speech act describes events or states in the world, such as a claim, a report, an assertion, etc. Finally, *Declaratives* in which a speech act changes the state of affairs in the world. In this paper, more details will be given to expressive acts in general and to compliments in particular, simply because when we talk about compliment then we talk about one of the expressive acts.

Compliment as Expressive Act

Expressive acts are those expressing the emotional reaction of the speaker towards a state of affairs. In *Expressives*, the illocutionary point consists of expressing a specific psychological state regarding a proposition content. For example, in “I thank you for supporting me,” the propositional content is “you helped me” while “I thank you” expresses the IF of thanking. In this case, the speaker does not assert that the hearer helped him or does not ask him or her anything. Expressives are the production of the speaker’s response towards a certain past or future event in relation to the related act. The element of the event includes a speaker who is the agent or the one responsible for the act and a hearer who is affected by the act. In Expressives, the speaker evaluates the state of affairs either positively or negatively. The effect is either on the hearer or on the speaker. The relationship between the hearer and the speaker helps in distinguishing between expressive verbs of similar illocutionary point such as (blame, deplore, reject) (Vanderveken, 2001).

To determine the specific expressive act, Norrick (1978:277) says that there must be a presupposition by the speaker that the proposition expressing the state of affairs is true. The speaker makes an evaluation concerning the effect of the related event on the affected person. This evaluation could be

negative or positive. Sometimes, the event or action could have a negative effect on one person and at the same time a positive one on another. Therefore, 'compliments', belong to the expressive category. 'Compliments' are also related to the expressive acts identified by T.Gorgis (1992). Hence, they are categorized as polite formulaic speech acts. (Al-Rassam, 1999: 6).

Compliment and Its types

Scholars pointed out that recently the interest in speech act theory in general and complimenting in particular has increased. Yet, this speech act overlaps with other acts specially that of praising (Mustapha ,2012). It is possible to differentiate between *complimenting* and other related speech acts. In this respect, Lewandowska -Tomaszczyk (1989) presents some components of complimenting, the first of which is that there should be a property which is related to the hearer and the speaker tries to assess this property positively in order to make the hearer feel happy or to maintain solidarity with the hearer. Carretero, et al. (2015) state that compliments often include adjectives such as good, interesting ,excellent, perfect or fine. All these adjectives are positive evaluation of the person or his work. Other Researchers like (Al-Rassam, 1999: 6) pointed out that once the four types of felicity conditions are fulfilled in the sentences, it is easy to detect them as

Indirect compliments as in: *I am glad that I went to the same school with lovely people like you.* Also, as direct compliments as in: *I like your hair.* He also asserts the fact that a functional definition will help in excluding other similar speech acts from the classification of compliments. The distinction between praising and complimenting is clearly stated by Holmes (1986) who assumes that positive evaluation will not be considered as compliments when the related person to be complimented is not directly addressed. This means that one of the felicity conditions, the preparatory one, is violated in that the hearer cannot take credit for the property. Yule (2005; 48-91) expresses that there are two kinds of compliment strategies:

Direct Compliment

Direct Compliment refers to the explicit and ostensible expressions of the act communicative value for various linguistic and/or pragmatic purposes since the act is almost appears to be face-saving act. Such instances for direct compliments are :

- 1) **I really like your dress.**
- 2) **Isn't the drink great!**

Indirect Compliment

It refers to statements that can be considered as compliments by the addressee, although the linguistic form which is generally associated with complimenting is missing.

This type of comment can usually be interpreted as having complimentary force though the linguistic forms of these utterances are indirect. Hence, it seems clear that indirect compliments need more inferences for the hearer to rebuild the intended meaning carried in the message by the speaker. Indirect compliment involves the topic complimented. For example:

3) Your friend is a very lucky boy.

Similarly, Holmes (1995) speaks about the two types of compliments. He asserts that direct compliments concentrate on something directly attributable to the recipients whereas indirect ones need utilization of some inferences to elicit the illocutionary force of Compliment the shared background knowledge.

