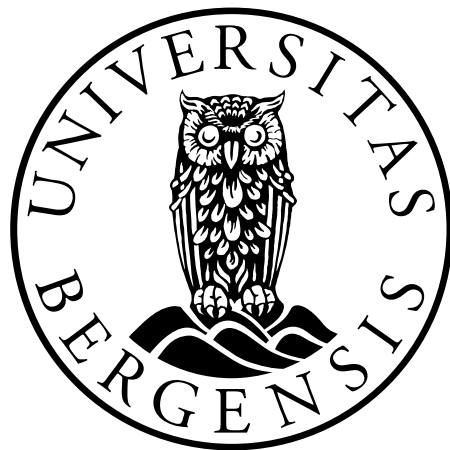


Evaluative Moves in *13 Reasons Why* and *Riverdale*

A Discourse Analysis of Gender Differences

By

Lene Torheim Solheim



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Department of Foreign Languages

University of Bergen

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Summary in Norwegian

I nyare tider har filmar og TV-seriar ofte blitt brukt av forskarar som utforskar språkhaldningar, særleg i samband med haldningar til forskjellige uttalevariantar. Samstundes, innan autentisk språk, har forskarar undersøkt korleis kompliment og fornærmingar heng saman med stereotypar, som til dømes dei relatert til kjønn. Føremålet med denne masteroppgåva er å utforske møtetpunktet mellom desse to tilnærmingane: å utforske korleis kjønnsstereotypar vert reflekterte gjennom kompliment og fornærmingar i Amerikanske TV-seriar.

Denne studien analyserer den evaluande åtferda, det vil seie komplimenta og fornærmingane, til tenåringsane i TV-seriane *13 Reasons Why* og *Riverdale* ved å ta i bruk både ei kvalitativ og kvantitativ tilnærming til datamaterialet. Det kvalitative aspektet ved analysen er todelt, kor det første gjekk ut på å identifisere og organisere evalueringane i passande kategoriar, og det andre gjekk ut på å analysere dei i lys av eksisterande kjønnsstereotypar. Før evalueringane kunne analyserast, måtte dei, derimot, teljast og kvantifiserast, som ugjorde det kvantitative aspektet ved studien.

Analysen viser at tenåringskarakterar i TV-seriane ikkje viser heilt lik evaluande åtferd som menneske i studiar av autentisk språk, som til dømes at det er skilnadar mellom åtferda knytt til kompliment og fornærmingar i *13 Reasons Why* og *Riverdale*, noko som antyd at evaluande åtferd har ein spesiell funksjon i fiktiv diskurs. I tillegg viser analysen at komplimenta og fornærmingane i seriane reflekterer stereotypar som knyt omsorg og seksuell reinleik til feminitet og det å vere muskuløs og omsynslaus til maskulinitet.

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List of abbreviations

DTVS:	Digital television series
SVOD:	Subscription-based video on demand
VOD:	Video on demand
SIT:	Social identity theory
FTAs:	Face-threatening acts
<i>13RW:</i>	<i>13 Reasons Why</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim and scope

The aim of this thesis is to explore how gender stereotypes are reflected through compliments and insults produced by teen characters in the American digital television series *13 Reasons Why* and *Riverdale*. Because the accurate interpretation of compliments and insults often depends on the interactional context, this thesis is mainly situated within the field of discourse analysis, with special attention to gender differences. The aspect of discourse in focus is evaluative moves, which include compliments and insults. The reason why evaluative moves are of interest is that they are linguistic expressions of judgment that often convey the speaker's gender values and attitudes.

Additionally, as this thesis concerns digital television series (henceforth DTVS), how fictional discourse is treated within linguistics also has to be taken into consideration in my study. The reason why television series and movies are useful when studying stereotypes is that fictional discourse is recognized as a reflection of the society it is meant to represent, and therefore also the stereotypes that exist in that society. Thus, the use of compliments and insults in *13 Reasons Why* and *Riverdale*, which are both contemporary teen dramas set in the United States, is interesting for the purpose of my study. In addition, with the immense growth of streaming services this past decade, series, such as *13 Reasons Why* and *Riverdale*, have been able to reach millions both across the United States and around the world. Examining the gender stereotypes found in the discourse of these American television series could therefore not only provide insight into the stereotypes that might exist in the American society but also illuminate what stereotypes of Americans the viewers in other parts of the world are subject to.

The data used in the present study consist of 20 episodes from the American television series *13 Reasons Why* and *Riverdale*, collectively. The evaluative moves made by the 53 teen characters included were analyzed and organized according to the type of evaluative move (compliment/insult), the givers and targets' gender and sexual orientation, and the evaluations' contents, which were organized into the six main categories Physical traits, Skills, Possessions, Characteristics, Sexuality, and Behavior, and their subcategories. These categories and subcategories cover evaluative moves related to physical and psychological attributes, abilities, and actions, etc. They also reflect common areas where evaluative moves are often given, and

areas where gender differences stereotypically exist. When the evaluations had been categorized, they were further analyzed for patterns that could potentially reflect different gender stereotypes.

A common approach used when analyzing stereotypes in movies and television series is the societal treatment study, where language attitudes and stereotypes are inferred by exploring the relation between the characters' accent use and character traits. Established researchers within this field have found fairly systematic correlations, which implies that certain accents are associated with certain character traits (e.g., Lippi-Green 2012). Additionally, in relation to non-fictional discourse, researchers have argued that compliments and insults can convey gender stereotypes the speakers have about the targets (e.g., Rees-Miller 2011; Felmlee, Rodis, and Zhang 2020). The aim of the present study is to explore the intersection of these two fields; to identify which gender stereotypes can be inferred from the compliments and insults given in fictional discourse. To my knowledge, this approach to fictional discourse and stereotypes has yet to be explored.

1.2 Research questions and hypotheses

The research questions and hypotheses of the present study are inspired by various research on evaluative moves and gender stereotypes (cf. 2.4–2.5). This thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Which gender gives and receives the most compliments and insults?
2. Which compliment categories and subcategories are most common for each gender?
3. Which insult categories and subcategories are most common for each gender?
4. Which existing gender stereotypes are reflected by the evaluative moves in the DTVS?

The hypotheses are outlined below.

1. The girls will give and receive the most compliments and the boys insults.
2. Both genders will give the most compliments on Physical traits.
3. The female characters will be complimented the most on their Physical traits and the male characters on their Skills.
4. The girls will give the most insults on Relationship building, and the boys will give the most on Emotional intelligence.

5. The female characters will receive the most insults related to Relationship building and Promiscuity, while the male characters will receive the most related to Emotional intelligence.
6. The existing gender stereotypes that women are supposed to be beautiful and caring and that men are supposed to be tough and skilled are reflected through evaluative moves in the DTVS.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters covering different aspects of my study. The first chapter presents the aim and scope of the thesis, in addition to the research questions and hypotheses. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the theoretical background, which focuses on discourse analysis, fictional discourse, gender stereotypes, and evaluative moves. Chapter 3 explains my methodology and discusses the data collection, compliment and insult categorization, quantitative and qualitative aspects of my study, and the methodological challenges. Chapter 4 presents and discusses my results pertaining to the evaluations overall, the compliments, and the insults. Additionally, the largest compliment and insults categories are presented and discussed separately in light of gender stereotypes. Finally, chapter 5 provides a summary of the main results and offers answers to the research questions. It also suggests some considerations for future research.

2. Theoretical background

In this chapter, I give an overview of what discourse analysis and pragmatics are. Subsequently, I explain what fictional discourse is and discuss why it is relevant for linguistic research. Then, I discuss what gender stereotypes are, how and why they are created, and give some examples of different gender stereotypes that exist in the contemporary English-speaking world. Lastly, I discuss what evaluative moves are, how they are related to linguistic politeness and how compliments and insults relate to gender.

2.1 Discourse analysis

In order to understand what discourse analysis is, one must understand what *discourse* is. The term discourse can be defined in terms of a count noun or as a mass noun (Johnstone 2018, 2). The former, which is usually represented by capitalized D, is used to describe language related to conventional ways of thinking, which in turn constitutes ideologies (3). In other words, Discourses are specific ways of speaking that are directly related to and reflect one's ideology, identity, or membership of a socially meaningful group. For example, different ethnicities, occupations, gangs, religions, and fields of study can all have their own Discourse. Discourse analysts, however, typically define discourse as “actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language” (Johnstone 2018, 2). This means that, though the context of the communicative action is important, the focus is not on the overarching ideologies or identities of the people involved, but rather on the meaning and functions of the language in the given circumstance.

Discourse analysis, then, can be defined as “the study of language in use” (Gee and Handford 2012, 1). However, as Gee and Handford (2012) note, this definition is more commonly used to describe the field of pragmatics (see section 2.2). Therefore, discourse analysis is also defined as “the study of language above the level of a sentence, of the ways sentences combine to create meaning, coherence, and accomplish purposes” (1). In a similar vein, Johnstone (2018, 3) explains discourse analysis as the examination of the structure and function of language in use. In other words, discourse analysis is not merely an analysis of language as an abstract system or of communication in the broad sense (which includes music and fashion, etc.), but of real instances of language used in communicative actions.

According to Gee and Handford (2012), there are two tasks that are relevant in discourse analysis: *utterance-type meaning task* and *situated meaning task*. The former concerns the correlation between the form and function of discourse, where the focus is on the general meanings of the form, which are not dependent on the context of the use. The latter, however, concerns the correlation between form and function in language, with attention to the situation-specific meanings of the forms used, in the contexts of their use (2). When discourse analysis undertakes a situated meaning task, the context of an utterance will determine what a word means in that specific context. For example, the word *honey* may, in one context, mean a viscid fluid made by bees, and in another it may mean a loved one.

Moreover, Gee and Handford (2012) accentuate that discourse analysis is the study of language seen in the context of all that language helps to create and all that makes language meaningful in various ways, such as society, identity, history, institutions, culture, politics, and power, etc. Discourse analysis can, therefore, be seen as both a branch of linguistics and a contribution to the social sciences (5).

2.2 Pragmatics

According to Yan Huang (2017b, 1), pragmatics is one of the most rapidly growing fields in linguistics and has, more recently, become a central topic within other fields, such as cognitive science, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and sociology. As previously mentioned, pragmatics and discourse analysis are sometimes defined in similar ways, namely as “the study of language use in context” (1). Context is notoriously hard to define or delimit, but Piotr Cap (2010) proposes the following description:

[Context] is the back catalogue of situations and utterances and their (physical) consequences, determining the (function of) the current utterance, a combined (or even common) prehistory of the speaker’s and the hearer’s (linguistic) experience, including a set of expectations the speaker (pre-)possesses with regard to the effect of his or her current utterance (197).

This means that in order to understand the full context of an utterance, one must take into consideration the possible intention of the speaker, and the listener’s inference from the utterance, and the relationship between them, or their shared understanding, both generally and linguistically. Therefore, in order to understand the utterance in question, it must be seen in relation to the preceding and following utterances.

Even though the abovementioned definition of pragmatics is broadly accepted and seldom refuted because of its ability to fit in with virtually any contemporary approach to pragmatics, especially the two main schools of thought that can be identified, i.e., Anglo-American and European Continental, other, more specific, definitions have been proposed (Cap 2010, 195–96). Huang (2017b) proposes the following definition in line with the Anglo-American tradition:

Pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language. The central topics of inquiry include implicature, presupposition, speech acts, deixis, reference, and context, and the division of labour between, and the interaction of, pragmatics and semantics (2).

This is known as the “component view of pragmatics”, which means that pragmatics is seen as a core element of a theory of language, similarly to phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (5). According to Cap (2010, 196), the way in which the component view and the general view of pragmatics concur is through an assumed relation between a specific item of interest, such as a linguistic item, and how that item is studied, for instance by analyzing its use in a given context.

Within the European Continental tradition, however, “pragmatics is taken to present a functional perspective on all core components and ‘hyphenated’ areas of linguistics and beyond” (Huang 2017b, 3). This means that pragmatics, in this sense, is not an element to investigate, but rather a means through which the other core elements and other areas of linguistics can be investigated. Because of the broad properties of this definition, the Continental tradition encompasses much more than the Anglo-American tradition, such as some non-core branches of linguistics, including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and discourse analysis (Huang 2017b, 3).

2.2.1 Speech acts

As mentioned, one of the central topics of inquiry in pragmatics is speech acts. J. L. Austin (1976), who is usually credited for the first developed theory of speech acts, emphasizes, in his book *How to do things with words*, the notion that language is not merely something we *use*, but something we *do*. He proposes the term *performative utterance* to differentiate between utterances as actions and the form of utterances (7). Today, the term *speech act* is more commonly used as a replacement for performative utterance.

Levinson (2017, 203) notes that one of the central components to speech acts is that the act itself is rarely directly coded in the linguistic form of the utterance. This is because an utterance can function as significantly different speech acts depending on the context, intonation, and body language. For example, the utterance *What did you say?* can be a question to a story the addressee is telling, a request for the addressee to repeat themselves, or a challenge of their utterance. In addition, an utterance can function as multiple speech acts at the same time. For instance, the utterance *What did you say?* can, simultaneously, be a request for the addressee to repeat themselves and a challenge to what the speaker thinks the addressee might have said.

This phenomenon, of one utterance functioning as different speech acts, can be further illuminated by Austin's (1976) introduction of the three levels of speech acts: the *locutionary act*, the *illocutionary act*, and the *perlocutionary act*. The locutionary act is the explicit linguistic meaning expressed by the utterance. Next, the illocutionary act (force) refers to the speaker's intended function of the utterance. Finally, the perlocutionary act (effect) is the effect, outcome, or consequence the utterance has on the hearer. To illustrate the differences, consider the phrase *Is it cold in here?*. In this example, the locutionary act is a closed question regarding the temperature of the room. The illocutionary force, however, could be a request for the hearer to close an open window, and the perlocutionary effect could be that the hearer walks over to the window and closes it. In this case, the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect mirror each other. However, in the instances where the hearer misunderstands the speaker's intention, the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect will differ.

2.3 Fictional discourse

Fictional discourse is a broad spectrum of text, including written, auditory, and audio-visual text. What all types of fictional discourse have in common is that they are stories produced through the imagination of one or more authors, which occur in created worlds populated by fictitious characters (Jucker and Locher 2017, 5). Jucker and Locher (2017) stress that the boundaries between fictional and non-fictional language are "fuzzy and slippery" (5). For example, texts that claim to produce or reproduce reality, such as reality television shows or television documentaries, might include scripted or staged dialogues performed by the participants of the show or by actors. The fictionality of the digital television series (henceforth DTVS) discussed in this study, however, does not inch close to this fuzzy border, as the worlds, characters, and stories are all made up.

Whether fictional discourse can be of use in linguistic research has been disagreed upon by linguists for centuries (Jucker and Locher 2017). In the earlier days of linguistics, fictional discourse, especially that produced by proclaimed authors, was given a unique status as examples of language particularly interesting for linguistic research. However, this sentiment changed considerably for a substantial period of time, as linguists interested in present-day languages, more or less dismissed fictional discourse as a suitable area of research (4). Written discourse, in particular, was seen as a secondary level of language use and, therefore, not suitable for linguistic analysis (8). The reason why fictional discourse was dismissed is because of its spurious nature, as it is always constructed and planned, most likely by someone other than the speakers themselves. However, some linguists, for instance historical linguists, have always resorted to fictional discourse, as that is the only data available to them (Jucker and Locher 2017, 4–5). In addition, in more recent years, some linguists have come to see fictional discourse as a rich source of data, on the condition that it is investigated on its own terms (5). This means that fictional data should not be studied as being representative of language in general but as a variety of language. Jennifer M. Rey (2001) states that because the media often reflect societal and cultural attitudes, even though the language used in fictional discourse cannot be compared to authentic speech, it “does represent the language scriptwriters imagine that real women and men produce” (138). Therefore, analyzing how men and women speak in fictional discourse can “reveal perceived differences in women’s and men’s speech” (138). In other words, fictional discourse can, for example, be valuable in order to understand what we think language should look or sound like, and how that is related to societal attitudes and stereotypes.

One of the approaches that is sometimes used when researching fictional discourse in relation to attitudes and stereotypes, in particular pertaining to language varieties, is societal treatment studies. Peter Garrett (2010) defines societal treatment studies as “studies of attitudes to language as they are evident in sources available in public social domains, such as the media, policy documentation, literature, etc.” (229). This approach can provide some insight into “the societal meanings and stereotypical associations of language varieties and languages” (51). The way societal treatment studies are conducted is through inferring attitudes from different behaviors and sources (52). For example, by analyzing the use of different varieties of a language in movies, one can infer some societal attitudes and stereotypes pertaining to the different varieties. This is done by comparing the characters’ characteristics to the varieties they are speaking to see if there is any correlation between character type and variety. For instance, in one of the more famous societal treatment studies of accent use in Disney animated movies,

Lippi-Green (2012) found that female characters mostly speak standard English varieties while the male characters show greater variation in the use of accents and use more stigmatized accents. Several master's theses of British and American fictional movies and television series have found similar results in that the female characters were found to mostly speak with a standard English variety and the male characters with more variation (Sønnesyn 2011; Lundervold 2013; Moltu 2014; Urke 2019). From these findings it is possible to infer that there are societal expectations of women to speak standard varieties of English, while the same expectation does not exist for men. Additionally, the same master's theses all found that sophisticated characters mostly speak a standard variety of English while unsophisticated characters mostly speak regionally marked accents. From this, one could infer that using regionally marked accents could be associated with being unsophisticated. In a similar way, by researching the portrayal of gender in fictional discourse, it could be possible to say something about which gender stereotypes might exist in our society.

2.3.1 Digital television series (DTVS)

The particular type of fictional discourse this thesis is concerned with is that of DTVS. DTVS are television series that are streamed via online streaming services, such as Netflix. Generally, the content available through such streaming services is called subscription-based video on demand (SVOD or VOD) (Matrix 2014). However, the term SVOD refers to movies, news broadcasts, television series, and other video content. I will, therefore, use the term DTVS to refer specifically to the television series available through these streaming services.

The reason why DTVS are particularly interesting to research today is that streaming has, no doubt, become the new television. As SVOD services are accessible to anyone with an internet connection and a subscription, at any time of day, DTVS can reach a much larger audience on a much larger geographical scale than linear television ever could. According to Stoll (2021), the largest U.S.-based SVOD service, Netflix, had over 73 million subscribers, in the United States only, and 203,67 million subscribers worldwide as of September 2020.¹ Consequently, viewers are not only watching more television but also in larger doses at a time (Matrix 2014, 120).

¹ YouTube is ranked as the largest video streaming service, with over 167 million monthly average users. However, it is mainly an online video-sharing platform, not an SVOD.

2.4 Gender stereotypes

In this section, I will first discuss what gender stereotypes are and their social implications. Then I will explain how and why stereotypes are developed by using the social identity theory. Afterward, I will discuss some of the different stereotypes men and women are faced with in the contemporary English-speaking world. And finally, I will discuss how these stereotypes affect how men and women are treated and how they relate to linguistic stereotypes.

Henri Tajfel (1969) defines stereotypes as “the attribution of general psychological characteristics to large human groups” (81–82). These characteristics are manifested in general expectations people have towards members of a specific social group (Ellemers 2018, 276). In other words, stereotypes are assumptions about characteristics and abilities that the people of the group in question are expected to possess. In relation to gender stereotypes, Scott Kiesling (2007, 656) points out that the most obvious gender stereotypes are only separated into two categories, men and women, or masculinity and femininity, which are treated as opposite and homogeneous. In other words, through stereotypes, men and women are considered to be in binary opposition. Though this idea has been heavily criticized, gender maintains its status as a binary categorization, in which men and women are often compared (Ellemers 2018, 277). The result of this phenomenon is that, stereotypically, what men do, women are assumed not to do and vice versa (Kiesling 2007, 656). This singular focus on men and women’s differences contributes to the creation and endurance of gender stereotypes, which further reinforces the idea that men and women are inherently different. It is also important to note that even though the difference in how men and women lead their lives has changed in the past decades, some of the stereotypes that developed a long time ago still remain today.

Because gender stereotypes, consciously or unconsciously, will affect people’s thoughts and behaviors when dealing with other people, they have real implications for men and women’s lives, both negatively and positively (Ellemers 2018, 280). For example, evaluative differences, influenced by gender stereotypes, can affect career development and income levels of men and women, which can further prompt gender inequalities throughout a lifetime (279). In addition, Ellemers (2018) notes that stereotypes also affect what qualities people search for in a romantic partner, how people raise their sons or daughters, how boys and girls are assessed in school, and the perception of mothers and fathers that choose to work or stay home with their children. In other words, gender stereotypes potentially affect everyone in almost every aspect of their lives, whether it is visible or not.

2.4.1 Social identity theory

In the 1970s, Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner developed the social identity theory (henceforth SIT), which aims to explain why humans tend to evaluate others as either *us* or *them*. One of the ways SIT has been defined is as “the theory that a driving force behind ingroup bias is people’s motivation to gain positive self-esteem from membership of their group” (Peter Garrett 2010, 229). More specifically, SIT proposes three cognitive processes that are involved in the development of various forms of intergroup behavior, social conflict, and social change, namely social categorization, social identification, and social comparison (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 46). The first process is related to the human tendency to categorize objects in order to more easily identify and understand them. Social categorization, thus, involves assigning people to categories in order to understand our social environment. Tajfel and Turner (1979) define social categorization as “cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action” (40).

The second process, social identification, is developed from “those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which [they] perceive [themselves] as belonging” (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 40). In other words, a person’s social identity is shaped by the social categories they belong to. This process is, to a large extent, relational and comparative, i.e., individuals often define themselves as “similar to or different from, as ‘better’ than or ‘worse’ than, members of other groups” (40).

The third process, intergroup social comparison, is included in SIT on the basis of three general assumptions:

1. Individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem; they strive for a positive self-concept.
2. Social groups or categories and the membership of them are associated with positive or negative value connotations ...
3. The evaluation of one’s own group is determined with reference to specific other groups through social comparisons in terms of value-laden attributes and characteristics ... (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 40).

The first assumption is related to the individual’s desire to achieve and maintain a positive social identity. However, whether the social category they perceive themselves to be part of contributes to a positive social identity is dependent on whether the social category is associated with positive or negative value connotations (assumption 2). The third assumption states that the evaluation of one’s own group is shaped through social comparisons with other specific groups. That is, when the in-group is perceived more positively compared to the out-group, it produces high prestige for the members of the in-group, while a negatively discrepant

comparison would result in low prestige (40). According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), because intergroup comparisons is such an important factor in social identification, social groups often attempt to differentiate themselves from each other in order to “maintain or achieve superiority over an out-group on some dimensions” (41).

As mentioned, social categorization helps us understand the social environment we are situated in by means of categorizing ourselves and others into various groups, e.g., Norwegian, British, student, fisherman, conservative, progressive, black, white, woman, man, etc. It is important to note, though, that social categorization is not simply a set of cognitive tools to facilitate our organization and understanding of our environment, it is also a process that accentuates intragroup similarity and intergroup difference and causes “evaluative and behavioral discrimination favoring the ingroup” (Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 1994, 37). Tajfel and Turner (1979) also claim that certain social categorizations directly cause in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out-group. However, they emphasize that, regarding in-group favoritism, maximum intergroup difference is of more importance than maximum in-group profit (39). The accentuation of and focus on intragroup similarity and intergroup difference are both considered to be fundamental to stereotyping (Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 1994; Tajfel 1969). In other words, social categorization causes a simplified view of the in-group and out-group. This simplification creates stereotypes of both groups that favor the in-group and disservice the out-group, with particular attention to intergroup differences.

2.4.2 Stereotypical traits

Cejka and Eagly (1999) separate stereotypical traits of gender into three categories: *personality traits*, *physical attributes*, and *cognitive attributes*. Regarding personality traits, men are expected to have traits related to performance, such as being competitive, dominant, and aggressive (Cejka and Eagly 1999; Ellemers 2018; Kite, Deaux, and Haines 2008). Women, in contrast, are expected to have personality traits that are related to building societal relationships, such as being gentle, emotional, nurturing, helpful to others, kind, supportive, cooperative, and sociable (Cejka and Eagly 1999; Ellemers 2018; Kite, Deaux, and Haines 2008). Though these differences are often considered to be deeply rooted in evolution and the physical abilities of men and women, Ellemers (2018, 178) emphasizes that multiple studies have been conducted that refute this claim, further accentuating that these stereotypical views of gender are developed due to how boys and girls are raised. In other words, stereotypes are related to gender as a social construct, not to biological sex.

Regarding physical attributes, men are generally expected to have qualities related to *toughness*, such as being muscular, athletic, and physically vigorous (Cejka and Eagly 1999, 416). Women, however, are expected to have physical attributes related to *softness*, such as being pretty, cute, petite, and soft-voiced (Cejka and Eagly 1999; Kite, Deaux, and Haines 2008). However, interestingly, women are also expected to have physical attributes related to sexuality, such as being sexy and gorgeous, which contradicts the expectation of sexual *purity* (see section 2.4.3).

Concerning cognitive attributes, men are expected to have attributes related to intelligence, such as being mathematical, analytical, exact, and good at reasoning and problem solving, which also are traits related to performance (Cejka and Eagly 1999). Women, on the other hand, are expected to have cognitive attributes related to creativity, such as being imaginative, tasteful, and artistic. In addition, women are expected to have cognitive attributes related to communication, such as being expressive, intuitive, and verbally skilled (416), which are related to the personality traits regarding building social relationships.

These gender stereotype patterns are also found in the stereotypes regarding male and female language behavior. According to Deborah Cameron (2008, 21), stereotypically speaking, women care more about communication than men, they talk more and are more verbally skilled. In addition, the motivation differs as well, as men are thought to use language more instrumentally, i.e., talking about things and facts, whilst women are thought to use it to be interpersonal or relational, i.e., talk about feelings, people, and relationships. Men are also said to use language more competitively, for example to acquire or maintain status, which can be done through interrupting and engaging in banter, etc. Women, on the other hand, are said to use language more cooperatively, e.g., to achieve equality and harmony, which can be done by asking questions, backchanneling, and engaging in supportive overlap, etc. (24). Cameron (2008) calls this discrepancy between male and female stereotypes “the question of ‘nature versus nurture’” (23), which shares similarities with the abovementioned personality traits and cognitive attributes stereotypically attributed to men and women.

2.4.3 Sexual purity

In addition to the three categories provided by Cejka and Eagly (1999), I have included a separate one regarding *sexual purity*. Jodi McAlister (2020) argues that women “have become subject to a discourse of ‘compulsory demisexuality’” (4), which means that women are expected not to have sexual relations until they are in a committed romantic relationship, or, in other words, to be *pure*. The consequence of such discourse is that female sexual activity that

occurs outside of such relationships is deemed unnatural, deviant, and wrong (McAlister 2020, 4). Along with this discourse, the notion of *virginity loss* is emphasized, both when applied to men and to women. However, when men lose their virginity, it is understood as a gain and a symbolic moment of the attainment of *manhood* (5). Contrastingly, a woman's virginity is seen as crucial, and in losing it there is a notion that "the woman is not only losing something valuable but losing value herself" (6). As a result of this discourse, women, especially when young and unmarried, are expected to not engage in sexual activities or be *sexual beings*. In contrast, men are expected to have had engaged in sexual activities, as it is seen as a rite of passage in order to become a man.

2.4.4 Linguistic gender stereotypes

In relation to linguistics, Kiesling (2007, 662) points out that finding discursive features that are generally used more, or less, by men than by women is difficult, as most studies conducted on the topic have either had limited generalizability or been contradicted by other studies. However, what can be found in such studies and certain attitudinal studies, is the expectations that exist about how a man or woman ought to speak. As mentioned, because of the presumed binary opposition between men and women, male and female linguistic stereotypes are also seen as being in opposition to each other. This means that a stereotypical female linguistic trait will not be found within the stereotypical male linguistic traits and vice versa. Moreover, a linguistic trait that is considered to be the opposite of the female trait in question might even be considered a male trait.

One of the most prominent researchers within gendered speech and linguistic gender stereotypes is Robin Lakoff. In 1975, she wrote *Language and Woman's Place* where she presents the linguistic forms she considers to be typical of *women's language* and of *men's language*. Even though she presents the female and male linguistic features as examples of how women and men speak, she does emphasize that it is not a definite list of how all women or men speak, but rather a list of general tendencies of features that women are more likely to use than men and vice versa (57). Though her claims have been met with constant criticism, this has not taken away from her work's influence on later linguistic research, and *Language and a Woman's Place* is still significant when discussing linguistic stereotypes. For example, Lakoff (1975) asserts that women are expected to use linguistic traits that mitigate statements, such as using question tags, *uptalk* (i.e., rising intonation at the end of declarative sentences), and hedges, while men are not. She argues that the reason why women are expected to use these linguistic traits, and men are not, is that women are not supposed to assert themselves, as that

is considered a male trait (53–54). This notion of assertiveness has been a common topic within the dominance theory. This theory suggests that the difference between male and female language is related to male dominance and female subordination (Kiesling 2007, 654). Though this theory has been disputed, it is still relevant when discussing stereotypes, as dominance is still considered to be a stereotypical masculine linguistic trait (658).

According to Lakoff (1975, 55), women’s language is stereotypically much more grammatically correct and polite.² Women typically use more standard forms, linguistic tact, and euphemisms than men, who are expected to use more non-standard forms, such as g-dropping in words like *singing* and *going*, and not be too polite. Joking is also seen as a stereotypical male trait, while women are neither supposed to tell jokes nor *get* them (56). Additionally, women are expected to use more *empty* adjectives, such as *gorgeous*, *divine*, and *adorable*, and intensive *so* than men. Women and men are also expected to use words related to stereotypical female and male interests, respectively (53). Lakoff (1975, 60) stresses that men are not to let on that they know the meanings of what would be considered female lexical items and that not being able to talk about typical male interests, such as the function and name of his car, will cause negative reactions from other men. Similarly, she notes that if a woman does not speak women’s language, she will be “ostracized as unfeminine by both men and women” (61). This implies that whether women and men actually use the features listed or not, there are societal expectations that they ought to.

2.4.5 Previous research: gender stereotypes in fictional discourse

According to Kiesling (2007, 654), especially in the USA, heterosexual, Christian, middle-aged, middle-class, white men are usually considered the norm against which all other identities are measured. Therefore, less research has been conducted about their identities, while the identities of other groups, such as women, black people, or homosexual people, have been studied in great detail as a contrast to *the norm*. This is also evident in research on gender stereotypes in fictional discourse, as it mostly focuses on feminine stereotypes.

A study conducted by Carmen Gregori-Signes (2017) of male and female stereotypes in the TV sitcom *3rd Rock from the Sun* found that negative female stereotypes are purposefully used as a strategy to create humor, which simultaneously conveys negative attitudes towards women. In her study, Gregori-Signes (2017, 33–34) found that the female stereotypes depicted

² Note that this refers to linguistic politeness, e.g., saying *please* and *thank you*, not to how it is defined in section 2.5.3.

are women shown as nurturing mothers, wives, maids, secretaries, as being domestic, weaker than men, vain, and caring of others. She also found that the women are often objectified and judged according to their beauty (34). Most of these stereotypes correlate to the stereotypical female traits discussed above.

In a different study, of the female main characters' use of bad language in the pilot episodes of *Weeds*, *Nurse Jackie*, and *Saving Grace*, Monika Bednarek (2015) found that the female main characters of these shows do not conform to the female linguistic stereotype that women are not supposed to swear. Bednarek (2015, 446) hypothesizes that the reason why the creators of these shows might have chosen for these female characters to deviate from stereotypical feminine language, and even use stereotypical masculine language at times, can be a way to have the series appeal to a broader audience. Another potential hypothesis Bednarek (2015) proposes, is that "women are only allowed to act like this in a fictional world where they provide entertainment to a mass media audience" (447). She does specify, however, that whether these female characters, who use bad language, are evaluated negatively or positively will affect the impact these characters can have on the viewers. That is, if the characters are portrayed as bad or evil, that might reinforce the stereotype that *proper* women are not supposed to swear, but if they are portrayed positively or neutrally, they might actually provide a variety of cultural representation of femininity for the viewers (447).

2.5 Evaluative moves

In this section, I will first explain the term evaluative moves and how they can reflect societal gender stereotypes through DTVS. Secondly, I will discuss what positive (compliments) and negative (insults) evaluative moves entail. Then, I will discuss politeness theory in relation to evaluative moves. Subsequently, I will discuss compliments and insults in relation to gender, and lastly, I will give a brief outline of some previous research related to evaluative moves and gender.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) assert that "anything other people say about us or our things or our activities can be seen as potentially evaluative" (149). In other words, anything people say about us, our things, or our activities is considered an evaluative move. This means that an evaluative move is not necessarily always directed towards the target person themselves but can also be directed towards something that person owns or does. For example, a comment on the color of someone's living room might be seen as potentially evaluative as it can be interpreted as a compliment or insult of their interior design abilities or personal taste. In regard

to the definition itself, despite the use of the limitless *anything*, I think constraining evaluative moves to something that is said limits its potential. I would argue that as little as a smile or a frown could also be seen as potentially evaluative. However, for the purposes of this study, I will focus on verbal evaluations.

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 149), how people evaluate one another is principal to how both social norms and hierarchical distinctions are constructed and reinforced. It is, therefore, possible to infer some societal gender stereotypes by investigating how someone talks about someone else. In regard to fictional discourse, it can be possible to detect preexisting societal gender stereotypes by investigating what evaluative moves characters in DTVS make. One of the ways in which gender stereotypes are expressed, and therefore simultaneously reinforced, is by the contents of the evaluations. For example, if only men received compliments on their handwriting, and in large quantities, and women rarely did, it might indicate that nice handwriting is a stereotypical feature in men, but not in women.

The speech acts that are most easily detectable as evaluative, and that I have, therefore, chosen to focus on in my study, are compliments and insults, which will be explained more thoroughly in the following sections.

2.5.1 Compliments

Complimenting, though it is a speech act that can be easily identified and labeled by the average person, it is not as easy to define. According to Eckert and McConnell (2003), compliments are social moves that convey positive appreciation for something that can be credited to the addressee. Moreover, their definition separates the positive evaluative moves praise and approval from compliments and treats these speech acts as separate entities (145). However, Janet Holmes (1988) does not make the same distinction in her definition:

A compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristics, skill etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer. (446)

According to this definition, a compliment does not have to be directed towards the addressee but can attribute credit to someone who is not present in the conversation. Hence, speech acts such as praise and approval are also considered compliments under this definition. In other words, both definitions underscore that a compliment conveys a positive appreciation or attitude towards another person, but they disagree on whether the target person is required to be the addressee or not. However, Holmes (1988) does specify that for an utterance to be heard as a

compliment it “must refer to something which is positively valued by the participants to the addressee” (454). This suggests that there are different criteria for what constitutes a compliment, depending on the level of speech act considered. The illocutionary force of an utterance can be considered a compliment regardless of whether it is addressed to the target or not. However, the perlocutionary effect can only be considered a compliment if the target is the addressee.

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 145), compliments can have many different social functions and possible motivations; for instance, it can be a strategy to elicit information needed for a business deal or a way to strengthen social bonds. In addition, as mentioned, the contents of evaluative moves can reflect both societal norms and hierarchical distinctions. In fact, Wolfson (1984) claims that all forms of complimenting behavior “is a form of social judgement” (240). Similarly, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 145) state that what people might value about other people is indirectly stated in compliments. This means that a compliment on someone’s appearance implicitly instructs the recipient that how they look is something that might be valued by other people.

2.5.2 Insults

Insults, similarly to compliments, are challenging to define. On the one hand, most people can intuitively tell whether something is an insult or not, and quite easily explain why. On the other hand, what can potentially be an insult is difficult to grasp, as it is a rather large and indefinite category. Anderson (2018) claims that one can insult “directly or indirectly, via omission or commission, verbally or nonverbally, or with explicitly marked expressions or seemingly mundane language” (233). In other words, there is no one way to insult someone.

However, several researchers, within different fields, have attempted to give a definition of what constitutes an insult. Jerome Neu (2007) suggests that to insult “is to assert dominance, either intentionally claiming superiority or unintentionally revealing lack of regard” (vii). In other words, according to this definition, to insult is about dominance over the target and intentionally or unintentionally making that clear. However, Anderson (2018) argues that this definition is “too promiscuous” (237) as there are multiple ways of asserting dominance over someone without insulting them. Hence, Anderson (2018) provides his own characterization of an insult as “a mechanism that undermines reasonable expectations of respect” (234). This explanation focuses on an element of disrespect, rather than dominance.

Additionally, David Archard (2014) proposes three key characteristics of an insult: (a) it is an expressive act but not necessarily a speech act, (b) it conveys disparaging propositional

content, and (c) it must be directed at someone and in respect of something to which the other bears a possessive relation (129). This implies that an insult (a) can be carried out through, for example, body language or movement, (b) expresses a negative opinion, and (c) is directed towards a person's looks, performance, belongings, beliefs, personality, etc. Archard (2014) also emphasizes that the propositional content of an insult does not have to be true. However, the insult "cannot disparage what the other lacks" (130). In other words, an insult can be untrue and exaggerated. However, an insult regarding a feature or property that the target bears no relation to will not have the perlocutionary effect intended.

It is important to note, though, that an insult does not always *look* like an insult, for example, it can also be delivered in the form of a back-handed compliment, or a compliment uttered sarcastically or insincerely. In order to detect such insults, the context and intonation of the speaker's voice need to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, according to Allan (2018b, 25), these types of subtle insults are especially pernicious as they allow for the speaker to signal the devious intent as much or little as they want and, thereby, possibly leave much of the interpretation up to the target themselves.

To put it briefly, insults are a similar kind of speech act as compliments, but "with the opposite overt orientation" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 146), i.e., instead of conveying positive appreciation for something that can be credited to the addressee, an insult conveys a negative appraisal. This means that an insult about someone's behavior, for example, can indirectly instruct the recipient that that type of behavior is not appreciated by the speaker. In addition, according to McCreary (1994), when someone deviates from expected behavior, that can elicit a negative reaction from others, for example through insults (see section 2.5.4).

2.5.3 Politeness theory

In order to understand the social implications of evaluative moves, researchers often look at them in relation to politeness theory, which accounts for politeness and impoliteness strategies. Within pragmatics, politeness does not simply concern socially correct/incorrect or appropriate/inappropriate speech and behavior, such as the use of phrases like *please* and *thank you*. It does, however, concern interactional sensibilities/insensibilities where the feelings and expectations of the addressee(s) are in focus (Brown 2017, 383). Similarly, Johnstone (2018, 164) explains politeness as how speakers adapt (or fail to adapt) to the fact that their interlocutors also have social needs. Furthermore, different interlocutors will have different social needs, and politeness will therefore look different depending on the interlocutors. Two highly regarded views of politeness, which are discussed below, are Robin Lakoff's (1977)

three rules of politeness and Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory. It is important to note, though, that these are not two opposing views, as they are often seen in relation to each other.

The first view, Robin Lakoff's (1977) three rules of politeness, is three rules proposed to get people through interactions with different people with a minimal amount of friction: the rule of formality, the rule of hesitancy, and the rule of equality. The rule of formality is designated for conversations where the interlocutors are of different status and the speaker should therefore keep their distance from the addressee. This is achieved through formal language, using title and last name, and avoiding personal topics of conversation (89). The rule of hesitancy is designed for slightly less distance and is defined as "give options" (90). Through this rule, politeness is achieved by hedging your opinions, making suggestions, and asking questions. Euphemisms are also a device within this rule, as it allows for the speaker to both talk about topics in a less formal way than under the rule of formality, and still follow the rule of hesitancy (90). The last rule, the rule of equality, demands that the speaker acts as though they and the addressee are equal. This rule requires the least amount of distance, which is achieved through the use of nicknames, being direct, and discussing personal topics, without the use of euphemisms, and giving compliments (90). It is important to note that this rule can only be enforced by the speaker if they are of superior or equal status to the addressee, in which case most politeness strategies will, most likely, be considered a compliment. If a speaker of inferior status attempts to enforce this rule, however, it can be interpreted as an attempt to lower the addressee to the speaker's status, and thereby insulting them. Therefore, it is implied that the giver and receiver of a compliment are of equal status, or that the speaker wishes that the addressee would feel like they are.

The second view, Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, is best described through the abstract notion of *face*, which they describe as "[consisting] of two specific kinds of desires ('face wants') attributed by interactants to one another: the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (on some respects) to be approved of (positive face)" (13). This means that people assume that their interlocutors will have similar needs as them in needing to not be imposed upon or impeded and also needing to be approved of, liked, and validated, etc. The way in which politeness theory relates to face is through the notion that someone's face is always potentially at risk and interaction, then, is a source of possible face-threatening acts (FTAs) which can be mitigated or provoked through politeness or impoliteness strategies, respectively. Politeness that mitigates threats to someone's negative face, such as being indirect, apologizing, or phrasing statements as questions, is called negative politeness

(Brown 2017). Similarly, politeness that mitigates threats to someone's positive face, such as expressing sympathy with the hearer, making promises, taking an interest in the addressee's wants, interests, and needs, or giving compliments, is called positive politeness (387).

Whereas politeness is strategies used to *mitigate* FTAs, impoliteness is strategies used to deliberately perform FTAs (Culpeper 1996, cited in Culpeper 2016). Equally to the different types of politeness mentioned, negative impoliteness is related to negative face and positive impoliteness is related to positive face. Negative impoliteness, then, is strategies that emphasize the speaker's power, such as condescending, scorning, or ridiculing the hearer, instilling fear in them, or belittling them. And positive impoliteness is strategies that cause the hearer to feel ignored, rejected, or invalidated, such as excluding them from an activity, being disinterested, using inappropriate identity markers, or in other ways insulting them (425).

2.5.4 Evaluative moves and gender

As previously mentioned, compliments and insults can implicitly convey people's values. Hence, studying evaluations might give us an indication of what gender stereotypes people have, depending on what they focus on when giving compliments and insults. Similarly, in relation to American DTVS, studying the characters' compliment and insult behaviors might give us an idea of what gender stereotypes might exist in the American society.

Among Americans, the general trend in compliment behavior is that women receive and give more compliments than men (Wolfson 1984; Rees-Miller 2011). Furthermore, women tend to receive more compliments on their appearance, and men on their performance (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Parisi and Wogan 2006; Rees-Miller 2011; Wolfson 1984). Interestingly, appearance compliments are almost never addressed to men, neither by women nor by other men (Rees-Miller 2011, 2676).³ What this tells us is that women are more judged on the basis of their appearance, which indicates that beauty is something that is valued in women. According to Wolf 1991 (cited in Kahalon, Shnabel, and Becker 2018, 147), the constant policing of women's appearance through appearance compliments functions as a subtle reinforcement of the stereotypical view of women as sex objects. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to be judged on their skill levels and on how well they perform, which indicates that these are traits that are valued in men. In addition, the fact that men are unlikely to receive compliments on their appearance implies that beauty is not as highly valued in men.

³ This is not universal, as illustrated by Janet Holmes's (1988) research on Australian compliment behavior, which shows that Australian men give and receive an equal amount of appearance and performance compliments.