Knapp et. al (1984) refer to other types of compliments including general and specific compliments, compliments built on comparison and compliments according to normality in addition to direct and indirect ones. Specific compliments are those identifying particular items as in "You look nice in that shirt whereas to say "you look nice' is a general compliment. Comparative compliments are those in which the property or behavior is compared to another person as in:

4) You look better than your friend.

Compliment within Politeness

In fact, speakers normally attempt to achieve face-saving acts while communicating by hiding, lessening or euphemizing some acts that are not favoured to delivered explicitly or directly in communication. For example, acts like ‘refusal, disagreement, blames, etc..’ are considered face-threatening acts that might jeopardize social harmony between the participant. So, to express these illocutionary forces, the users of language need to implicitly or indirectly refer to them in communication. Other speech acts like ‘praise, thanking, gratitude, compliment, etc..’ are considered as **face-saving acts** and are favoured to be directly and explicitly used. Hence, the speech act of compliment is mostly considered **face-saving act** and the direct sort of it is polite and does put the speaker’s self-image in jeopardy.

THE STRUCTURE OF COMPLIMENT

According to Yule (1996), there are four syntactic classifications of a sentence with four semantic functions. These syntactic types are:

1. **Interrogatives:** Types of sentences that are used to explicitly show questions. Speakers normally use it

when s/he inquires or seeks information. Otherwise, the speech act would be rendered indirect and the recipient has to apply some inferences to grasp the intended meaning. For example, “Can you please guide me how to get to the mall?” Here, the speaker is inquiring how to find the direction to the mall. While for instance saying: “Is that a reason for despair?” does not sometimes require an answer, but it basically indirectly performs the function of ‘statement’ to mean “that is not a reason for despair.

2. **Declaratives:** Types of sentences that are used to show statements.
3. **Exclamatives:** Types of sentences by which the speaker expresses a surprise. For example, “What a funny story he told us!
4. **Imperatives:** Sort of sentences by which the speaker shows command or an order.

For example, ‘Close the window.’”

Some speech acts are politely considered face-threatening act and their direct or explicit use of it might jeopardize social harmony between the interactants. Therefore, the speaker resorts to linguistic deviation to lesson that threatening sort in communication. Such acts that are not socially favoured to be used direct are

‘refusal, disagreement, denial, etc....’ whereas some other acts are considered face-saving and their use directly and explicitly, to some extent, is favoured. Such acts are ‘thanking, praise, **compliment**, etc....”

COMPLIMENTS IN SHAKESPEARE'S 'JULIUS CAESAR'

At the beginning of the tragedy, the leadership of Julius Caesar for the Roman is discussed. When he returned to Rome, Caesar was considered a victorious leader civilian. So, the theme of leadership is clear from the beginning and one of the deriving forces in the play is *flattering* and *compliments*. Actually, compliments play a pivotal role in the course of this play. From the beginning of the play, Cassius keeps complimenting Brutus as a way to persuade him share the conspiracy to kill Caesar. Caesar himself goes to his death after being flattered by Desias. Then after killing Caesar, Antony seeks revenge and compliments Brutus in a way invokes the people of Rome against the conspirators.

In *Julius Caesar*, there are cases of compliments used by the characters of the play. For example, Cassius compliments Brutus because he wants Brutus to join his conspiracy against Caesar. Such a compliment can be seen in many extracts in the play. “That you might see your shadow. I have heard where many of the best respect

in Rome” (I.2.55). Cassius says that Brutus is very well known in Rome and every one in Rome loves him. This suggests that the people of Rome do not want Caesar as a leader but Brutus instead. Cassius is referring to his reputation by saying “respect”. By saying “shadow” he is also referring to the “reflection” of what others think of him. “Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes.” (Ballard,2016).

METHODOLOGY

The Speech act of compliment in the Shakespearian tragedy of *Julius Caesar* has been pragmatically analyzed according to the principles of Speech Act Theory in which there are certain felicity conditions that must be met in order to call a certain act compliment as so.

The cases have been classified into direct, indirect and comparison compliments.