One of the ways in which insults might reinforce societal gender stereotypes is by shaming the target for not meeting normative expectations (Felmlee, Rodis, and Zhang 2020; Kite, Deaux, and Haines 2008; McCreary 1994). In other words, deviating from normative expectations, such as displaying cross-gender behavior or personality traits, can cause negative reactions from others. According to McCreary (1994, 518), there is an asymmetry in how men and women are treated when they deviate from male and female stereotypes. Men tend to receive much more negative reactions from other people if they divert from the male stereotypes, while women do not necessarily meet as severe reactions if they deviate from female stereotypes. McCreary (1994, 520) explains this phenomenon by proposing the sexual orientation hypothesis, which assumes that stereotypical gender characteristics and behaviors are closely connected to perceived sexual orientation, specifically in men. This comes from the suggestion that gender is binary, and that masculinity and femininity are, therefore, bipolar opposites and “share a one-to-one relationship with biological sex and sexual orientation” (McCreary 1994, 521). Hence, as we live in a heteronormative society, portraying stereotypical male characteristics or behaviors would be linked to being sexually attracted to women, and portraying stereotypical female characteristics or behaviors would be linked to a sexual attraction to men. The reason why a man would then receive strong reactions when not following male stereotypical characteristics is that this would most likely cause him to also be perceived as homosexual, which, in our traditionally homophobic society (especially towards men), is regarded as “a negative outcome and should be avoided” (McCreary 1994, 520). Additionally, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 37) state that women who exhibit more masculine qualities are sometimes seen as striving for what is considered a more valued persona as opposed to being seen as inferior women. Therefore, women who divert from female stereotypes are often less stigmatized than men who divert from male stereotypes.

While complimenting is somewhat related to stereotypical femininity, insults are more associated with stereotypical male behavior. For instance, as men are expected to be tough, dominant, competitive, and aggressive, the mere act of insulting can be a way for a man to display stereotypical behavior in order to meet the expectations of others. A study conducted in Stockholm of students in grade 8 also showed that verbal abuse, including insulting, was regarded as a masculine trait that was expected of the boys (Eliasson, Isaksson, and Laflamme 2007). The boys that gave insults were considered tough and more popular. The girls who used verbal abuse, however, were neither perceived as tough nor did they gain popularity (602).

Additionally, according to Kiesling (2007, 665), insulting is a speech act that is often used by men to build solidarity with other men without it potentially being understood as sexual

interest. However, in building solidarity, the use of insults is most often jocular, which means they have the opposite intended perlocutionary effect. In other words, jocular use of insults, such as negative epithets, can function as a way to strengthen social bonds among friends, like a compliment could. This means that the jocular use of insults can be regarded as a politeness strategy according to the equality rule, as it could potentially decrease the distance between the interlocutors. Additionally, Kiesling (2007) states that competitive language through the use of insults, or banter, is also commonly used by men to build solidarity. Insults turn into banter if the target rejects the perlocutionary intention of the insult, and then engages in the verbal play and upmanship of banter, where there is a mutual understanding that there is no harm intended (Allan 2018b, 12). The insult, then, loses its innate negative quality, which means that the illocutionary act can be an insult, while the perlocutionary effect is not.

2.5.5 Previous research: compliments and insults

In a compliment study conducted in 2008 and 2010, Rees-Miller (2011) found that single-sex compliments, particularly, reinforce values of femininity and masculinity. The data used in this study were collected at a small college in the U.S. and consist of compliments given to and from students, faculty, and staff. However, only the compliments between equals (e.g., student to student or staff to staff) were included. This study showed that women received the most appearance compliments and that these could reinforce values of femininity, such as attention to apparel and hairstyle. The men in this study gave and received the most performance compliments, especially in relation to sports, which could reinforce values of masculinity, such as “male heterosexual bonding, physical prowess and strength, and masculinity that is separate from any hint of femininity” (2687). Rees-Miller (2011, 2687) claims that men and women use compliments as a way to construct their gender identity through language.

An insult study from 1987, where American college students were to answer what the worst insult a member of each sex could give a member of the same or opposite sex, shows that insults regarding sexual looseness were almost exclusively expressed toward women, while those regarding homosexuality were almost exclusively expressed toward men by other men (Preston and Stanley 1987, 216). In addition, Felmlee, Rodis, and Zhang (2020) found, in their research on online harassment toward women, that women often received insults targeting their abilities to “embody traditional feminine stereotypes and ideals” (24), with an emphasis on those related to their physical attractiveness, niceness, and sexual purity.

3. Data and methodology

In this chapter, I will first present the digital television series (DTVS) I have selected for my study and the relevant characters I have included and give an outline of the transcription process. I will then explain how I have chosen to combine a quantitative and qualitative approach for my study. Subsequently, I will explain how I have chosen to define compliments and insults for the purpose of my study and present the compliment and insult categories used in the analysis. Penultimately, I will give an outline of the organization and analysis process. And finally, I will discuss the methodological challenges and limitations of my study.

3.1 Data collection

The first step of my study was the selection and collection of the data material. In the following subsections, I will explain the selection of the DTVS that constitute my data material, the relevant characters I have included, and the transcription process.

3.1.1 The series

The texts that constituted the data material for this study were from two American DTVS, *13 Reasons Why* (henceforth *13RW*) and *Riverdale*, both of which were watched on Netflix. The main reason why I selected these two series is that I decided to only include evaluations given by and targeted toward teenage characters. This was done, firstly, because the compliment and insult behavior of teenage characters was what originally interested me about the current topic. And secondly, because if I were to include the teenage characters and adult characters, the power imbalances that exist between the different characters would presumably affect their compliment and insult behavior, which would have had to be considered in the analysis. Though power imbalances also exist between teenagers, I would argue that the potential power imbalance between peers in a high school would be less significant than the imbalance between an adult, such as a parent, teacher, principal, judge, or attorney, and a child. Though analyzing evaluative moves in relation to power imbalances and other social differences in DTVS could be interesting, that is beyond the scope of the present study. Because both *13RW* and *Riverdale* belong to the genre *American teen drama television series* and are concentrated around the lives of various teenage characters, both boys and girls, most of which attend high school, they were deemed appropriate for my study.

Furthermore, both series can be described as contemporary dramas, i.e., series that discuss current problems or issues within society. They are both set in the present, in a society meant to represent one located in the United States. Additionally, *13RW* discusses various issues that are prominent in many teenagers' lives, such as those related to mental health, substance abuse, bullying, and sexual harassment and abuse. Similarly, *Riverdale* also discusses relevant issues that teenagers might encounter inside and outside of school, such as those related to gangs, sexual harassment, teen pregnancy, and complicated relationships. As both series are, to some extent, attempting to imitate reality, they are also, in some ways, imitating teen behavior and speech. This provides an opportunity to make connections between the characters' insult and compliment behaviors and gender stereotypes that exist in the American society. This connection would not be as straightforward to make if, for example, a series does not prescribe to reality to some degree, as that gives more room for the creators to actively use language as a tool to construct alternative societies. In that case, one could research what gender norms or views the series were depicting, or even encouraging, but they would not necessarily say anything about preexisting stereotypes.

Though both series are based in reality, I will note that *Riverdale* does step outside of the more classic high school issues at times, for instance when the teen characters have to deal with serial killers, manipulative tycoons, and organ-stealing cults in addition to their regular high school drama. This overdramatic element is also evident, to some degree, in the way the characters act and speak. For example, where a character in *13RW* would call someone *beautiful*, someone from *Riverdale* might say *Teen Outlander, very Betty Draper season one, or the redheaded Ansel Elgort* to mean something similar. However, even though the manner of speaking and behavior of the characters in *Riverdale* might be slightly more dramatic than that of the *13RW* characters, what is interesting for my study is the content and frequency of the evaluations, not specifically the wording.

Additionally, though several American teen drama television series have been made, the success and topicality of *13RW* and *Riverdale* make them of particular interest for the present study. In terms of their topicality, not only do both series deal with important societal issues that teenagers often face, but they have also been the topic of discussion in different ways since their releases. Of the two series explored in this study, *13RW* has been the most discussed and scrutinized. The series was most prominently critiqued for its vivid portrayal of suicide and rape, which sparked many discussions about teenagers' mental health issues and bullying in schools (e.g., Hong et al. 2019; Jenney and Exner-Cortens 2018). Though *Riverdale* did not spur the same amount of controversy as *13RW*, it has still been discussed both in everyday

conversations and in academic circles in terms of how *Riverdale* deals with feminism and its portrayal of homosexuality and young people (e.g., Tho 2018; Jeafer 2019; Brüning 2021).

In terms of their successes, both shows gained international popularity when they were launched in 2017 and have been renewed for multiple seasons each. However, the exact success of the shows is impossible to determine as Netflix does not release their numbers and viewership information. Therefore, accurate numbers of how many viewers the series have had are unavailable. However, according to the Nielsen Company (cited in de Morales 2017), *Riverdale*'s first season had 1.69 million average U.S. viewers. Whether that number only includes viewers from The CW Network, or also an estimate of Netflix's viewers, is unknown. For *13RW*, however, only an estimate is available as it is only available through Netflix. According to the Nielsen Company (cited in Spangler 2018), the second season of *13RW* averaged 6.08 million U.S. viewers in the first three days of its release. It is important to note that the Nielsen Company is only able to monitor what is watched on televisions with internet access and not on mobile devices or computers (Spangler 2018). Hence, their numbers only give an inkling of the actual success of the series. The numbers do, however, prove the series' successes in the sense that they are only showing a limited amount of actual viewers.

In relation to the series' casts, both series have one central male main character, Clay Jensen in *13RW* and Archie Andrews in *Riverdale*. However, they do also have several female and male main and supporting characters as the stories mostly take place in a high school setting. That both series have a varied cast with both male and female characters was important for the gender stereotype aspect of my study. However, as I will explain next, this criterion did prove slightly problematic to fulfill.

In order to limit the amount of data material for the study, I decided to only include 10 episodes from each series. I chose to include the 10 first episodes from season two of *13RW* and the 10 first episodes from season one of *Riverdale*. Originally, I had chosen to include episodes from the first season of both series. However, because the first season of *13RW* has disproportionately fewer teenage female main characters than teenage male main characters, I decided to use episodes from season two of *13RW* instead. Though this discrepancy is also found in season two, to some degree, the teen female characters that are included in this season speak more and more frequently than the female characters in season one. I ultimately decided to start transcribing episodes from season two of *13RW* and continuously, during this process, I took note of the number of lines the female characters uttered to make sure the discrepancy between the female and male characters was not too large. After five episodes were transcribed,

I concluded that there were enough evaluative moves made by female characters for season two of *13RW* to be included in the analysis.

13RW is a Netflix original series from 2017 that is adapted from the novel *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher. The series follows a teenage boy, Clay Jensen, in the aftermath of the suicide of Hannah Baker, his friend and crush. In the first season, Clay receives 13 cassette tapes of recordings of Hannah where she gives 13 reasons for why she has decided to take her own life, including but not limited to a stalker, bullying, and rape. The second season is set five months after the suicide. The premise of this season is twofold; Liberty High, the school where Hannah was a student, is going to trial for the incident, and several students are called as witnesses to provide their sides of the story. Additionally, Clay starts to receive ominous polaroid photos alluding to a rape culture at Liberty High, with Hannah's unconvicted rapist, Bryce Walker, as a prominent member. This season, unlike season one, includes narratives from several teen characters, not just Clay, which shows the story from multiple different perspectives.

Riverdale is a series from 2017 adapted for The CW Network that features a cast based on an ensemble of characters from the Archie Comics universe. The series follows Archie Andrews and his group of unlikely friends as they juggle friendships, romance, expectations, and dreams, all the while also trying to unveil the truth about the murder of Jason Blossom, Riverdale High's quarterback.

As previously mentioned, I chose to include 10 episodes of each of the series in order to limit the data material. *13RW* had slightly longer episodes than *Riverdale* as they were on average 57 minutes long, while the episodes from *Riverdale* were on average 43 minutes. In total, the analysis is based on 16.5 hours of data.

3.1.2 The characters

In order for a character to be included in this study, they had to be a teen character and utter at least one evaluation about another teen. As both series take place in a high school setting, and none of them are freshmen, all the teen characters are between the ages of 15 and 18.⁴ In total, 35 main and supporting characters are included in the study, in addition to 18 peripheral characters.

⁴ The age of two of the characters, Caleb from *13RW* and Joaquin from *Riverdale*, is unknown because they are not in high school. However, because of their relationship with the other teen characters and their roles, they are inferred to be between the ages of 18–21 and have therefore been included.

The main characters are the central characters of the stories. They are the ones who encounter the main problems or obstacles in the series and have the most screen time and lines. The supporting characters, on the other hand, are characters that play a role in the life of the main characters. They have less screen time and lines but are still important characters that add depth and interest to the plot of the stories. They are the friends, classmates, siblings, and love interests of the main characters.

The peripheral characters are both the characters that are not named in the series and those who do not speak enough to be considered supporting characters. Because the episodes of *13RW* were longer than those of *Riverdale*, and therefore provided more data, I decided that what constitutes a peripheral character would be different in *13RW* and *Riverdale*. The limit I set for the peripheral characters in *13RW* was 25 spoken lines or less, and for those of *Riverdale*, 10 spoken lines or less. This resulted in 13 peripheral characters from *13RW* and five from *Riverdale*. The peripheral characters are included in the analysis as they do meet the criteria set for character inclusion. However, they will not be presented in detail below like the main and supporting characters.

For this study, it is interesting to see the gender distribution in the series and how much the female and male characters speak in general and on average.⁵ Of the total 35 main and supporting characters, 21 are from *13RW*. Eight of these are female and 13 are male. Not only does *13RW* have more male teen characters than female, but the boys also speak more. In total, the male characters produce 25,883 words in 2,609 lines, and the female characters, 10,696 words in 1,094 lines. In other words, the boys produce 70% of the words and lines while the girls produce 30%. On average, however, the difference is not as severe. The female characters from *13RW* utter 1,337 words in 137 lines on average, while the male characters utter 1,991 in 201. In other words, the male characters produce on average 49% more words and 47% more lines than the female characters.

In *Riverdale*, on the other hand, there is an equal number of male and female main and supporting characters, namely seven of each gender. However, as opposed to *13RW*, the female characters in *Riverdale* speak more than the male characters. The girls utter 17,339 words in 1,303 lines, which constitutes 62% of the words and 57% of the lines. The boys, on the other hand, produce 10,823 words in 968 lines, which equals 38% of the words and 43% of the lines.⁶ On average, the female characters produce 2,477 words in 186 lines while the men deliver 1,546

⁵ Peripheral characters are not included here.

⁶ The narration, though produced by one of the teen characters, is neither included in these numbers nor in the analysis.

in 138. In other words, the girls produce on average 60% more words and 35% more lines than the boys.

When combining the characters from both series, the numbers even out slightly. Though the male characters do produce 60% of the total lines, they only utter 12% more lines on average than the female characters. Additionally, the male characters produce 57% of the total words, but on average the female characters produce 2% more words than the male characters. In total, the boys might speak more often than the female characters, but the average number of words uttered by each gender is close to equal.

Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 below present the main and supporting characters that are included in the study from each of the two series. The information I have included about them is their gender, sexual orientation, and whether they are main or supporting characters. Regarding the characters' sexual orientations, I chose to use the labels heterosexual and queer, as opposed to hetero- and homosexual. This is because not all the queer characters audibly label themselves as homosexual and I, therefore, found queer to be more appropriate as it encompasses all non-heterosexual characters.

Table 3.1: Characters analyzed from *13 Reasons Why*

Name	Gender	Sexual orientation	Character role
Hannah	Female	Heterosexual	Main
Jessica	Female	Heterosexual	Main
Skye	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Sheri	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Chlöe	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Courtney	Female	Queer	Supporting
Nina Jones	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Mackenzie	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Clay	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Alex	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Zach	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Tyler	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Tony	Male	Queer	Main
Bryce	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Justin	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting
Cyrus	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting
Ryan	Male	Queer	Supporting
Marcus	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting
Caleb	Male	Queer	Supporting
Montgomery	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting
Scott	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting

Table 3.2: Characters analyzed from *Riverdale*

Name	Gender	Sexual orientation	Character role
Betty	Female	Heterosexual	Main
Veronica	Female	Heterosexual	Main
Cheryl	Female	Heterosexual	Main
Polly	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Josie	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Valerie	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Ethel	Female	Heterosexual	Supporting
Archie	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Jughead	Male	Heterosexual	Main
Kevin	Male	Queer	Main
Reggie	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting
Moose	Male	Queer	Supporting
Chuck	Male	Heterosexual	Supporting
Joaquin	Male	Queer	Supporting

3.1.3 Transcription

Because both *13RW* and *Riverdale* were available on the streaming service Netflix, the subtitles in English were also available. I acquired the subtitles (henceforth transcriptions) from 8flix.com, a website dedicated to providing screenplays, teleplays, and transcripts as PDF files. I used these transcriptions as a base for my data, thereby reducing the transcription process significantly. When I had obtained the transcripts, I copied the text and added it to a word document in order to make adjustments in line with the actual speech of the DTVS and to add the names of the characters speaking. Firstly, I had to remove all the time codes and line numbers that were included in the original transcript in order to make it more readable. Then, I read through the transcript while using the audio-visuals of the series on Netflix so that I could accurately detect and change any discrepancies between the actual speech of the relevant characters and the transcript and add what character uttered each line. This process was completed twice to ensure a more detailed and correct transcript, which made the analysis more accurate. I did not include the speech made by any adult characters in this process, as that was not relevant for my study. Therefore, the speech uttered by adult characters was not changed in any way and their names were generally not added. However, in the scenes where both adult and teen characters were speaking, I did add the adults' names for context.

3.2 Methodology

In order to achieve the aim of this study, to explore how gender stereotypes are reflected through evaluative moves in American digital television series, I have used a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative methods when analyzing the data material. Generally, a quantitative method is used for objective analyses of quantifiable data, such as measuring the frequency of a linguistic form. The findings from the data are counted and often presented in tables or diagrams. Such studies typically have a broad scope with an objective to make generalized statements about the topic of interest. A quantitative study therefore usually requires a large data collection. A qualitative method, on the other hand, is used for subjective analyses that concern non-statistical data that cannot be quantified. This method is usually used to gain deeper insight into a more specific area than a quantitative study. However, in order for the researcher to gain this deeper insight, qualitative studies usually rely on a smaller data collection than quantitative studies. In other words, quantitative studies are usually more objective and generalizing while qualitative studies are more subjective and descriptive (cf. Dörnyei 2007; Phakiti et al. 2018; Lazaraton 2002).

For the purpose of this study, using a mixed method was deemed the most appropriate. Firstly, the data, once collected and organized, were quantified, and presented as statistics, which is a common characteristic of quantitative studies. However, in order to identify and categorize the evaluations, a qualitative approach was necessary, as it required interpretation and flexibility, for example when developing the categories (see section 3.4). Also, when analyzing the data material, only considering the quantitative results would not be sufficient in order to understand the nuances in how gender stereotypes are reflected through evaluative moves. The data material was, therefore, also systematically examined in light of the gender stereotypes discussed in section 2.4. and, occasionally, in light of the context and characteristics of the characters in order to detect patterns.

3.3 Defining compliments and insults

Before starting the identification and categorization process, I had to decide how I would define compliments and insults, which, as mentioned in sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, have been defined in different ways by different scholars. In the case of compliments, I chose to utilize Janet Holmes' (1988) definition:

A compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristics, skill etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer. (446)

The reason why I chose this definition is that it does not make a distinction between whether the target is present to hear the compliment or not. When discussing compliments as an evaluative move, which does not take into account how the compliment is received, I found this definition to be the most suitable for my study.

In relation to insults, I chose to utilize David Archard’s (2014) three characteristics of an insult: (a) it is an expressive act but not necessarily a speech act, (b) it conveys disparaging propositional content, and (c) it must be directed at someone and in respect of something to which the other bears a possessive relation (129). The reason why I chose Archard’s (2014) perspective on insults, is that he provides clear limitations of what constitutes an insult in terms of content with the third characteristic and is vague regarding the function insults can have in the second characteristic. The other two definitions discussed in section 2.5.2 provided a more function-centered definition, as Neu’s (2007) definition focused on asserting dominance and Anderson’s (2018) focused on undermining “reasonable expectations of respect” (234). I will note, though, that I did disregard the first characteristic provided by Archard (2014), as the present thesis is a study of verbal compliments and insults, and expressive acts were therefore not of interest. However, such expressive acts, including facial expressions and body language, were used in the analysis to help identify and categorize verbal insults where it was necessary.

3.4 Compliment and insult categories

The next step in my analysis was to identify and categorize the evaluative moves found in the DTVS. Originally, I had decided on four main categories: Appearance, Performance, Possessions, and Personality.⁷ These were selected based on how researchers have classified compliments in previous research (Holmes 1988; Rees-Miller 2011; Wolfson 1984). However, these four categories did not prove sufficient when seen in relation to the data material. First of all, the nature of compliments and insults is too fluid to aptly be classified into just four categories. Secondly, the categories were chosen based on compliment research without considering how researchers have typically categorized insults. This was done because less research has been conducted on insults than on compliments, and the insult research that has been conducted is usually not on insults in general, but on insults in relation to a specific topic,

⁷ The names for these categories eventually became Physical traits, Skills, Possessions, and Characteristics.

such as feminism. Therefore, the categories used in insult research are usually much narrower than what was necessary for this study. Consequently, I modified the categories according to the gender stereotypes discussed in section 2.4 and my analysis of the data material by adding Sexuality as a fifth category and including several subcategories where I deemed it necessary. These subcategories were further modified as the data were more thoroughly analyzed, for example, I separated the subcategory Cognitive skills into two distinct subcategories Creative skills and Intellectual skills. I chose to make this distinction in the categorization in order to be able to more easily compare the findings to the existing gender stereotypes concerning cognitive attributes, discussed in section 2.4.2. Additionally, a sixth category, namely Behavior, was also added during this stage of the analysis (see section 3.4.6 for description).

The evaluations identified in the transcripts were classified, firstly as positive/compliment or negative/insult, and secondly into six main evaluation categories. Furthermore, four of the main categories, Skills, Possessions, Characteristics, and Sexuality, consisted of two to five subcategories in which the evaluations were placed. In addition, each evaluation was also categorized according to the gender of the giver and target. Some of the evaluations had to be included in more than one category. For example, “Yeah, well, at least Cheryl's not putting on an act, pretending she's a butterfly when she's really a wasp” (R-02) is firstly a backhanded compliment of Cheryl as it compliments her on being transparent and real while also insulting her on being mean, or *a wasp*. Secondly, it is also an insult of the target because the speaker is insinuating that the target is not even trying to hide her cruel side. Hence, this evaluation belongs in three categories: compliment of General traits of Cheryl, insult of Relationship building of Cheryl, and insult of Relationship building of Veronica, the addressee (see section 3.4.4).

In the following subsection, I will explain the categories and subcategories included in my analysis, all of which will be illustrated with examples from the data material. The examples will be followed by a reference to the series where it is uttered, i.e., *13RW*, for *13 Reasons Why*, or *R*, for *Riverdale*. All examples from *13RW* are from season two and all from *Riverdale* are from season one. The season number is therefore not included in the reference. The episode number, however, is included after the series, e.g., *13RW-01* refers to episode one of season two of *13 Reasons Why*. All the main categories and subcategories are summarized in Table 3.3 at the end of the subsection.

3.4.1 Physical traits

The first category is Physical traits, which cover characteristics pertaining to how a person looks

[a] well, you're a total smoke show now (R-01)

or dresses

[b] he fucking dresses gay every day (13RW-05)

or smells

[c] you smell like dead feet (13RW-05).

This category is not divided into subcategories, as it was not deemed necessary for this study.

3.4.2 Skills

The second category is Skills, which include evaluations of a specific action or activity that has been performed and evaluations related to the characters' skills. This category is divided into four subcategories: Physical skills, relating to physical activities, such as sports

[d] that's some hard hits today (13RW-02)

and Intellectual skills, which relate to knowledge and academia

[e] you dumb cow (R-02)

and Creative skills, which include evaluations on activities related to music, writing, photography, etc.

[f] you're a pretty good artist (13RW-02)

and Other, pertaining to other skills that do not fall into the former categories

[g] that [food] tastes like pasture (13RW-02).

See section 3.4.5 for evaluations of skill and performance related to sexuality.

3.4.3 Possessions

The third category is Possessions, which involve evaluations of things or people pertaining to the target character which are detached from the person itself. This category is divided into two subcategories: Physical possessions, which entail evaluations of physical objects the person owns, such as a car or clothes they are not wearing

[h] this car is so insane (13RW-04)

and Relationships, which include evaluations about someone other than the target themselves, but are still evaluative of the target

[i] your mom is so cheap (13RW-03).

Including Relationships as a subcategory of Possessions is admittedly controversial, as it suggests that people are something one can possess. This is by no means the intention. However, since relationships do not fall into any other main category created, I included it here. This is because an evaluation based on someone's relationship is an evaluation of something that is related to the target in some way but is not part of the target in any way. Relationships have also been categorized like this in other studies of compliments (e.g., Wolfson 1984).

3.4.4 Characteristics

The fourth category is Characteristics, which include evaluations of traits and attributes that are innate in the characters themselves. This category is divided into five subcategories: Relationship building, which encompasses how the target is toward others

[j] he's so sweet to me (13RW-05)

and Emotional intelligence, which includes evaluations of a person's emotional control, empathy, and courage

[k] she's, like, batshit crazy, too (13RW-04)

and Status, relating to the person's social standing

[l] he's the varsity football coach's son. In Riverdale, that's like dating a Kennedy. (R-03)

and Structure, which pertains to the person's ability to plan and be organized

[m] some days you're this serious person with legitimate plans for the world (13RW-04)

and General traits, which relate to other evaluations of one's personality that does not fit into any other category

[n] you are so perfect (R-01).

3.4.5 Sexuality

The fifth category is Sexuality, which encompasses evaluations of different aspects relating to sex. This category is divided into three subcategories: Sexual performance, which pertains to the target's sexual accomplishments and skill

[o] couldn't keep it up, Marcus, huh? (13RW-04)

and Promiscuity, which concerns comments on the target's sexual experience and attitude toward sex

[p] you and Ms. Four-Eyes were pulling a Mary Kay Letourneau? (R-10)

and Sexual orientation

[q] worst kind of gay (13RW-05).

3.4.6 Behavior

The sixth category is Behavior, which contains evaluations of someone’s actions in a specific moment

[r] the way you say ‘drugs’ makes you sound like a Republican senator. (13RW-07).

This category is distinct from the Skills category as evaluations of Behavior are situational and not in regard to someone’s general skill level.

Table 3.3: Main categories and subcategories summarized

Main category	Subcategory
Physical traits (3.4.1)	–
Skills (3.4.2)	Physical skills
	Intellectual skills
	Creative skills
	Other skills
Possessions (3.4.3)	Physical possessions
	Relationships
Characteristics (3.4.4)	Relationship building
	Emotional intelligence
	Status
	Structure
	General traits
Sexuality (3.4.5)	Sexual performance
	Promiscuity
	Sexual orientation
Behavior (3.4.6)	–

3.5 Data organization and analysis

After identifying what would be considered compliments and insults in my study and how I would categorize them, I had to go through the data material and identify and organize all relevant evaluations, and then analyze them. These processes will be outlined in the following sections.

3.5.1 Organization

In order to identify and organize the evaluations in the data material into the abovementioned categories, I used NVivo. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis computer software, which is primarily a coding software that allows for researchers to organize and analyze qualitative data, such as open-ended interviews and journal articles.

Before the evaluations could be categorized, though, they had to be identified. The recognition and classification of speech acts is challenging, as there are no linguistic formulas dedicated to each category. Levinson (2017, 208) offers two distinct components required in recognizing and comprehending speech acts: *bottom-up* information and *top-down* information. Bottom-up information refers to the form of the utterance, such as lexical choice, construction, and intonation, which can give clues as to what speech act type the utterance is. However, as disclosed in section 2.2.1, one utterance can have several different functions depending on other factors, such as the context and body language. There is, in other words, not always a direct correlation between form and function. Hence, top-down information also needs to be taken into consideration. Top-down information contains all available context and sequential information (Levinson 2017, 210). This includes information about where the conversation is taking place, who the participants are and their relation, what has been said before, and the addressee's response.

Several evaluations only required the bottom-up information, as they were intuitively identified as either compliments or insults simply by looking at sentence structure and lexical choice, such as "you look good" (13RW-01) and "you're a dumbass" (13RW-06). However, some evaluations required top-down information in order to be detected, such as "does he need his diaper changed?" (13RW-03). Out of context, this question does not seem like an insult, but when the context is taken into consideration, a group of guys making fun of Alex, who has sustained a brain injury, the question is immediately interpreted as an insult, as it insinuates that Alex is no longer able to take care of himself. This is further supported by the fact that the same group of guys uses the word *crippled* to describe Alex on other occasions. Because bottom-up information alone was not always enough to identify evaluations, I also used the top-down information available through Netflix on all potential evaluations to ensure that all relevant evaluations were identified.

Simultaneously, as I identified the relevant evaluations, I also organized them in NVivo according to the categories outlined in section 3.4. The audio-visual context available through Netflix was also useful during this process in order to determine to what category and subcategory each evaluation belonged. This was also particularly helpful when trying to identify whether compliments were sincere or not and whether insults were said jokingly or not.

After organizing the evaluative moves in NVivo, I reorganized them in separate excel spreadsheets, one for each main category or large subcategory, such as Emotional intelligence

and General traits. In each spreadsheet, I included the following supplementary information about the evaluation and the context:

- gender: whether the giver and target are male or female.
- sexual orientation: whether the giver and target are heterosexual or queer
- target involvement: whether the target of the evaluative move is present, not present, or dead
- giver: who performs the evaluative move
- target: who the evaluative move is directed at
- addressee: who the compliment or insult is spoken to, regardless of whether they are the target
- subcategory: what subcategory the evaluation belongs to
- further reflections: such as otherwise useful context information, function, or implication of the evaluation.

These additional brackets of information both allowed me to understand the context of most evaluations without consulting the transcripts or series themselves, and to organize the evaluations in a multitude of different ways in order to count them and detect potential patterns. For example, the spreadsheets allowed me to organize the evaluations by compliments, speaker, and target, simultaneously, which helped me visualize how many compliments of a certain variety are given to female characters by other female characters in comparison to male characters. In order to achieve this organization, I made a coding system for the speaker, target, and addressee brackets which included the gender and sexual orientation of the characters before their names (e.g., FHE Veronica = female heterosexual Veronica, MQ Tony = male queer Tony). In the cases where the addressee is an adult, they were simply labeled with their names or profession, as the addressees were not of interest in my study.

To further simplify the analysis process, I color-coded the supplementary information that would be involved in the analysis: gender, sexual orientation, giver, target, target involvement, and subcategory. The subcategories were color-coded in line with their main categories, e.g., the main category Skills was assigned the color blue and every subcategory of Skills was a different shade of blue. The givers and targets were color-coded in terms of their gender and sexual orientation. The female characters were marked in yellow and the male characters in green. I did not need a non-binary gender category because all the teen characters in the episodes included are portrayed as cisgender. The queer characters were marked with the color corresponding to their gender, but in one shade darker so that they could also be analyzed separately if that proved to be of interest. It was also necessary to be able to see whether the evaluations related to Sexuality are directed toward queer characters or not. As for the target involvement, the cases where the target is present or not present were not color-coded.

However, in the cases where the target is dead, the text was colored red so that those evaluations could easily be distinguished from the others (see section 3.5.2).

After reorganizing the evaluations into excel spreadsheets, I contemplated whether it would have been more efficient to organize the evaluation into a spreadsheet immediately, instead of using NVivo first. However, NVivo allowed for a much quicker categorization with their code function. Additionally, NVivo made it easy to find the evaluation in the reference file in order to see it in context or to see in which episode and approximately when in the episode the quote is located. These features made both the initial categorization process more efficient, and the open-reference-file function served as a useful tool when analyzing the material in the excel spreadsheets because I could easily find the quotes in NVivo which would either provide me with the context needed or the information of where to find the necessary context in the series on Netflix.

3.5.2 Analysis

The analysis process was divided into three steps: one using a quantitative approach and two using a qualitative approach. The step using the quantitative approach entailed counting how many compliments and insults were given and received by each gender within each category and subcategory. The numbers were added to an Excel spreadsheet in order to calculate what gender gives and receives the most compliments and insults within the different categories. In order to account for the difference in how many male and female characters are included and the difference in how much they speak, I chose to focus on the average numbers and how many percent of the lines spoken are evaluations when making comparisons.

Additionally, the fact that a few of the evaluations were placed in more than one category also had to be taken into consideration (see section 3.4). Therefore, when discussing the distribution of the evaluations according to gender, i.e., how many evaluations the male and female characters give and receive each, the duplicated evaluations were subtracted from the total number of evaluations categorized. When discussing the number of evaluations according to category placement, on the other hand, all evaluations were counted, including the duplicated ones. Thus, the number of evaluations will be slightly higher when discussing the categories than when discussing the evaluations in general.

The qualitative approaches to the data material, firstly, entailed going through the compliments and insults and deciding which category they belong to and, secondly, examining the correlation between the evaluations and the gender stereotypes discussed in section 2.4.

One aspect of the quantification of the evaluations that had to be taken into consideration was the fact that some of the evaluations were made about dead characters, both in everyday speech and in court hearings, which could potentially skew the evaluations toward more compliments than if the characters were alive. This is the case for two peripheral characters, one in *Riverdale* and one in *13RW*, and one main character in *13RW*, Hannah, who committed suicide, which in turn is the reason for the court hearings. Because the evaluations of these characters could potentially skew the results toward more compliments for the female characters, I decided to calculate my results, when relevant, both with the evaluations made of the dead characters included and without them to check to what extent the results were affected.

3.6 Methodological challenges and limitations

One of the challenges of my study, which affects two aspects of the categorization process, is subjectivity. Firstly, there are no set rules for what can and cannot constitute a compliment or insult. Thus, classifying whether various utterances are evaluations or not is entirely reliant on the researcher and is, therefore, subject to the researcher's judgment. However, since the discourse analyzed occurs in DTVS, visual cues and social context were used to interpret the speech acts more accurately. This made it easier to discover, for example, insults that might, on a surface level, look like positive evaluations, such as backhanded, sarcastic, and insincere compliments. For example, at first glance, the utterance "thanks for having my back" (R-08) seems to be a compliment to Jughead (the addressee) in regard to Relationship building. However, with the help of audio-visual cues and social context, it becomes clear that the compliment is sarcastic, and therefore, really an insult. In addition to consulting the series for context, I also conferred with my supervisor and a peer about evaluations I was unsure about, which helped reduce the subjectivity to some degree.

Secondly, again, since there is no universal agreement for what constitutes compliments and insults, there is no set system of categorization. Hence, the choice of categories and the categorization of the compliments and insults itself would be heavily influenced by the interpretation of the researcher. For example, a few compliments and insults were ambiguous, in that they could be referring to different aspects of a person's character. For example, the compliment "What kind of foolish woman would let you go?" (13RW-03) could both be a compliment of the target's Physical traits and of their General traits. In the case of such ambiguous evaluations, I conferred with my supervisor and a peer and decided that it was more

appropriate to categorize them into both of the two possible categories rather than to apply my own interpretation of which one category would be the most suitable.

However, in the cases where the evaluations required too much interpretation, they had to be excluded. For instance, the insult “yeah, somehow I don't see Bryce walking into a sex shop” (13RW-02) is clearly an evaluation of Bryce. Yet, neither the social context nor the audio-visual cues provided by the series helped determine what aspect of Bryce's character is under scrutiny. Similarly, the utterance “I love a good closet case” (R-01) had to be excluded because of the amount of interpretation involved. On the one hand, it could be understood as a statement of what the speaker generally likes, and thereby not an evaluation at all. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as a sarcastic compliment, and thereby an insult, of the target being a closeted gay person. The utterances that are so vague they required an unreasonable amount of interpretation, either to determine whether they are evaluations at all or to determine how they should be categorized, were excluded. Even though there were very few cases of such vague utterances, the decision to exclude any potential evaluations was done in consultation with my supervisor.

Another group of compliments and insults that had to be excluded from my study was non-evaluative utterances. These utterances, though they are all compliments or insults, such as “good to have you back” (13RW-01) and “I wish you were dead” (13RW-06), they do not provide evaluations of any specific aspect of the target's character. The most common non-evaluative insult from the data material is “fuck you”, which was also excluded. However, in the cases where the speaker specifies the insult, for example when Alex says, “fuck Justin for coming back for Jessica” (13RW-06), the utterance is not non-evaluative and is, therefore, categorized according to the specification made in the utterance, in this case: insult of Behavior.

The last group of evaluations I decided to exclude from my study was evaluations occurring in the very few dream sequences in the series. The reason for the exclusion of such evaluations is that they cannot be said to represent another character's evaluations. For example, one of the dream sequences in *13RW* occurs in the school hallway after Courtney has announced that she is gay. During this scene, several peers are seen and heard calling her slurs such as *lesbo* and *dyke* (13RW-03). Because these evaluations occur in Courtney's mind, they are not anyone else's evaluations, but rather her own insecurities that manifest themselves in this way. As very few evaluations occur in dream sequences, excluding them does not affect my study in any significant way.

Another limitation of my study, caused both by the qualitative approach used and the limited scope of the study, is that I cannot make any sweeping generalizations from my results.

As mentioned in section 3.2, the aim of qualitative studies is not to give a general overview of the topic studied, but to give deeper insight into it. This is the case for my study as well, as the data material is only collected from 20 episodes from two television series. However, the aim of my study is not to make any generalizations about evaluative behavior in American DTVS, overall, but rather to give new insight into an area that has not previously been researched. I, therefore, make no claims in my study of how evaluative moves, in general, reflect gender stereotypes in American television series.

Additionally, a challenge that studying fictional discourse poses, is that the speech analyzed is not authentic (see section 2.3). This means that the results of my analysis cannot say anything about how teenage boys and girls actually talk. However, as Rey (2001) states, “while the language used in television is obviously not the same as unscripted language, it does represent the language scriptwriters imagine that real women and men produce” (138). Fictional discourse can therefore be an interesting basis for researching language attitudes, ideologies, and stereotypes.

One of the limitations that fictional discourse might cause when researching scriptwriters’ perception of how women and men speak, is the possible discrepancy between the gender and age of the scriptwriters and the gender and age of the characters analyzed. In the case of my study, the characters analyzed are boys and girls mostly between the ages of 15 and 18, while the scriptwriters are mostly adult men. Eight out of the 20 episodes included in this study were co-written by a female scriptwriter while all 20 episodes had one or several male scriptwriters. In other words, how the female scriptwriters perceive teenage boys and girls to talk was included in the scripts of just 40% of the analyzed episodes. This means that the results of my study might, to some degree, show how adult men think teenagers speak, not how they are generally thought to speak. However, because of the male dominance within media production, and thereby scriptwriting, this issue is almost impossible to avoid.

4. Results and discussion

In this chapter, I will first give an overview of the evaluations identified in the 20 episodes analyzed. In doing so I will look at the evaluations in relation to gender distribution, and the categories and subcategories, both in the series collectively and individually. Then I will present and discuss the compliments and insults identified. For each, I will discuss the overall findings in light of the theoretical background, and highlight the largest categories and subcategories, which will be discussed individually in relation to their gender distribution and gender stereotypes.

4.1 Evaluations in general

In this study, 552 evaluations were identified in the 20 episodes analyzed from *13RW* and *Riverdale*. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of the total compliments and insults identified. Furthermore, Table 4.1 shows the total evaluations according to the givers and targets' gender.

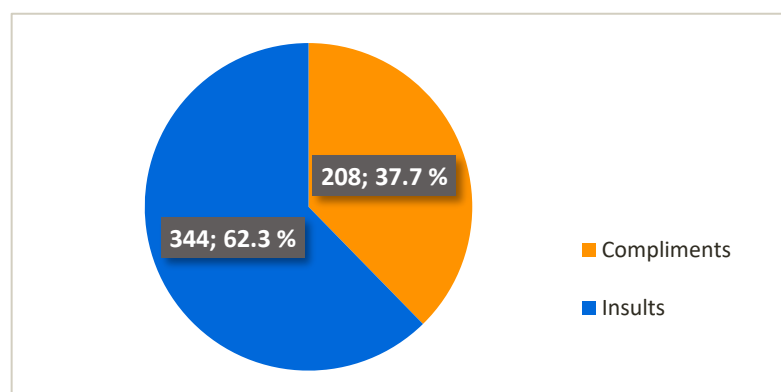


Figure 4.1: All evaluations according to type

Table 4.1: All evaluations according to the givers and targets' gender

	Giver		Target	
	No. (%)	Average ⁸	No. (%)	Average
Male	299 (54.2%)	8.8	312 (56.5%)	9.2
Female	253 (45.8%)	13.3	237 (42.9%)	12.5
Total	552 (100%)		548 (99,4%) ⁹	

⁸ The average numbers include all main, supporting, and peripheral characters, which equals 34 boys, 23 from *13RW* and 11 from *Riverdale*, and 19 girls, 11 from *13RW* and eight from *Riverdale*.

⁹ Three evaluations given by a female character to a group with both male and female characters are not included in the tables that contain results regarding insults given by the girls in *Riverdale*.

As shown in Figure 4.1, 344 of the evaluations are insults and 208 are compliments. In other words, 62.3% of the evaluations are insults and 37.7% are compliments. To my knowledge, there are no studies that have researched how common compliments and insults are in relation to each other. However, it is reasonable to assume that the dominance of insults is related to the dramatic effect insults have, as opposed to that of compliments. That is, insults can be used as a tool to easily create tension between the characters, which enhances the drama.

Table 4.1 shows that the male characters produce 299 of the total evaluations, which constitutes 54.2%, and the female characters produce 253 evaluations, which equals 45.8%. However, because of the higher number of male characters, when calculating the average numbers, it becomes clear that the female characters are the ones who give the most evaluations. The female characters produce 13.3 evaluations on average while the male characters produce 8.8 on average. The same pattern can be observed for the receivers of the evaluations. As presented in Table 4.1, the male characters receive 312 evaluations, which is 56.6% of the total evaluations, while the female characters receive 237, which is 42.9%. However, the female characters receive more evaluations on average than the male characters, as the girls are the target of 12.5 evaluations on average and the boys are the target of 9.2 on average. In other words, on average, the female characters both give and receive the most evaluations.

When comparing the numbers of total evaluations from the two series, however, the evaluative behavior of the *13RW* characters and that of the *Riverdale* characters produce different results. Table 4.2 below shows how the evaluations from each of the series are distributed regarding the givers' gender, and Table 4.3 shows how they are distributed regarding the targets' gender.

Table 4.2: Evaluations given in each series according to the givers' gender

	13 Reasons Why			Riverdale		
	No. (%)	Average	% of lines ¹⁰	No. (%)	Average	% of lines
Male	203 (71%)	8.8	7.7%	96 (36.1%)	8.7	9.7%
Female	83 (29%)	7.5	7.6%	170 (63.9%)	21.3	13%
Total	286 (100%)			266 (100%)		

Table 4.3: Evaluations received in each series according to the targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why		Riverdale	
	No. (%)	Average	No. (%)	Average
Male	176 (61.5%)	7.7	136 (51.1%)	12.4
Female	110 (38.5%)	10	127 (47.7%)	15.9
Total	286 (100%)		262 (98.8%)	

¹⁰ The percentages are calculated from the lines spoken by all the named characters, which in *13RW* equals 1,094 lines by the girls and 2,641 by the boys, and in *Riverdale*, 1,306 by the girls, and 987 by the boys.

As presented in Table 4.2, the male characters in *13RW* produce 203 of the 286 evaluations identified, which is 71%, while the female characters only produce 83 of the evaluations, which equals 29%. On average, that corresponds to 8.8 evaluations given by the boys and 7.5 evaluations by the girls. However, as discussed in section 3.1.2, the male characters in *13RW* speak much more than the female characters, which means that approximately how many evaluations the characters give in relation to how much they speak also has to be taken into consideration. In the case of *13RW*, 7.7% of the lines produced by male characters contain an evaluation, and 7.6% of those produced by female characters do. In other words, the male and female characters of *13RW* produce proportionally an equal amount of evaluations.