Text Analysis

The following tables show some cases of compliments taken from the Shakespearian tragedy of *Julius Caesar*:

A. Direct Speech Act of Compliment in *Julius Caesar*

Decius says to Caesar, "To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar."

Decius shows a positive attribute of Caesar. Being Powerful has a positive value for Caesar who can take credit for his power. Decius has a positive opinion about Caesar's

power. The utterance is an approval of Caesar's power.

Cassius says to Brutus, "And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus." Cassius shows that Brutus is gentle. Brutus's gentleness has a positive value for him and he can take credit for this gentleness. Cassius has a positive opinion about Brutus's gentleness. The utterance is an approval of Brutus's gentleness.

Brutus says to CASCA, "Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca".

Brutus shows that CASCA is gentle. CASCA's gentleness has a positive value for him and he can take credit for this gentleness. Brutus has a positive opinion about CASCA's gentleness. The utterance is an approval of CASCA's gentleness.

Cassius Compliment s Brutus saying, "Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see, Thy honourable metal may be wrought From that it is disposed".

Cassius shows that Brutus is noble and honorable. Brutus's nobility and honorability has a positive value for him and he can take credit for this nobility and honorability

Cassius has a positive opinion about Brutus's nobility and honorability. The utterance is an approval of Brutus's nobility and honorability.

Brutus says to PORTIA, "Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed".

Brutus shows that PORTIA is a good person. PORTIA's nobility has a positive value for him and she can take credit for this nobility. Brutus has a positive opinion about PORTIA's nobility. The utterance is an approval of PORTIA's nobility.

Brutus says to PORTIA, "Kneel not, gentle Portia". Brutus shows that PORTIA is gentle. PORTIA's gentleness has a positive value for him and she can take credit for this gentleness. Brutus has a positive opinion about PORTIA's gentleness. The utterance is an approval of PORTIA's gentleness.

Brutus says to PORTIA, "You are my true and honourable wife."

Brutus shows that PORTIA is noble and honorable

PORTIA's nobility and honorability has a positive value for him and she can take credit for this honorability. Brutus has a positive opinion about PORTIA's honorability. The utterance is an approval of PORTIA's honorability.

LIGARIUS is Complimenting Brutus saying, "Brave son, derived from honourable loins!"

LIGARIUS shows that Brutus is Brave. Brutus's bravery has a positive value for him and he can take credit for bravery.

LIGARIUS has a positive opinion about Brutus's bravery. The utterance is an approval of Brutus's bravery.

ANTONY says to Caesar, "So to most noble Caesar"

ANTONY shows that Caesar is noble. Caesar's nobility has a positive value for him and he can take credit for this nobility. ANTONY has a positive opinion about Caesar's nobility. The utterance is an approval of Caesar's nobility

Cassius says to Brutus, "Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see, Thy honourable metal may be wrought from that it is disposed".

Cassius shows that Brutus is noble and honorable. Brutus's nobility and honorability has a positive value for him and he can take credit for this nobility and honorability. Cassius has a positive opinion about Brutus's nobility and honorability. The utterance is an approval of Brutus's nobility and honorability.

Casca says to Cassius, "Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!"

Casca shows that Cassius has a good hearing ability. Cassius's hearing ability has a positive value for Cassius who can take credit for that CASCA has a positive opinion about Cassius's good ability to hear. The utterance is an approval of Cassius's good ability to hear.

Cassius says to Cinna , "Be you content: good Cinna , take this paper".

Cassius shows that Cinna is a good person. Cinna's goodness has a positive value for Cinna who can take credit for his goodness. Cassius has a positive opinion about Cinna's goodness. The utterance is an approval of Cinna's goodness.

PORTIA is complimenting Brutus saying, "Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health, He would embrace the means to come by it".

PORTIA shows that Brutus is a wise person. Brutus's wisdom has a positive value for him and she can take credit for this wisdom. PORTIA has a positive opinion about Brutus's wisdom. The utterance is an approval of Brutus's wisdom.