In contrast, the male characters from *Riverdale* only produce 96 of the total 266 evaluations, which equals 36.1% while the female characters give 170 of the evaluations, which constitutes 63.9%. On average, the boys give 8.7 evaluations, and the girls give 21.3. However, as is the case with *13RW*, the male and female characters in *Riverdale* do not speak the same amount, as the female characters speak much more than the male characters (see section 3.1.2). Therefore, the amount of evaluations proportionate to lines spoken has to be taken into account when studying the numbers from *Riverdale* as well. The male characters spend 9.7% of their lines giving evaluations, while the female characters spend 13% of theirs doing the same. In other words, the male and female characters in *13RW* give an equal amount of evaluations relative to how much they speak, while the female characters in *Riverdale* give more evaluations than male characters. Overall, however, the characters in *Riverdale* spend more of their lines producing evaluations than the characters in *13RW*. It is reasonable to assume that this is related to the stylistic differences between the two series mentioned in section 3.1.1. Though both series portray dramatic stories, *Riverdale* does so in a theatrical and exaggerated way, while *13RW* has a more realistic approach to its storytelling. One of the ways *Riverdale*'s theatricality is manifested is through the characters' use of hyperbolic and excessive compliments and insults. These differences, as well as the gender difference, will be further discussed in relation to the characters' compliment and insult behavior in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

With regard to the target of the evaluations, the difference between *13RW* and *Riverdale* is not as large. Table 4.3 shows that the male characters in *13RW* receive 176 evaluations in total, which equals 61.5% and the female characters receive 110, which is 38.5%. On average, that corresponds to 7.7 evaluations directed at the boys and 10 directed at the girls. Similarly, in *Riverdale*, the girls receive more evaluations than the male characters. At first glance, the difference is minimal, as the male characters are the target of 136 evaluations, which is 51.1%, and the female characters are the target of 127, which equals 47.7%. On average, however, the

female characters receive 15.9 evaluations while the male characters receive 12.4. The nuances of these differences will also be further discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

4.1.1 The categories

Figure 4.2 presents the number of evaluations in each of the six main categories based on the type of evaluation. The number of evaluations in all the subcategories are shown in Figure 4.3.

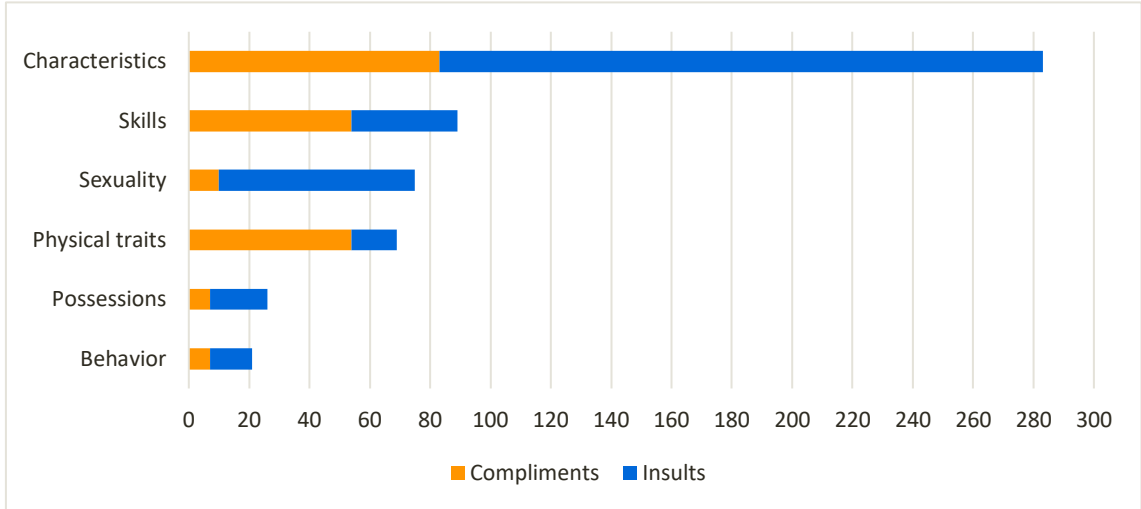


Figure 4.2: All evaluations according to category and type of evaluation

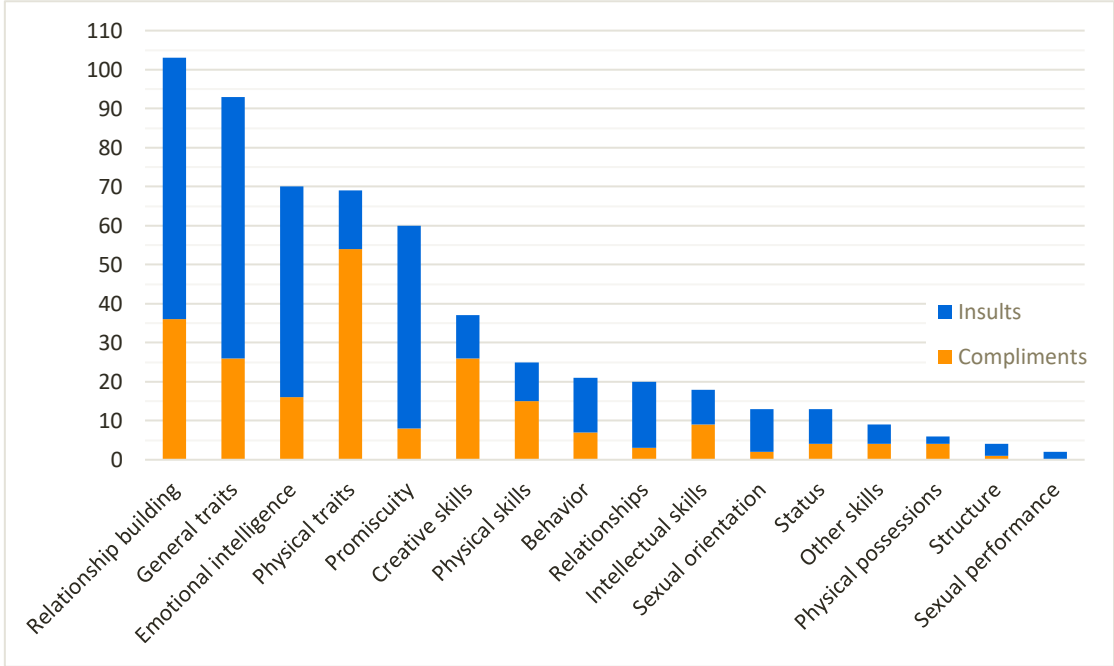


Figure 4.3: All evaluations according to type and subcategory

The largest category in my study, as illustrated by Figure 4.2, is Characteristics, with 283 evaluations, which constitutes 50.3% of the total evaluations categorized. The second largest category, which contains 15.8% of the evaluations, is Skills, with 89 evaluations. The third largest is Sexuality, with 75 evaluations, which amounts to 13.3%. And, the fourth largest, Physical traits, contains 69 evaluations, which corresponds to 12.3%. The two smallest categories, Possessions and Behavior, on the other hand, contain very few evaluations. 26 evaluations were categorized in Possessions, which equals 4.6%, and 21 were categorized in Behavior, which constitutes 3.7%.

When taking the subcategories into consideration we get a more nuanced picture of the distribution of the evaluations. Because of the great number of subcategories, though, only the five largest will be discussed. As shown by Figure 4.3, the three largest subcategories belong to the main category Characteristics, which explains its substantial size. Those three subcategories are Relationship building, with 103 evaluations, which corresponds to 18.3% of the total evaluations, General traits, with 93 evaluations, which equals 16.5%, and Emotional intelligence, with 70 evaluations, which is 12.4%. Next is the main category Physical traits, as it does not have any subcategories, with its 69 evaluations, which corresponds to 12.3%, followed by Promiscuity, which has 60 evaluations, which equals 10.7%.

Regarding the givers and targets, there are some gender differences. Therefore, the five largest subcategories are presented in Figure 4.4 below, although I will focus specifically on the three largest for each gender.

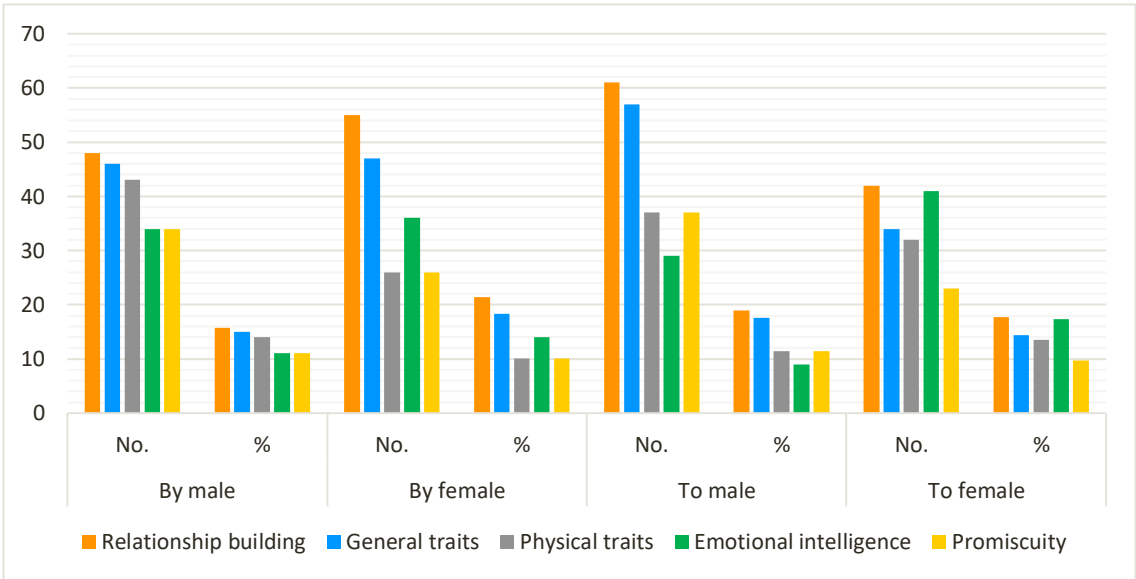


Figure 4.4: The five largest evaluation subcategories by the givers and targets' gender

For the male characters, as seen in Figure 4.4, the most evaluations given belong to the subcategory Relationship building. They give 48 such evaluations, which constitutes 15.7% of the evaluations given by the boys. The second largest category for the boys is General traits, which contains 46 evaluations, which equals 15%. The third largest is Physical traits with its 43 evaluations, which is 14.1%. As illustrated by Figure 4.4, Relationship building was also the subcategory with the most evaluations given by the girls. The female characters give 55 such evaluations, which equals 21.4% of the total evaluations given by the girls. The second largest subcategory, similarly to that of the male characters, is General traits, in which 47 evaluations are placed, which constitutes 18.3%. The third largest subcategory, however, differs from that of the boys, as 36 Emotional intelligence evaluations are given, which equals 14%, while the Physical traits category constitutes 10.1% of the evaluations given by the girls with its 26 evaluations.

Moreover, when looking at the targets' gender, Figure 4.4 shows that the evaluations are distributed similarly to the categorization of boys and girls' given evaluations, with only a few differences. Firstly, the male characters receive the most evaluations on their Relationship building, and secondly General traits, as they receive 61 and 57 evaluations respectively. That is, 18.9% of the evaluations received by the boys belong to Relationship building, and 17.6% to General traits. The second largest (sub)categories are Physical traits and Promiscuity, as both contain 37 evaluations each, which constitutes 11.5% each. For the female characters, as illustrated by Figure 4.4, the two largest evaluation subcategories contain almost the same amount. The largest, by one, is Relationship building, as that contains 42 evaluations, which equals 17.7% of the total evaluations targeting the girls. The second largest is Emotional intelligence with 41 evaluations, which corresponds to 17.3%. The third largest is General traits, with 34 evaluations, which is 14.3%.

In other words, by these numbers, the male and female characters' evaluative behavior seems more similar than different. However, in order to understand how they actually evaluate each other, the positive and negative nature of the evaluations, i.e., whether they are compliments or insults, also has to be taken into consideration (see sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.1).

4.1.2 Evaluations targeting dead characters

As mentioned in section 3.5.2, some of the evaluations identified target dead characters, which could potentially skew the results of my analysis. In total there are three dead characters that are targets of evaluations, two male peripheral characters, one in *Riverdale* and one in *13RW*, and one female main character in *13RW*, Hannah. The evaluations targeting dead characters are

presented in Figure 4.5 according to the targets' gender and in what subcategories they are placed.

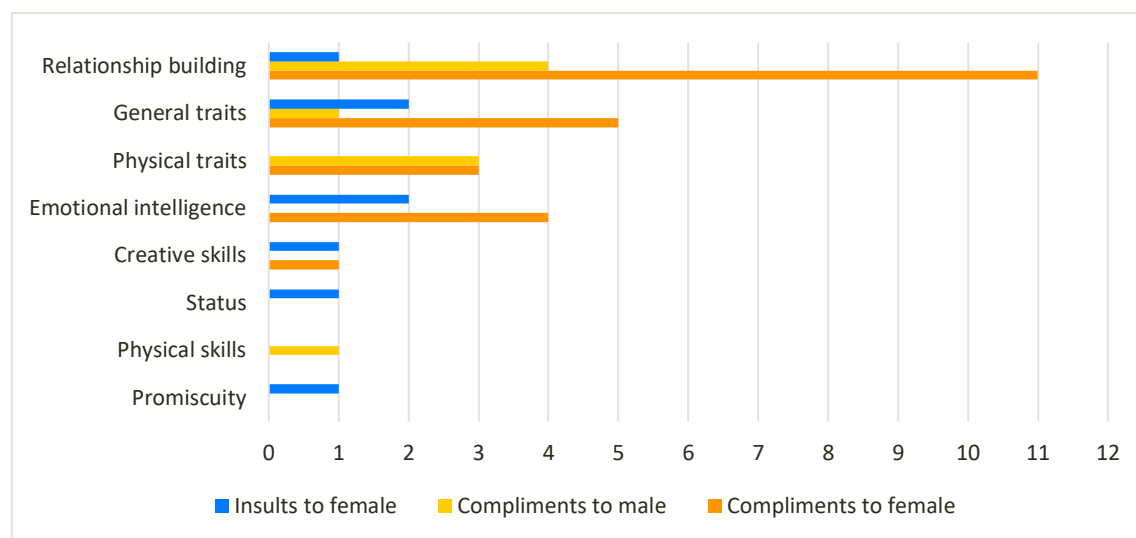


Figure 4.5: Compliments and insults targeting dead characters by subcategory and targets' gender

As Figure 4.5 shows, 41 evaluations target dead characters in total, of which 33 are compliments and eight are insults. This means that 15.9% of the total 208 compliments targets dead characters, while this is the case for only 2.3% of the total 344 insults. The fact that the characters give considerably more insults than compliments in general, but they give far more compliments than insults to the dead characters, supports my concern that the evaluations directed towards dead characters could skew my results toward more compliments than what would be given if the characters were alive. Thus, these compliments will receive special attention when discussing the compliment categories in general and Relationship building specifically (see sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.3).

4.2 Compliments

Hypothesis 1 of this study predicts that the female characters will both give and receive the most compliments. Table 4.4 shows how the compliments were distributed by gender, presented in numbers, percentages, and average numbers.

Table 4.4: All compliments according to gender

	Giver		Target	
	No. (%)	Average	No. (%)	Average
Male	108 (51.9%)	3.2	97 (46.6%)	2.9
Female	100 (48.1%)	5.3	111 (53.4%)	5.8
Total	208 (100%)		208 (100%)	

As shown in Table 4.4, 108 of the total 208 compliments are given by male characters and 100 by female. This means that the male characters produce 51.9% of the compliments and the female characters, 48.1%. Though these numbers imply that the boys give the most compliments, the fact that there are more boys than girls in the series has to be taken into consideration. It is in fact the female characters who produce the most compliments, as they give 5.3 compliments on average and the male characters give 3.2.

In regard to who receives the most compliments, as indicated in Table 4.4, 111 compliments target the female characters, which equals 53.4%, while the male characters receive 97 compliments, which constitutes 46.6%. Because of the predominance of male characters, however, the female characters receive the most compliments on average. The girls receive 5.8 compliments on average, and the boys receive 2.9. This means that the girls actually receive twice as many compliments on average as the male characters.

The distribution of compliments across gender in each of the two series is presented below in Table 4.5, in relation to the givers' gender, and in Table 4.6, in relation to the targets' gender.

Table 4.5: Compliments given in each series by the givers' gender

	13 Reasons Why			Riverdale		
	No. (%)	Average	% of lines	No. (%)	Average	% of lines
Male	72 (65.5%)	3.1	2.7%	36 (36.7%)	3.3	3.7%
Female	38 (34.5%)	3.5	3.5%	62 (63.3%)	7.8	4.8%
Total	110 (100%)			98 (100%)		

Table 4.6: Compliments received in each series by the targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why		Riverdale	
	No. (%)	Average	No. (%)	Average
Male	48 (43.6%)	2.1	49 (50%)	4.5
Female	62 (56.3%)	5.6	49 (50%)	6.1
Total	110 (100%)		98 (100%)	

The results from the two series seen separately, which are presented in Table 4.5 above, show very distinct compliment behaviors. Of the total 110 compliments given in *13RW*, 72 are produced by the boys, which is 65.5%, and 38 are produced by the girls, which equals 34.5%. However, on average, the male and female characters produce almost an equal number of compliments. The female characters produce on average 3.5 compliments and the male characters, 3.1. Additionally, according to how much of the total lines spoken by each gender

are compliments, the difference is quite small. 2.7% of the lines spoken by the boys are compliments and 3.5% of those spoken by the girls.

In *Riverdale*, on the other hand, the male and female characters show somewhat different compliment behaviors. Of the total 98 compliments identified, the female characters give 62, which equals 63.3%, while the male characters only give 36 compliments, which is 36.7%. In terms of compliments given on average, that corresponds to 7.8 compliments given by the girls and 3.3 given by the boys. These numbers depict the female characters giving twice as many compliments as the male characters on average. However, if the total number of lines spoken by each gender is considered, the difference is not as large. Of the total lines produced by the female characters 4.8% are compliments, while of the total lines produced by the boys, 3.7% are compliments. Hence, because the female characters produce much more lines than the male characters, they also have the opportunity to produce more compliments than the male characters.

When looking at the numbers for received compliments in each of the series, a few differences can be observed. The most noticeable difference is found in *13RW*. As presented by Table 4.6, the male characters in *13RW* receive 48 compliments in total, which is 43.6% of the total 110 compliments identified, while the female characters receive 62 compliments, which equals 56.3%. That corresponds to the boys receiving 2.1 compliments on average and the girls receiving 5.6. In other words, the female characters in *13RW* receive more than twice as many compliments on average as the male characters.

The numbers from *Riverdale*, in Table 4.6, show a similar result. However, when looking at just the raw numbers, it seems as if the male and female characters receive 50% of the compliments each, as they both receive 49 compliments. When taking into consideration the average numbers, on the other hand, it becomes clear that the female characters do receive more compliments than the male characters, as the girls receive 6.1 compliments, and the boys receive 4.5. In comparison with the numbers from *13RW*, the male and female characters in *Riverdale* receive a more similar amount of compliments on average than the characters in *13RW*. However, the female characters in both series receive more compliments than the boys on average.

According to research on compliment behavior discussed in section 2.5.4, women tend to both give and receive more compliments than men (Wolfson 1984; Rees-Miller 2011). Though this is reflected in the overall results, the difference is smaller than anticipated, in particular regarding the givers. Although there is no obvious explanation for this, one possibility is that the compliment behavior of teenagers might differ from that of adults, who are most

often the focus in compliment research. One of the main foci for both male and female teens is to build relations with each other, and compliments are one tool to achieve this. Although relations are, undoubtedly, important in all stages of life, it is plausible to assume that most adults already have built some relations, which would cause them to be less concerned about relationships than teenagers. This could mean that their compliment behaviors rather align with stereotypical male and female behavior, in which complimenting is related to femininity, than with their need to build relations. Another possibility is that the scriptwriters, who are all adults, believe that male and female teenagers either give a similar amount of compliments or that they should give a more equal amount than they do. Additionally, compliments can be an effective tool for character building in fictional discourse. The fact that character building is a necessary process for most regular and recurring characters could explain why fictional discourse might have less gender variation regarding compliments than authentic speech.

4.2.1 The categories

The 208 compliments identified were categorized into six categories, as illustrated by Figure 4.6.

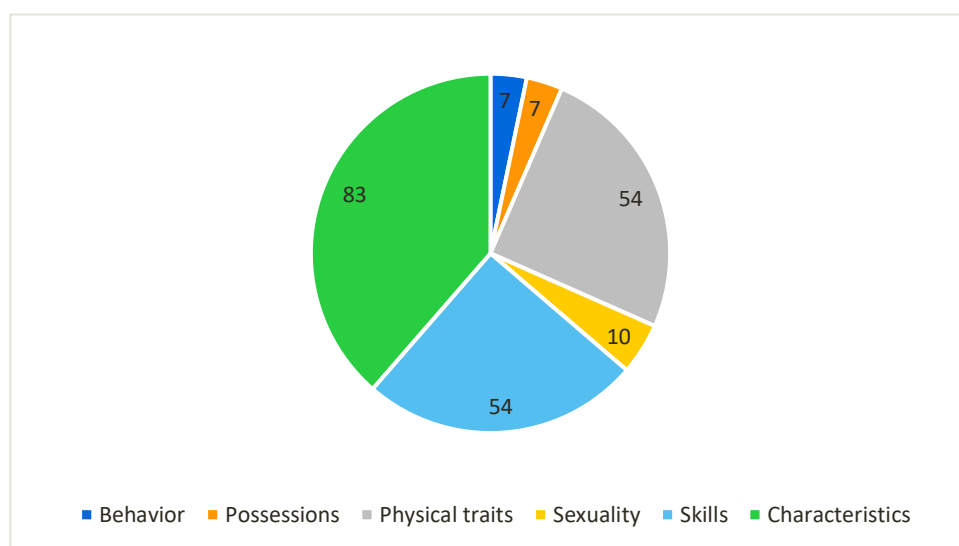


Figure 4.6: All compliments according to the main categories

As Figure 4.6 shows, most of the compliments identified belong to the main categories Characteristics, Skills, and Physical traits. In total, 83 Characteristics compliments were identified, which equals 38.6% of the total compliments, and 54 Skills and Physical traits compliments each, which constitutes 25% each. In contrast, in each of the three smallest compliment categories, Sexuality, Possessions, and Behavior, less than 10 compliments were

placed. This means that the three smallest categories collectively constitute only 11.2% of the total compliments.

In comparison to Rees-Miller’s (2011, 2678–79) research on American’s compliment behavior, where appearance and performance compliments are the most common and possession and personality compliments are rare, there is one notable difference. The category Characteristics, or perhaps its subcategory General traits, both of which could potentially be compared to Rees-Miller’s (2011) personality category, is among the largest (sub)categories in my study, but the smallest in her research. However, as she neither provides the description of her categories nor how she defines compliments, a true comparison is not possible. A possible explanation for more Characteristics compliments in these series than in authentic speech is that the characters’ personalities in fictional discourse have to be constructed and clearly portrayed to the audience, which could potentially be done through verbal evaluations.

In relation to the categories and subcategories, hypothesis 2 states that both genders will give the most compliments on Physical traits. Figure 4.7 below presents the main categories according to gender.

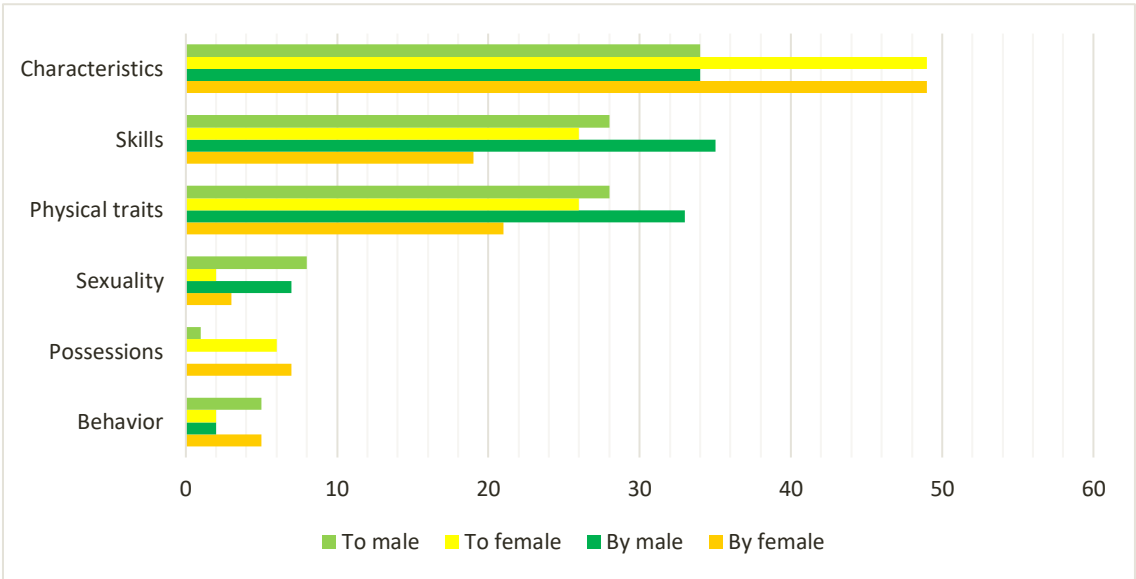


Figure 4.7: Compliment main categories according to the givers and targets’ gender

The largest main categories for compliments given by each gender differ slightly. As illustrated by Figure 4.7, the male characters give a total of 35 Skills compliments, which equals 31.5% of the 108 compliments given by the boys. A close second is the Characteristics category with 34 compliments, which constitutes 30.6%, and following these is the Physical traits category with 33 compliments, which equals 29.7%. The female characters, on the other hand, give the

most compliments on others' Characteristics. In total, they give 49 Characteristics compliments, which is 47.1% of the 104 compliments given by the girls. Moreover, they give 21 compliments on Physical traits, which corresponds to 20.2%, and 19 compliments on Skills, which is 18.3%.

In relation to received compliments, hypothesis 3 predicts that the female characters will be complimented the most on their Physical traits and the male characters on their Skills. As illustrated by Figure 4.7, the male characters most frequently receive compliments on their Characteristics, with 35 compliments, which equals 32.7% of the 104 compliments targeting the boys. The second largest main categories are Physical traits and Skills, both of which contain 28 compliments, which constitutes 26.9% each. Similarly, the female characters receive the most compliments on their Characteristics, with 49, which equals 44.1% of the total 111 compliments targeting the girls. Also, much like how the compliments received by the boys are distributed, the second largest main categories for the girls are Physical traits and Skills, with 26 compliments in each, which corresponds to 23.4% each.

In order to get a more nuanced view of the characters' compliment behaviors and what the characters are actually complimented on, the subcategories have to be considered. Additionally, how compliments given to the dead characters potentially affect the results will also be taken into account. Because of the large number of subcategories, only the three largest for each gender will be presented and discussed. First, they will be presented and discussed briefly, and then I will discuss the three largest subcategories for each gender in more detail in sections 4.2.2–4.2.5. Figure 4.8 shows the six largest compliment subcategories according to the givers and targets' gender, both including the compliments given to dead characters and excluding them.

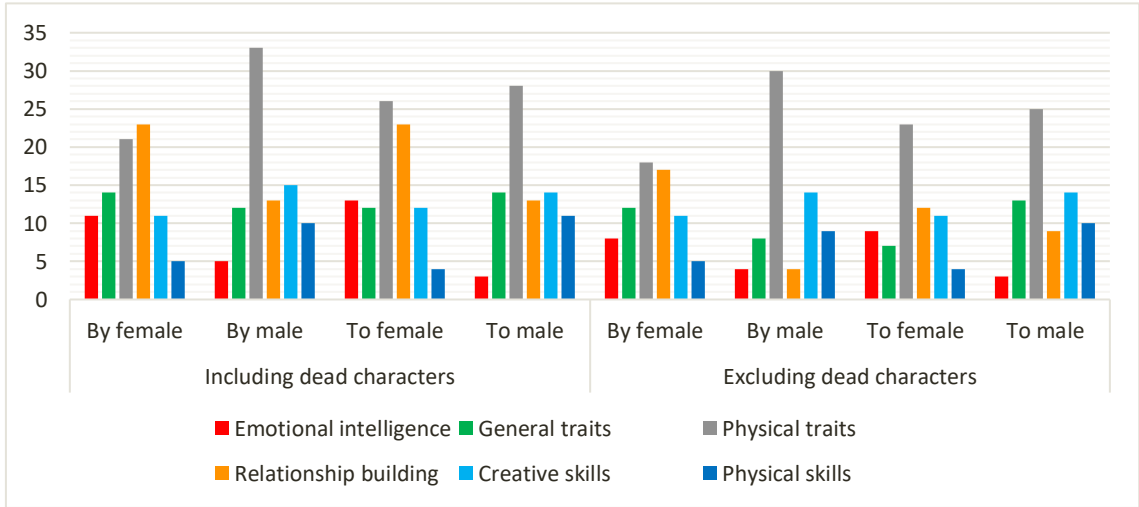


Figure 4.8: Largest compliment subcategories, including and excluding dead characters, by gender

As shown in Figure 4.8, the largest compliment (sub)category is Physical traits, with 54 compliments, of which 21 are given by female characters and 33 by male characters. In other words, 20.2% of the compliments given by the girls are commenting on the other characters' Physical traits, while this is the case for 29.7% of the 111 compliments given by the boys. Additionally, this is the (sub)category that contains the most compliments produced by the male characters. The subcategory with the second most compliments given by male characters is Creative skills, with 15, which equals 13.5% and the one with the third most is Relationship building, with 13, which constitutes 11.7%. However, if the compliments directed towards the dead characters were to be considered, there is one considerable difference; compliments regarding Relationship building would no longer be the third largest subcategory, but rather among the smaller subcategories, with only four compliments (see section 4.2.3). Instead, the Physical skills subcategory would be the third largest, with nine compliments.

Though Physical traits is the largest (sub)category for both genders combined, the female characters most frequently give compliments that refer to Relationship building, with 23 compliments, which equals 22.1%. Physical traits, on the other hand, is the second largest, and the third largest is General traits, with 14, which is 13.5%. However, the numbers are affected slightly when considering the compliments regarding the dead characters. Mainly, Physical traits would contain more compliments than Relationship building by one compliment, as the former would have 18 compliments and the latter 17.

In relation to received compliments, as Figure 4.8 above shows, Physical traits is the largest subcategory for both genders. The male characters receive 28 such compliments, which is 26.9% of the compliments targeting the boys, and the female characters receive 26, which equals 23.4% of the compliments directed at the girls. The subcategories with the second most compliments directed at the boys are Creative skills and General traits, with 14 compliments each, which constitutes 13.5%. If the compliments directed at the dead male characters were to be excluded, the numbers would only change minimally. The Physical traits category would contain three fewer compliments and General traits would contain one less.

For the female characters, as presented in Figure 4.8 above, the subcategory with the second most received compliments is Relationship building, with 23 compliments, which equals 20.7%, and the third largest is Emotional intelligence with 13, which is 11.7%. However, if the compliments directed toward the dead female character were excluded, Creative skills is the third largest subcategory with 11 compliments, as Emotional intelligence would consist of four fewer compliments. Additionally, the subcategory Relationship building would contain 11 fewer compliments, which is interesting, as that means that almost half of the compliments on

Relationship building directed at the girls are targeting a dead character. This will be discussed further in section 4.2.3.

4.2.2 Physical traits

The largest compliment (sub)category is, as mentioned, Physical traits, with 54 compliments. All the Physical traits compliments identified are presented in Table 4.7 according to the givers and targets' gender.

Table 4.7: Physical traits compliments in each series by the givers and targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why	Riverdale	Total
F→F	2 (7.4%)	5 (18.5%)	7 (13%)
F→M	3 (11.1%)	11 (40.7%)	14 (25.9%)
M→M	6 (22.2%)	8 (29.6%)	14 (25.9%)
M→F	16 (59.3%)	3 (11.1%)	19 (35.2%)
Total	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	54 (100%)

As Table 4.7 shows, the Physical traits compliments quite evenly target the male and female characters. The boys received 28 compliments on their Physical traits, which equals 51.9%, while the girls received 26, which constitutes 48.2%. What is interesting, however, is between what genders these compliments are given and received. The female characters, who collectively produce 21 Physical traits compliments, which corresponds to 38.9% of the total compliments given, give 7 of them to other girls and 14 to male characters. That means that 13% of all Physical traits compliments are given among the girls and 25.9% are given from girls to boys. The fact that the girls give twice as many compliments to the male characters than the female could potentially be related to the fact that the male characters complimented by the girls are all heterosexual and, therefore, potential partners. This is further supported by a similar trend in the 33 Physical traits compliments given by the boys, as 19 of them are given to girls, which equals 57.6% of the Physical traits compliments produced by the boys. Only two of these are said without potential romantic or sexual interest, one that is produced by a queer male character [1], and one that would be considered sexual harassment [2].

[1] And where did you get those thigh-high boots? They're amazing. (R-03)

[2] That night I saw the real you. The dark you. The Betty that I actually think about every night when I'm lying in bed. (R-10)

However, the fact that the remaining 14 compliments are given between male characters, which constitutes 25.9% of the total compliments, is surprising. This is because boys complimenting other boys on their Physical traits directly contradicts Rees-Miller's (2011, 2676) findings that men almost never receive compliments on their appearance from neither men nor women. Additionally, because of the small number of queer male characters in the series, the unexpected number of Physical traits compliments given between the male characters is not immediately assumed to be related to potential partners. However, the Physical traits compliment category is the category with the most compliments given by queer male characters. In fact, of the 14 compliments given between male characters, only three are given by heterosexual male characters:

- [3] Bro. You are ready for football. I'm not kidding you, dude, you got ripped. Dude, you're a beast. Look at this arm. How much are you benching? Like, 220, 225? (R-01)
- [4] Looking good, guys. (13RW-01)
- [5] Looking good. Looking buff. (R-08)

Compliment [3] is the only one that is said between heterosexual friends. It is given the first day back at school after summer and is a reaction to the target's visible body change. As giving compliments, especially on someone's appearance, is considered to be related to femininity, framing the compliment around possible physical skill increase by mentioning football and benching, and using the address forms *bro* and *dude* might be strategic choices by the writers to avoid the speaker being perceived as homosexual.

The other two compliments, [4] and [5], are given as encouragement to acquaintances. Compliment [4] is given by the yearbook photographer to members of the football team as he takes their picture in the hallway, and compliment [5] is given by a member of the football team to a peer as they are helping at a construction site. Both compliments are impersonal and superficial, and could not be interpreted as potentially romantic in any way.

The remaining 11 compliments given between boys are produced by queer male characters, some examples of which are shown below:

- [6] Of course, I [think Justin's hot]. I'm not blind, or, like, chemically castrated. (13RW-05)
- [7] I think you're cute... um, and funny and you have a way with words that I'm not entirely sure I understand. (13RW-10)
- [8] What kind of foolish woman would let you go? (13RW-03)

[9] His name may be Moose, but I'd describe a certain appendage of his as horse-like. (R-01)

The majority of the compliments produced by queer male characters are directed at heterosexual male characters who are not present to hear the compliments. All these compliments have a sexual undertone, which is illustrated by example [6]. The compliments made by queer male characters that are directed at other queer male characters, in the cases where the target is present, are either used to flirt, as in [7], or to ask permission to flirt, as in [8]. Only one of the Physical traits compliments given by and to queer male characters has a clear sexual undertone, as in [9]. Moreover, all the Physical traits compliments made by queer male characters are made with a romantic or sexual desire, which further suggests that Physical traits compliments could be used as an indication for romantic or sexual interest. It is therefore possible that Physical traits compliments could potentially be used in fictional discourse to give indications of characters' sexual orientations, and potentially to suggest to the audience what possible relationships they can expect.

Another identified pattern regards the compliments received by the male characters. As illustrated by examples [3] and [5] above, and [10] and [11] below, the male characters receive Physical traits compliments that reference their muscles. In total, they receive 8 such compliments, which equals 28.6% of the Physical traits compliments targeting them.

[10] Chuck has muscles for days, but his conversation is not the stuff of Oscar Wilde or even Diablo Cody. (R-03)

[11] Archie got hot. He's got abs now. Six more reasons for you to take that ginger bull by the horns tonight. (R-01)

The female characters, on the other hand, do not receive any compliments pertaining to their muscles. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that this is related to the stereotype that men are expected to have physical attributes related to toughness, such as being muscular, while women are expected to have physical attributes related to softness (see section 2.4.2).

4.2.3 Relationship building

The compliment subcategory Relationship building is the subcategory that contains the most compliments directed at dead characters. The compliments identified within this subcategory, both including and excluding the compliments targeting the dead characters, are presented in Table 4.8 below according to the giver and targets' gender.

Table 4.8: Relationship building compliments by the givers and targets' gender

	Including dead characters	Excluding dead characters	Only dead characters¹¹
F→F	15 (41.7%)	10 (47.6%)	5 (33.3%)
F→M	8 (22.2%)	7 (33.3%)	1 (12.5%)
M→F	8 (22.2%)	2 (9.5%)	6 (75%)
M→M	5 (13.9%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (60%)
Total	36 (100%)	21 (100%)	15 (41.7%)

As previously mentioned, 36 Relationship building compliments were identified. However, as Table 4.8 shows, 15 of these, which equals 41.7%, are directed at dead characters. Because this number is considerable, it has to be taken into account when discussing the implications of these compliments. Most of the Relationship building compliments are given by and directed at the female characters. They receive 23 such compliments in total, which is 63.9% of the total compliments in this subcategory. 15 of these compliments are given by other girls, which equals 41.7% of the total Relationship building compliments, and eight are by the boys, which constitutes 22.2%. However, if only the compliments given to the girls who are alive are considered, they would receive 12 such compliments, which is 57.1% of the 21 Relationship building compliments targeting only the alive characters. In other words, 11 of the compliments given to the girls, which equals 47.8%, are directed at the dead female main character. One noticeable difference from the numbers including dead characters to those excluding them is that the male characters give 75% of the eight Relationship building compliments targeting the girls to the dead character.

Regarding the male characters, they receive 13 of the 36 compliments in this subcategory, which equals 36.1%. Eight of these are produced by the female characters, which equals 22.2% of the total Relationship building compliments, and five are produced by other male characters, which constitutes 13.9%. Only four of the 13 compliments are given to dead characters, which equals 30.8%. The reason why a larger proportion of the compliments directed at the girls are targeting a dead character than of those directed at the boys is that the two dead male characters are, as previously mentioned, peripheral characters, while the one dead female character is a main character.

In relation to the givers, there are two noticeable tendencies regarding gender. Firstly, the female characters produce the majority of these compliments, as they produce 23, which equals 63.9%, while the boys produce 13, which constitutes 36.1%. Moreover, when considering only the compliments given to alive characters the difference grows, as the girls

¹¹ These percentages indicate how many of the compliments within each row are directed at dead characters.

give 17 such compliments, which is 81%, and the boys only give four, which equals 19%. Secondly, as these numbers indicate, most of the compliments given by the male characters are directed toward dead characters. Nine of the 13 compliments produced by the male characters, which equals 69.2%, are directed at dead characters, while only four, which equals 30.8%, are directed toward living characters.

Moreover, of the four compliments related to kindness that the boys produce, only the two compliments given to the female characters are expressed with emotion. The two that are given to other male characters, which are presented in examples [12] and [13], on the other hand, are not.

[12] Such a gentleman. (13RW-02)

[13] Well, that's super kind of you. (13RW-08)

Though both compliments are genuine expressions of gratitude in context, they are said with a flat tone and clear emotional distance. This is possibly done so that the character is not perceived as feminine, seeing that using friendly and courteous language, such as expressing gratitude, is considered stereotypical female behavior (see section 2.4.4). Additionally, it might be related to the strategy suggested by Kiesling (2007, 665), discussed in section 2.5.4, that men use competitive and distancing forms, such as insults, in order to build solidarity with other men without it potentially being understood as sexual interest. Furthermore, the fact that the male characters only produce two Relationship building compliments expressed with emotion, and that the female characters give 81% of these compliments, might reflect that this is a characteristic that boys are not supposed to care about, but girls are. This could potentially be related to the stereotype discussed in section 2.4.2, that women are supposed to be caring and supportive, while men are not.

Another interesting tendency is related to the kind of Relationship building compliments that are targeting the dead characters. As mentioned, the dead female character receives 11 such compliments and the two dead male characters receive four.

[14] And she was always nice to me. (13RW-02)

[15] Hannah was a friend to me and she kept my secrets. (13RW-10)

[16] He protected me. Every single day. (R-05)

[17] He was what a teammate should be. Loyal. (13RW-07)

The dead female character receives eight compliments on being kind and a good friend, both by male and female characters, as illustrated by examples [14] and [15]. The dead male characters, however, do not receive any such compliments. As demonstrated in examples [16] and [17], they only receive compliments related to being loyal and protective, of which they receive three and one, respectively. Though the dead female character also receives three compliments on her loyalty, it is interesting that loyalty and protectiveness are the only attributes related to Relationship building that are focused on when remembering the dead male characters.

4.2.4 General traits

Although the General traits compliment subcategory is among the largest, there are no discernable patterns. This is because it is designed to encompass the Characteristics compliments that do not fit into any other subcategory. Thus, it contains both an assortment of sentiments, as illustrated by example [18], and very general compliments, as in [19].

[18] Okay, Miss Gyver. (R-04)

[19] Plus, I want some dirt on Mr. Perfect here. (13RW-05)

4.2.5 Creative skills

As mentioned above, 26 Creative skills compliments were identified, 12 directed at the female characters, and 14 directed at the male characters. Figure 4.9 below shows the Creative skills compliments identified according to the contents of the compliments and the gender of the givers and targets.

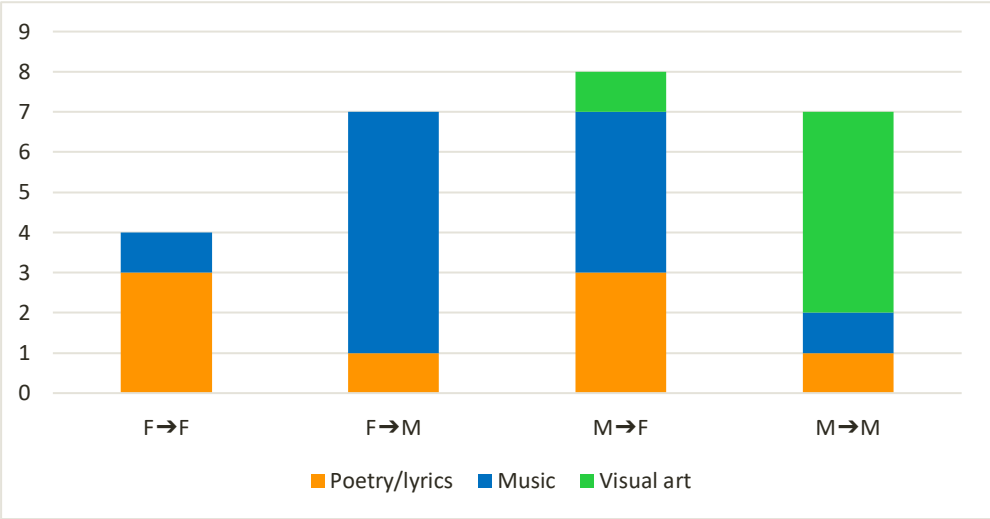


Figure 4.9: Creative skills compliments by content and the givers and targets’ genders

As indicated by Figure 4.9, the creative skill that is complimented the most in the series is regarding music, with 12 compliments, of which five are given to the girls and seven to the boys. Though the distribution of the music compliments is quite even, there is an interesting tendency in that these compliments are almost exclusively given from one gender to another. Only one of the music compliments is given from a female character to another female character and one from a male character to another male character. Additionally, the one music compliment given from a male character to another is mitigated by an insult, as in [20].