The analysis shows that Shakespeare used direct compliment by most of the characters of his play *Julius Caesar*. All of these direct compliments have been for a certain attribute of the addressee. However, it can be noticed that the motives of using compliment is different from one case to another. Generally, two basic motives can be seen in the play. The first is the use of compliment to direct the addressee to do something as in those of Cassius and Ligarius to Brutus aiming at motivating Brutus to join the conspiracy or Decius compliment of Caesar to convince him to go

out into his death as part of the conspiracy. The second motive is that of politeness as seen in the dialogue between Portia and Brutus.

B. Indirect Speech Act of Compliment in Julius Caesar

Cassius is complimenting Brutus saying, "I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus, As well as I do know your outward favour. Well, honour is the subject of my story."

Cassius shows that Brutus is honorable. The utterance is an approval of Brutus honorability. Brutus honorability has a positive value for him and he can take credit for this honorability. Cassius has a positive opinion about Brutus honorability.

Antony says to Brutus, "I doubt not of your wisdom".

Antony shows a Brutus wisdom. Brutus wisdom has a positive value for Brutus who can take credit for his wisdom. Antony has a positive opinion about Brutus wisdom.

The analysis of the text reveals that the speech act of compliment was utilized direct (12 times) and indirectly (2 times) in Shakespearean Julius Caser. All the usages were face-saving acts. The reason behind utilizing the indirect form of compliment is for dramatic purposes as a mean of persuading a character to do something like 'committing murder'.

Table (2) Types of Compliments Utilized in Shakespearean Julius Casers

Compliment Type	Quotation detection	Compliment Structure
Direct Compliment	That you might see your shadow. I have heard where many of the best respect in Rome."	Statement
Direct Compliment	"To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar."	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca"	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see, Thy honourable metal may be wrought From that it is disposed".	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed?"	Question
Direct Compliment	"Kneel not, gentle Portia".	Statement
Direct Compliment	"You are my true and honourable wife."	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Brave son, derived from honourable loins!"	Statement
Direct Compliment	"So, to most noble Caesar"	Statement
Direct Compliment	Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see, Thy honourable metal may be wrought from that it is disposed"	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!"	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Be you content: good Cinna , take this paper."	Statement
Direct Compliment	"Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health, He would embrace	Statement

	the means to come by it."	
<i>Indirect Compliment</i>	"I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus, As well as I do know your outward favour. Well, honour is the subject of my story."	<i>Statement</i>
<i>Direct Compliment</i>	"I doubt not of your wisdom"	<i>Statement</i>

RESULTS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

After analyzing the speech acts of compliments in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, it is found that most of such speech acts are *direct* in that (12) cases of *direct compliments* have been detected whereas only two indirect ones have been found and only one comparison compliment is detected. This validates and approves the first hypothesis that reads: **Shakespeare utilized direct compliments more than the indirect ones in his play 'Julius Caesar**. In all of these cases, the compliment has been for an attribute or physical appearance of the addressee not for an action. It is noted that adjectives like (noble, gentle, good, honorable, wise) are widely used in this play as a compliment to the addressee. Cassius is the main mover in the play, so he uses all kinds of compliments direct, indirect and comparison to achieve his goal. Moreover, most of the structures of the speech act of compliment are *statement* in that (11) cases of the act of compliments are statements and only (1) case of the direct compliments is a *question*. This validates and proves the second hypothesis of this research that states: **Most of the speech act of**

compliment structures are semantically statement.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Compliment is part of Shakespeare's rhetorical skill to persuade Brutus to join the conspiracy. Antony repeats that Brutus is "honorable" but he slightly conveys an impression that Brutus's speech cannot be trusted.
2. The use of direct compliment becomes part of the rhetorical ability of the characters to persuade the hearer and convince him to behave in a certain way. William Shakespeare has skilfully utilized the speech act of compliment in his master piece 'Julius Caser'. Most of the compliments are direct with statement function of sentence types. Sometimes, Shakespeare uses indirect compliments for dramatic purposes.
3. It is concluded that Shakespeare utilized direct compliments more than the indirect ones in his play 'Julius Caesar'. According to the textual analysis, (12) acts of compliment out of (14) are direct compliments, whereas only (2) acts were approved to be used indirectly.

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