[20] I thought we're gonna have to pretend to like it, but it's actually really good. (R-01)

Another interesting tendency related to the Creative skills compliments is that the compliments on someone's visual art, such as graffiti and photography, are only given by male characters. As shown by Figure 4.9, the male characters give six such compliments, of which five are given to other male characters, and only one is given to a female character. That almost all the visual art compliments are directed at male characters could most likely be explained by the fact that several of the male characters have visual art interests while that is the case for only one of the female characters. However, the fact that none of the female characters comment on the artistic abilities of the male characters, even though they are friends with them, contradicts this argument slightly. Though the numbers from my study are too small to draw any conclusions, they might suggest that some expressions of art are considered stereotypically more masculine than feminine, and vice versa.

This is further supported by the fact that the poetry/lyrics compliments are mainly given to the female characters. Of the nine compliments regarding writing poetry and lyrics, six are given to the girls, and three to the boys. Additionally, all the compliments that are specifically about poetry are given to the girls. This might be related to the fact that the storylines of two of the female characters are directly related to poems they have written, while the poems written by the one male character that writes poetry are not read or discussed by any of the characters. However, the fact that this one male character is queer, might actually further the argument that poetry is considered a stereotypically feminine expression of art, in line with the sexual orientation hypothesis (cf. 2.5.4). In other words, the compliments related to poetry do not directly reflect any gender stereotypes, but the writers choosing to only have female characters and a queer male character write poems might.

4.3 Insults

Hypothesis 1 of this thesis predicts that the boys would produce and receive the most insults. Table 4.9 below shows how the insults identified are distributed between the genders in relation to the givers and targets.

Table 4.9: All insults according to gender

	Giver		Target	
	No. (%)	Average	No. (%)	Average
Male	191 (55.5%)	5.6	215 (62.5%)	6.3
Female	153 (44.5%)	8.1	126 (36.6%)	6.6
Total	344 (100%)		341 (99.1%)	

As shown in Table 4.9, the male characters give 191 insults, which constitutes 55.5% of the total 344 insults, and the female characters give 153 insults, which is 44.5%. Though this implies that the male characters produce slightly more insults than the female characters, on average the girls give more insults than the boys. The girls produce 8.1 insults on average, while the boys produce 5.6.

In relation to who receives the most insults, the boys receive 215, which is 62.5%, and the girls receive 126, which equals 36.6%. Though almost two thirds of the insults are targeting the male characters, the average numbers disclose that the male and female characters are the target of almost the same amount of insults. The male characters receive 6.3 insults on average and the female characters receive 6.6.

The characters' insult behaviors in each of the two series are presented below in Table 4.10 according to the givers' gender, and Table 4.11 shows the insults from each series according to the targets' gender.

Table 4.10: Insults given in each series by the givers' gender

	13 Reasons Why			Riverdale		
	No. (%)	Average	% of lines	No. (%)	Average	% of lines
Male	131 (74.4%)	5.7	5%	60 (35.7%)	5.5	6.1%
Female	45 (25.6%)	4.1	4.1%	108 (64.3%)	13.5	8.3%
Total	176 (100%)			168 (100%)		

Table 4.11: Insults received in each series by the targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why		Riverdale	
	No. (%)	Average	No. (%)	Average
Male	128 (72.7%)	5.6	87 (51.8%)	7.9
Female	48 (27.3%)	4.4	78 (46.4%)	9.8
Total	176 (100%)		165 (98.2%)	

As presented in Table 4.10, in *13RW*, 131 of the total 176 insults are produced by the male characters, which constitutes 74.4%, and 45 insults are produced by the female characters, which equals 25.6%. Though it seems, from these numbers, that the male characters produce much more insults than the female characters in *13RW*, the average numbers suggest that the difference is much smaller, as the boys produce, on average, 5.7 insults while the girls produce 4.1. However, when taking into consideration that the male characters also speak more than the female characters, the difference decreases even more. 5% of the total lines spoken by the male characters are insults, whereas that is the case for 4.1% of the total lines spoken by the female characters. Hence, the insults are quite evenly distributed between the boys and girls in *13RW*.

In *Riverdale*, however, the results show a different tendency, as the female characters produce the most insults with 108, which equals 64.3% of the 168 total insults, and the male characters produce 60, which is 35.7%. As opposed to the numbers from *13RW*, where the average numbers evened out the results, the numbers from *Riverdale* show a large difference. On average, the female characters produce 13.5 insults while the male characters produce 5.5. In other words, on average, the female characters produce more than twice as many insults as the male characters. However, because the female characters in *Riverdale* produce more lines than the male characters, the difference is not as substantial. 8.3% of the lines produced by the girls are insults while that is the case for 6.1% of the lines uttered by the boys. In other words, the female characters not only speak more than the male characters, they also spend more of that time giving insults. Even though the difference between the boys and girls in *Riverdale* is not as large as first suggested, it is interesting that the female characters from *Riverdale* spend 8.3% of their lines insulting others while the female characters from *13RW* only spend 4.1% of their lines doing the same. This might be explained by the fact that *Riverdale* has a female villain, one of whose defining characteristics is giving insults to the other characters.

In relation to who receives the most insults in *13RW*, as Table 4.11 above shows, the male characters receive 128 insults, which is 72.7% of the 176 insults identified, and the female characters receive 48, which constitutes 27.3%. Though the difference between the genders is not as large when considering the average numbers, the male characters still receive the most insults. The male characters are the target of 5.6 insults on average, whereas the female characters are the target of 4.4.

In *Riverdale*, however, the results show a different tendency. The male characters are the target of 87 insults, which is 51.8% of the 165 insults identified, while the female characters are the target of 78 insults, which equals 46.4%. On average, on the other hand, the girls receive more insults, with 9.8, while the boys receive 7.9. It is interesting that in *13RW*, the male

characters are the target of the most insults, while in *Riverdale*, that is the case for the female characters. This might also be related to the fact that *Riverdale* has a female villain. Since she interacts more with the other girls than with the boys, she also insults them more frequently.

4.3.1 The categories

The 348 insults identified were also categorized into the six main categories, which are presented in Figure 4.10, and their subsequent subcategories, which are shown in Figure 4.11.

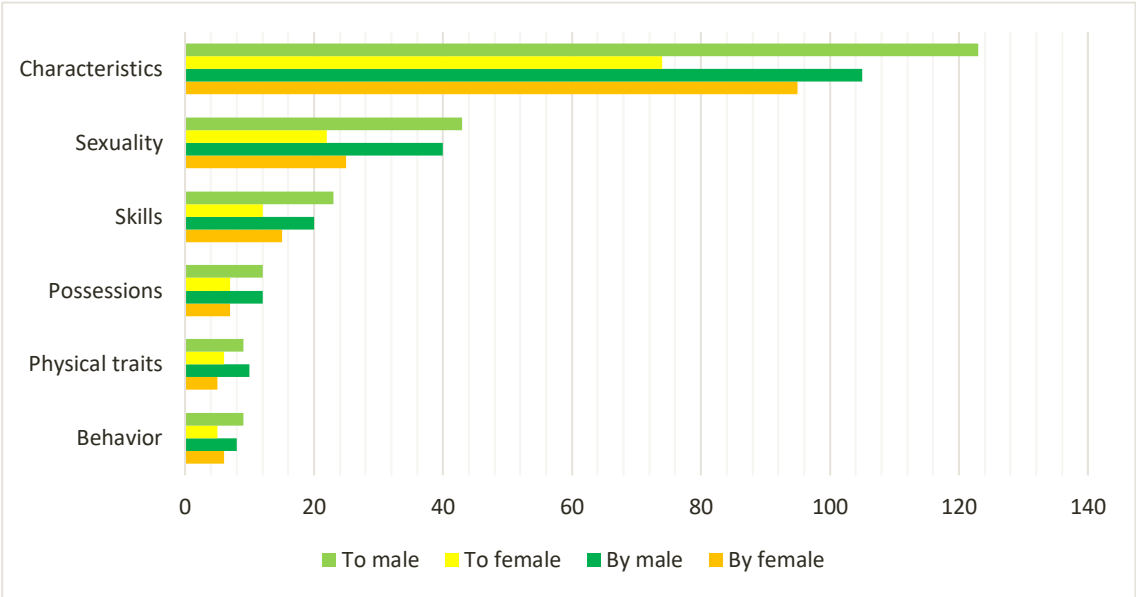


Figure 4.10: All insults by main category and givers and targets' gender

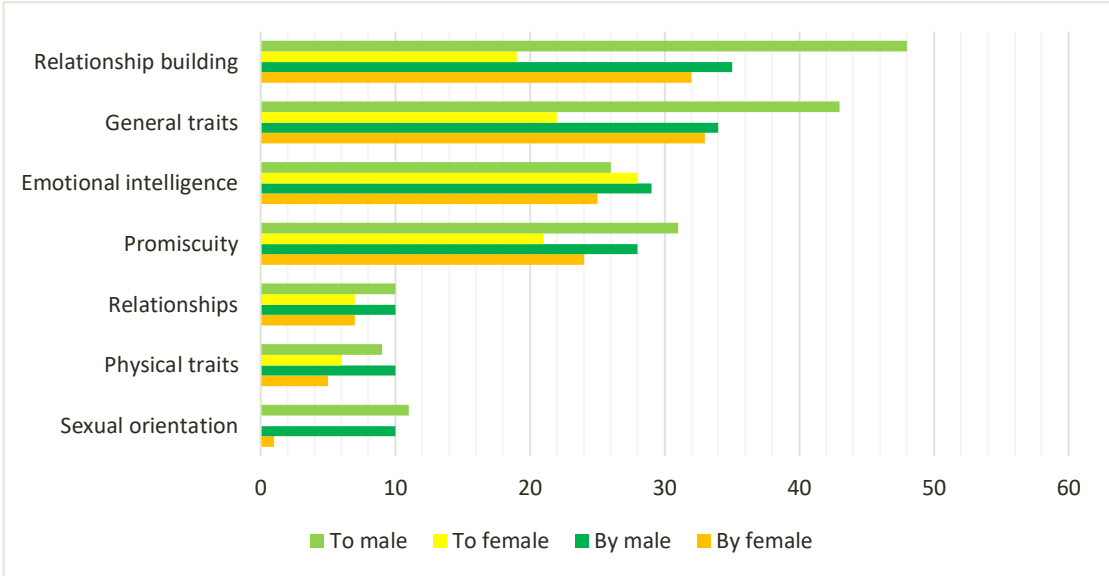


Figure 4.11: The largest insult subcategories according to the givers and targets' gender.

Regarding the givers, hypothesis 4 predicts that the girls will give the most insults on Relationship building, and the boys will give the most on Emotional intelligence. As Figure 4.10 shows, the majority of the insults are placed in the main category Characteristics, with 200 insults, which equals 57.5% of the total insults categorized. The male characters give 105 such insults, which is 53.8% of the 195 insults given by the boys, making it the largest main category for the male characters. The boys give the second most insults on Sexuality, as they give 40 such insults, which constitutes 20.5%. The third largest category for them is Skills, which contains 20 insults, which corresponds to 10.3%. For the female characters, the largest main category is also Characteristics, which contains 95 insults, which equals 62.1% of the 153 insults given by female characters. Similar to the male characters, the female characters give the second most insults on Sexuality, with 25 insults, which constitutes 16.3%. The third largest main category for the girls, as for the boys, is Skills, with 15 insults, which equals 9.8%. In other words, the male and female characters show very similar insult behavior in relation to the main categories.

In relation to the targets, hypothesis 5 states that the female characters will receive the most insults related to Relationship building and Promiscuity, while the male characters will receive the most related to Emotional intelligence. As shown in Figure 4.10, both the male and female characters receive the most insults on their Characteristics, with 123 and 74, respectively. That is, 56.2% of the insults directed at the boys and 58.7% of the insults directed at the girls are on their Characteristics. The category with the second most insults received, for both genders, is Sexuality. The male characters receive 43 insults related to Sexuality, which equals 19.6%, and the female characters receive 22, which constitutes 17.5%. The third largest category is Skills, as the boys receive 23 Skills insults, which correlates to 10.5%, and the girls receive 12, which is 9.5%. According to these numbers, the insults received are similarly distributed in the different main categories for the male and female characters.

However, in order to understand the nuances of the characters' insult behaviors and what kind of insults they actually receive, the subcategories will have to be taken into account as well. As shown by Figure 4.11 above, the male and female characters' insult behaviors are slightly more different than what is indicated by looking only at the main categories. The subcategories that contain the most insults given by the male and female characters are Relationship building, General traits, and Emotional intelligence. The male characters give the most insults on Relationship building and General traits, as these subcategories contain 35 and 34 insults given by the boys, respectively. That is, 17.9% of the insults given by the boys are on Relationship building, and 17.4% are on General traits. The third largest subcategory for the

boys is Emotional intelligence, with 29 insults, which is 14.9%, and the fourth largest is Promiscuity, with 28, which equals 14.4%. The female characters, on the other hand, give the most insults on others' General traits and Relationship building, which include 33 and 32 insults respectively. In other words, the girls give 21.6% of their insults on others' General traits, and 20.9% on Relationship building. The third and fourth largest subcategories for the girls are Emotional intelligence, with 25 insults, which equals 16.3%, and Promiscuity, with 24 insults, which is 15.7%.

In relation to what insults the male and female characters receive, there are some noticeable differences. As Figure 4.11 above shows, the male characters receive the most insults regarding Relationship building, with 48 insults, which equals 21.9% of the insults targeting the boys. The female characters, on the other hand, receive the most insults on their Emotional intelligence, with 28, which constitutes 22.2% of the insults targeting the girls. The second and third largest subcategories for both the male and female characters are General traits and Promiscuity. The male characters receive 43 General traits insults and 31 Promiscuity insults, which equals 19.6% and 14.2%, respectively. The female characters receive 22 insults on their General traits, which constitutes 17.5%, and 21 on their Promiscuity, which is 16.7%. As for the fourth largest subcategories, the male characters receive 26 insults on their Emotional intelligence, which is 11.9%, and the female characters receive 19 insults regarding Relationship building, which equals 15.1%. These four insult subcategories will be further discussed in sections 4.3.2–4.3.5.

4.3.2 Relationship building

As mentioned, one of the largest insult subcategories is Relationship building. The 67 Relationship building insults identified are presented in Table 4.12, according to the givers and targets' gender in the series, individually and combined.

Table 4.12: Relationship building insults in each series by the givers and targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why	Riverdale	Total
F→F	3 (8.3%)	10 (32.3%)	13 (19.4%)
F→M	9 (25%)	10 (32.3%)	19 (28.4%)
M→M	23 (63.9%)	6 (19.3%)	29 (43.3%)
M→F	1 (2.8%)	5 (16.1%)	6 (8.9%)
Total	36 (100%)	31 (100%)	67 (100%)

As Table 4.12 shows, the male and female characters give about the same amount of Relationship building insults. The boys give 35 of the 67 Relationship building insults, which equals 17.9% of the total insults given by the male characters, and the girls give 32, which is 20.9% of the insults given by the female characters. An interesting difference, however, is that the male characters give almost five times as many Relationship building insults to other boys than to the girls, with 29 directed to the boys and only 6 towards the girls. This difference is not found to the same extent in the girls' insult behavior, as they give 19 Relationship building insults to the boys and 13 to other girls. In other words, the male characters receive 48 such insults, which is 74.4% of the Relationship building insults, whereas the female characters receive 19, which equals 28.3%. Moreover, this means that of the total insults the male characters receive, 21.9% are about Relationship building, which is the case for 15.1% of the total insults the female characters receive.

Though Relationship building already is a subcategory of Characteristics, different Relationship building insults can hold different sentiments, for example being unkind, disloyal, uncaring, etc. Figure 4.12 below shows the distribution of different sentiments of Relationship building insults according to the targets' gender.

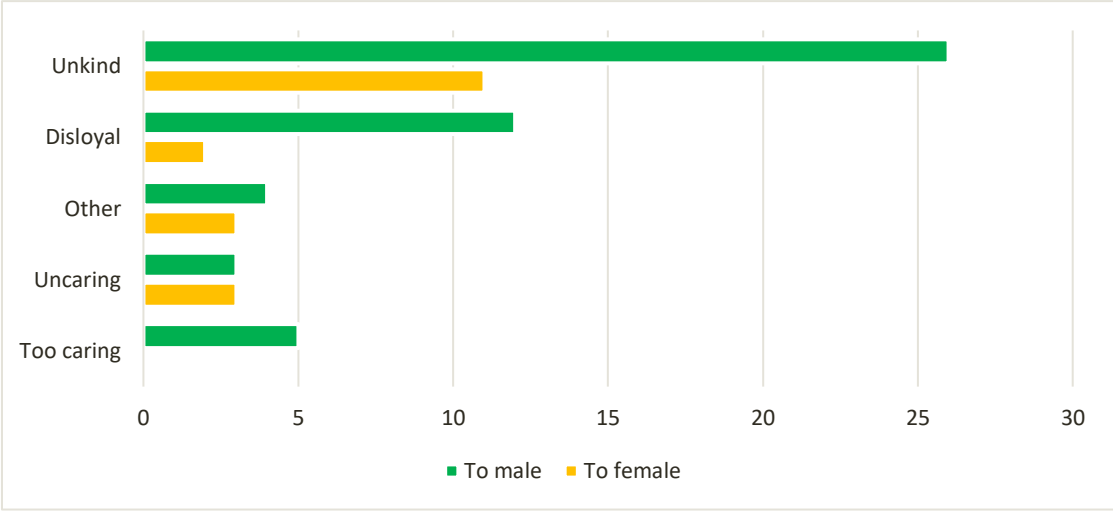


Figure 4.12: The sentiments of the Relationship building insults by the targets' gender.

As Figure 4.12 shows, the most common Relationship building insults directed towards both genders are about the targets' unkindness, exemplified below:

- [21] You shady bitch. (R-01)
- [22] Such a fucking asshole. (13RW-01)

[23] It's 'cause he's a dick. (13RW-07)

The female characters receive 11 insults about their unkindness, which equals 57.9% of the Relationship building insults directed at the girls, and the male characters receive 26, which is 54.2% of the Relationship building insults targeting the boys. In other words, the male and female characters receive proportionately about the same amount of insult referencing their unkindness. However, a noteworthy difference is that the word choice is, to some degree, dependent on the gender of both the giver and target of the insult. As illustrated by example [21], the female characters are called *bitch* numerous times, but only by other female characters. The male characters, on the other hand, are never called *bitch*. However, as indicated by example [22], they are frequently called *asshole*, mostly by other male characters but also by some female characters. Additionally, the word *dick* or *dickhead*, which is represented by example [23], is also used to insult the male characters. Though these words are only used by other male characters and never the female characters.

As presented in Figure 4.12, the second most frequent sentiment carried by the Relationship building insults toward the boys is about their disloyalty. 12 insults, which equals 25% of the insults on Relationship building targeting the boys, are in relation to the characters' disloyalty.

[24] I don't trust you, Cheryl. (R-07)

[25] Marcus is a liar and a creep, okay? (13RW-10)

[26] Dude, come on. That's a primal betrayal. (R-10)

The only two insults that are given to the girls about their disloyalty are in relation to the target lying, which is illustrated by [24]. Though the male characters also receive insults regarding them lying, as indicated by example [25], they are also frequently insulted on their unreliability, which is represented by example [26]. However, the reason why the male characters receive these insults is not necessarily that they are more likely to be shamed for their unreliability, but because they actually act more unreliable than the girls. In other words, the stereotype that men are unreliable is not necessarily manifested through the insults, but rather through the male characters' general behavior.

Another group of sentiments carried by the Relationship building insults, which are only given to and received by male characters, is insults regarding the characters being too caring:

[27] What are you like his butler now, or what? (13RW-02)

[28] You know, Dempsey, it's normal for nurses to fall for their patients. (13RW-03)

[29a] It's just your mom who makes you carry his books and wipe his ass. (13RW-03)

[29b] No, the ass he does for fun. (13RW-03)

Though only five insults convey a negative attitude for being too caring, which equals 10.4% of the Relationship building insults directed toward the boys, it is interesting that being caring, which is generally considered a positive attribute, is met with a negative reaction. All the insults regarding the target being too caring are composed using hyperboles, as illustrated by example [27]. Though example [27] uses a comparison to a typically male-dominated occupation, most of these insults use language related to typically female-dominated occupations, such as example [28], where the giver implies that Zach is a nurse. As discussed in section 2.4.2, being gentle, nurturing, and helpful to others are traits that are considered to be stereotypical for female behavior. Additionally, as discussed in section 2.4, because gender is perceived as binary, in which masculinity and femininity are in binary opposition, what is considered feminine cannot be masculine and vice versa. Furthermore, McCreary (1994, 518) claims that displaying cross-gender behavior can cause negative reactions from others, which was discussed in section 2.5.4. Hence, that the male character in *13RW*, who is portraying stereotypical feminine behavior, in this case being too caring, receives negative reactions from his peers in the form of insults, reflects the stereotype that caring is a feminine trait, and therefore not a masculine trait.

Additionally, the insults that convey both a negative reaction to the target being too caring and a hyperbole related to female-dominated occupations, such as example [28], also imply that the target is homosexual. This implication is also observable where the Relationship building insult [29a] is directly followed by the Sexual orientation insult [29b]. McCreary (1994, 520) uses his sexual orientation hypothesis, i.e., that the notion that gender is in binary opposition is related to the idea that biological sex and sexual orientation share a one-to-one relationship, to explain the correlation between displaying cross-gender behavior and presumed homosexuality (see section 2.5.4). As homosexuality is only linked to stereotypical traits in a few insults, I cannot draw any conclusions as to whether the insult behavior in *13RW* and *Riverdale* support McCreary's (1994) sexual orientation hypothesis. However, the presence of insults pertaining to a male being too caring, and that being correlated to homosexuality, is noteworthy and could be of interest for further research.

4.3.3 General traits

The other largest insult subcategory, with 67 insults, is General traits. Because two of the General traits insults are targeting a group of boys and girls, Table 4.13 below presents the 65 insults identified that are targeting either a single person or a group of only boys or girls.

Table 4.13: General traits insults in each series by the givers and targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why	Riverdale	Total
F→F	0 (0%)	12 (33.3%)	12 (17.9%)
F→M	5 (16.1%)	14 (38.9%)	19 (28.4%)
M→M	20 (64.5%)	4 (11.1%)	24 (35.8%)
M→F	6 (19.4%)	4 (11.1%)	10 (14.9%)
Total	31 (100%)	34 (94.4%)	65 (97%)

As Table 4.13 shows, the male and female characters produce almost the same amount of General traits insults, as they produce 34 and 31 such insults, respectively. However, most of these insults are directed towards the male characters, as they are the target of 43 such insults, which equals 64.2% of the total General traits insults, while the female characters receive 22 such insults, which is 32.8%.

Interestingly, though approximately the same amount of General traits insults was identified in each of the two series, the insult behavior pertaining to General traits in the series separately is very different. In *13RW*, the female characters only produce five of the 31 insults given by the girls overall, none of which are given to other female characters. The male characters, on the other hand, produce 26 of the 34 insults given by the boys. In *Riverdale*, the opposite is true, as the female characters produce 26 of the 31 insults given by the girls while the male characters only produce eight out of the 34 given by the boys.

As explained in section 3.4.4, the purpose of the General traits subcategory is to encompass the evaluations that do not belong in any other Characteristics subcategory. Therefore, the evaluations classified as General traits are quite varied. This means that the category includes, but is not limited to, traits like being shallow, gross, boring, white trash, gory, an idiot, sick, a tool, and a gossip. In other words, this subcategory is very diverse. However, there is one interesting pattern, which regards the insults directed only at the female characters in *Riverdale*. Eight out of the 22 General traits insults targeting the female characters, which equals 36.4%, are implying that they are *divas*, i.e., portraying traits such as being needy, demanding, and/or bossy. Four of these insults, which are illustrated by examples [30] and [31]

below, are given by female characters, and two by male characters, which is represented by example [32].

[30] Relax, Josie, it's a variety show in the Auditorium, not Showtime at the Apollo. (R-06)

[31] Just that I don't have to deal with diva crap when I work with Archie. (R-06)

[32] If anyone's gonna be a snob about it, maybe Veronica. (R-07)

What is interesting about these specific insults is that the traits and behaviors that would cause someone to be called a *diva*, which are considered inherently bad traits and behaviors, are closely related to traits and behaviors that would carry a positive appreciation if carried out by a man. That is, the typical traits of a diva, though often listed as needy, demanding, and bossy, correspond with stereotypical male traits related to performance, such as being ambitious, assertive, and dominant (section 2.4.2). In other words, the female characters being insulted for being divas could essentially be interpreted as a reaction to the female characters portraying cross-gender behavior.

4.3.4 Emotional intelligence

The second largest insult subcategory is Emotional intelligence, containing, in total, 54 insults. The Emotional intelligence insults identified in each series are presented in Table 4.14 below according to the givers and targets' gender.

Table 4.14: Emotional intelligence insults in each series by the givers and targets' gender

	13 Reasons Why	Riverdale	Total
F→F	3 (9.4%)	5 (22.7%)	8 (14.8%)
F→M	12 (37.5%)	5 (22.7%)	17 (31.5%)
M→M	6 (18.7%)	3 (13.6%)	9 (16.7%)
M→F	11 (34.4%)	9 (40.9%)	20 (37%)
Total	32 (100%)	22 (100%)	54 (100%)

As Table 4.14 shows, the male and female characters give and receive almost the same amount of Emotional intelligence insults, and the majority of the insults are given across the genders. The boys give 20 such insults to the girls, which equals 37%, and the girls give 17 to the boys, which is 21.5%.

What is interesting about this insult category, however, is the gender differences regarding the sentiments of the insults. Figure 4.13 below shows what kind of Emotional intelligence insults the male and female characters receive.

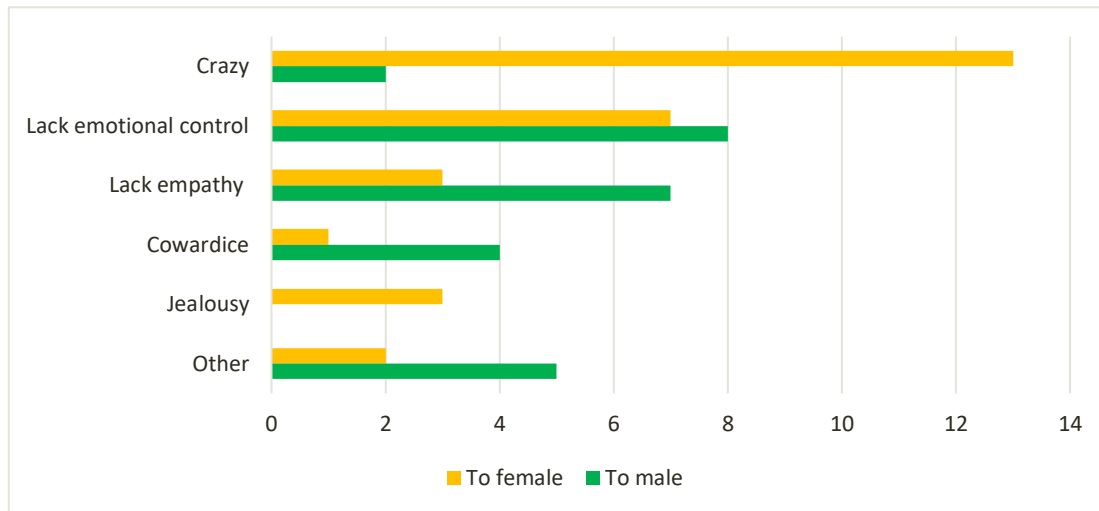


Figure 4.13: The sentiments of the Emotional intelligence insults by the targets' gender

As shown by Figure 4.13, the most frequently expressed sentiment within this subcategory is that the target lacks emotional control, of which 15 were identified. These insults are distributed quite evenly between the male and the female characters, as they receive eight and seven such insults, respectively.

The type of Emotional intelligence insults that present the most noticeable difference in terms of the targets' gender, however, are those that allude to the target being crazy:

[33] So Doiley's a psychopath. Everyone knows that. (R-10)

[34] Are you out of your fucking mind? (13RW-01)

[35] What are you doing, crazy? (13RW-03)

[36] I think she's crazier than a serial killer on bath salts, but so what? (R-07)

Though calling someone *crazy*, whether by using that specific word or other related words, such as *psychotic* and *insane*, are often in reaction to someone overreacting, or in other ways displaying lack of emotional control, such as in example [34], I have chosen to separate the sentiments *lack of emotional control* and *crazy* based on the word-choice in the insults. This is because all the insults labeling the target crazy allude to mental health conditions, which the other insults do not.

With regard to gender, there is a noteworthy difference within the insults alluding to the target being crazy. Of the 15 insults identified, 13 target female characters, while only two target male characters. That is, 48.4% of the 28 Emotional intelligence insults the girls receive imply that they are crazy, while this is the case for only 7.7% of the 26 Emotional intelligence insults directed at the boys. Moreover, the majority of the insults that imply that the female characters are crazy are produced by the male characters. The male characters produce 9 of the 13 insults while the female characters produce 4.

Interestingly, the word *crazy* is never used to describe the male characters, as shown by examples [33] and [34] above. The female characters, on the other hand, are called crazy numerous times, both by the boys, as illustrated by example [35], and by other girls, as demonstrated by example [36]. The labeling of women as *crazy* stems from the stereotypes discussed in section 2.4.2, that men are rational and analytical, while women are emotional. Because of the social construct that gender is binary, and that masculinity and femininity are therefore in binary opposition, one cannot be both rational and emotional at the same time, which can lead to expression of emotion being categorized as irrationality, which is further exaggerated as them being or acting *crazy*. In comparison to the instances where the characters are criticized for displaying cross-gender behavior (cf. 4.3.2–4.3.3), the female characters are now being insulted for adhering to the gender stereotype. Seeing that the majority of these insults are produced by the male characters, this could potentially be a result of intergroup comparison, as the main objective for the in-group, according to the social identity theory discussed in section 2.4.1, is to ensure higher prestige than the out-group, which can be achieved by ascribing negative value connotations to attributes associated with the out-group.

4.3.5 Promiscuity

The third largest insult subcategory is Promiscuity with 52 total insults, of which 31 are directed at male characters, and 21 at female characters. Figure 4.14 below shows how the different Promiscuity insults are distributed by the givers and targets' gender, and by the content of the insults.

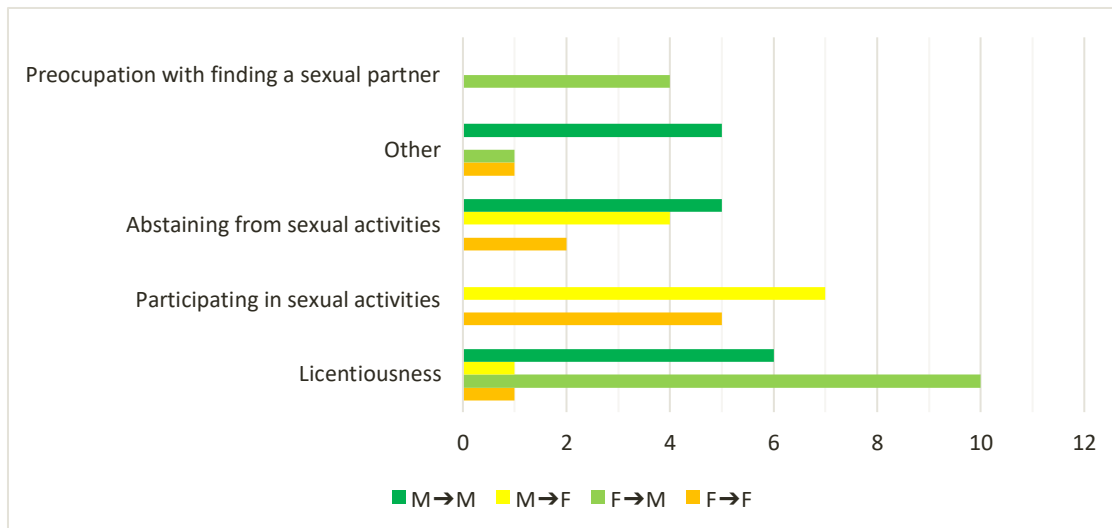


Figure 4.14: Promiscuity insults by content and the givers and targets' gender.

Even though this subcategory is not the largest, it is the one with the largest differences related to the gender of the targets, which is illustrated by Figure 4.14. The most noticeable difference between the kinds of insults the female and male characters receive is the fact that only the female characters receive insults shaming them for participating in sexual activities. The female characters receive 12 such insults, which equals 57.1% of the Promiscuity insults directed at the girls. Both examples [37] and [38] illustrate so-called *slut-shaming* of the female characters. Example [37] is given by another girl and [38] is given by a boy. The girls produce five of these insults, and the boys produce seven.

[37] Tell us, Veronica, what's so fresh about defiling Archie Andrews in a closet? (R-10)

[38] Yeah, "everything," meaning doing Bryce. (13RW-04)

The practice of shaming women for engaging in sexual activities is directly related to McAlister's (2020) argument that women are expected to be sexually *pure*, as they are not supposed to partake in sexual activities until they are in a committed romantic relationship (see section 2.4.3). The fact that only the female characters are shamed for participating in sexual activities reflects the assumed importance of women being sexually *pure*.

The female characters are not only shamed for participating in sexual activities, but they are also the target of insults related to them abstaining from sexual relations. As shown by Figure 4.14, the female characters receive six such insults, which equals 28.6% of the Promiscuity insults they receive. However, the male characters are also the target of this kind of insult, as they receive 5, which is 16.1% of the Promiscuity insults they receive. The fact that

the female characters receive this kind of Promiscuity insult directly contradicts McAlister's (2020) theory of sexual purity. However, the fact that the boys receive insults because they don't participate in sexual relations reflects McAlister's (2020) argument related to sexual purity in that, while participating in sexual activities causes a woman to *lose* something, participating in sexual activities for men is considered to be a rite of passage in which he attains his *manhood* (see section 2.4.3). It is interesting, though, that the male characters only receive these insults from other male characters, while the female characters receive them from both genders.

Furthermore, as shown by Figure 4.14, the male characters both receive insults related to them not participating in sexual activities by other male characters, and insults related to them being too preoccupied with finding a sexual partner by the female characters. Four of the insults they receive are related to their preoccupation with finding a sexual partner, which is almost the same amount as the insults they receive on abstaining from sexual activities. This might suggest that the idea that participating in sexual activities is an important part of *manhood* is seen as more important to boys than girls.

Another major discrepancy regards insults of licentiousness, such as those implying that the target is a rapist, sexual predator, etc., which are exemplified in [39], [40], and [41]. As illustrated by Figure 4.14 above, the male characters receive 16 licentiousness insults, which equals 51.6% of the total Promiscuity insults directed at the boys, while the female characters only receive two.

[39] Fuck you! You fucking rapist! (13RW-07)

[40] Don't you have windows to stalk, perv? (13RW-02)

[41] I'm sorry that after you sexually harassed those girls, that there were actual consequences, Chuck. (R-10)

Though this substantial difference makes it seem like the male characters are accused of and shamed for supposed licentious acts to a much higher degree than the female characters, these insults do not necessarily reflect gender stereotypes. In fact, 11 of the 16 licentiousness insults the male characters receive are reactions to actual licentious acts they commit, such as rape and various instances of other predatory behaviors. Though my research does not focus on the behavior of the characters, outside of their insult and compliment behavior, it is evident from simply watching the series that some of the male characters commit more licentious acts than

the female characters. This on its own is interesting, but not within the scope, or even topic, of my thesis.

4.3.6 Sexual orientation

Another observation made in the analysis of my material is that, although the insult behaviors of the male and female characters did not prove to be all that different in general, their insult behaviors related to the Sexual orientation subcategory are completely different. Though Sexual orientation is among the smallest insult subcategories in total, with only 11 insults, it is still interesting, as it is the subcategory with the largest discrepancy between the genders, both in relation to the givers and targets. While the female characters only give one insult in relation to Sexual orientation, the male characters give 10. Moreover, the female characters are not the target of any such insults, as the male characters receive all 11. This could potentially be caused by the fact that there are six queer male characters and only one queer female character. However, only four of the insults on Sexual orientation target queer characters, whereas seven are target heterosexual male characters.

Additionally, the insults directed at the queer characters are produced by other queer characters and a female character, while those targeting the heterosexual characters are, all but one, produced by other heterosexual male characters. The one that is not, is produced by a queer male character and holds a negative sentiment related to heterosexuality, as in [42], while the rest refer to homosexuality, as illustrated by examples [43] and [29b] above, repeated here as [44].

[42] But like most millennial straight guys, he needs to be told what he wants. (R-01)

[43] Why don't you ask your boyfriend for help with history? (13RW-04)

[44] No, the ass he [wipes] for fun. (13RW-03)

One of the reasons why mainly the heterosexual characters receive insults that imply that they are homosexual could be related to the previous research discussed in section 2.5.5, which reveals that insults regarding homosexuality are considered one of the worst insults men could receive (while the opposite is not an insult). Another potential reason is related to the sexual orientation hypothesis proposed by McCreary (1994), as discussed in section 2.5.4. McCreary (1994) claims that men who do not follow stereotypical male behavior are much more likely to receive insults accusing them of being homosexual. This is the case for four of six Sexual orientation insults targeting the heterosexual male characters, as illustrated by examples [42]

and [43] above. All four insults are reactions to a male character helping and supporting another male character, which was discussed in section 4.3.2.

Another aspect of this insult subcategory is that it is the subcategory with the largest differences between the series. Only three of the insults are from *Riverdale*, while the remaining eight are from *13RW*. In addition, the insults from *Riverdale*, as in [42] above and [45] below, are much milder than those from *13RW*, as in [46] and [47]. Example [46] is said between heterosexual male characters, and example [47] is said between queer male characters.

[45] Is being the gay best friend still a thing? (R-01)

[46] Hey, if you guys want to suck each other's dicks, there's a place for that, you know? (13RW-03)

[47] Worst kind of gay. (13RW-05)

There is no obvious explanation for this difference. However, it could potentially be related to the stylistic differences between the series in which *13RW* focuses more on societal issues and struggles, such as homophobia, while *Riverdale* is more escapist.

5. Conclusion

This final chapter provides a summary of the main results and offers answers to the research questions presented in chapter one. Subsequently, I will comment on the contributions made by this thesis and provide suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary and conclusion

The present study has explored how gender stereotypes are reflected through evaluative moves in the American television series *13 Reasons Why* and *Riverdale*. The compliments and insults produced by 53 teen characters in 20 episodes were analyzed and categorized by their contents. In total, 208 compliments and 344 insults were identified.

Regarding the first research question, which concerns the gender distribution of the compliments and insults, hypothesis 1 predicts that the girls give and receive the most compliments and the boys, insults. My study shows that the female characters overall do give and receive more compliments on average than the male characters, which partly confirms the hypothesis. However, the girls also give more insults on average than the boys, and they receive about the same amount. When comparing the two series, on the other hand, the results differ slightly. In *13 Reasons Why*, the male characters produce and receive more insults than the female characters, but in *Riverdale*, the girls produce and receive considerably more insults than the boys. As discussed in section 4.3, this is potentially a consequence of the existence of a female villain in *Riverdale*. In brief, hypothesis 1 was partly confirmed and partly refuted.

In relation to the second research question, which concerns which compliment categories and subcategories are most common for each gender, there are two hypotheses: hypothesis 2 states that both genders will give the most compliments on Physical traits and hypothesis 3 predicts that the female characters will be complimented the most on their Physical traits and the male characters on their Skills. My research shows that the male characters give the most compliments on Skills when combining all the Skills subcategories, while the female characters give the most on Characteristics. However, when looking at the subcategories individually, it becomes clear that the male characters give more Physical traits compliments. Regarding the female characters, though they give the most compliments on Relationship building, they only give two fewer Physical traits compliments. Thus, hypothesis 2 is partly confirmed. For received compliments, the main category Characteristics is the largest for both

genders, while Physical traits is the largest for both genders when considering the subcategories individually. However, a more nuanced look shows that both the male and female characters receive the same amount of Physical traits compliments and total Skills compliments, which partly confirms hypothesis 3.

Regarding the third research question, which concerns the largest insult categories and gender, there are also two hypotheses. The first, hypothesis 4, states that the girls will give the most insults on Relationship building, and the boys will give the most on Emotional intelligence. My research shows that both genders give the most Characteristics insults. However, when considering the subcategories individually, the male characters give the most on Relationship building and the female characters give the most on General traits, though they only give one less Relationship building insult. Thus, hypothesis 4 was disproved.

The second, Hypothesis 5, predicts that the female characters will receive the most insults related to Relationship building and Promiscuity, while the male characters will receive the most related to Emotional intelligence. According to the results, the female characters receive the most insults on Emotional intelligence and General traits, while the male characters receive the most on Relationship building and General traits. Thus, the hypothesis was not only refuted but also unintentionally predicted the opposite results for the male and female characters. However, the three categories predicted to dominate were among the four largest for both the boys and the girls.

In relation to the last research question, which concerns what existing gender stereotypes are reflected by the evaluative moves in the DTVS, hypothesis 6 predicts the dominance of the existing gender stereotypes that women are supposed to be beautiful and caring and that men are supposed to be tough and skilled. Regarding the stereotype that women are supposed to be beautiful, the evaluations in neither series indicate that appearance is more highly valued in the female characters, because the male characters receive more physical traits compliments than the girls. Thus, this aspect of hypothesis 6 is refuted.

The stereotype that women are supposed to be caring is neither reflected in the evaluative behavior of the female characters, nor in the evaluations they receive. However, the evaluations given and received by the boys indicate that being caring is not stereotypically masculine. Firstly, the male characters receive many insults regarding Relationship building because they portray more negative behavior related to this category, such as being unreliable. This indicates that relationship building is not something that is a priority to them. Secondly, the fact that the male characters rarely give compliments about Relationship building also implies that relationship building is not of importance to the male characters. Thirdly, the male

characters are insulted for being too caring, i.e., displaying cross-gender behavior, which also reflects the notion that relationship building is not a masculine trait, but rather a feminine one. In other words, the notion that women are supposed to be caring is not so much reflected through the compliments and insults directed at the girls, but rather in the evaluations related to the boys. Thus, the aspect of hypothesis 6 regarding the stereotype that girls are supposed to be caring is partly supported.

In relation to the stereotype that the boys are supposed to be skilled, a large portion of the compliments they receive refers to Skills, though that is also the case for the compliments targeting the female characters. What the Skills compliments might suggest, however, is that Physical skills, and Creative skills pertaining to music and visual art, are associated with masculinity, while Creative skills related to writing lyrics and poetry are associated with femininity. This means that although the aspect of hypothesis 6 pertaining to the boys being skilled in general is disproved, the results suggest some interesting potential correlations between specific skills and gender.

Regarding the stereotype that the boys are supposed to be tough, a large portion of the Physical traits compliments targeting the male characters is in reference to their muscles, while this is not the case for any of the compliments targeting the girls. This might indicate that toned muscles, which are related to toughness, are valued in men but not in women. Thus, the aspect of hypothesis 6 that pertains to the boys and toughness is supported.

Additionally, my expectation that Promiscuity insults would most frequently target the female characters was not met, as the results show that the male and female characters receive a similar amount. However, two interesting trends related to Promiscuity insults that can be observed are: *slut-shaming* is related to femininity and licentiousness to masculinity. The phenomenon of *slut-shaming*, in which the target is shamed for partaking in sexual activities, is only found in insults targeting the female characters and is related to the idea that women are supposed to be sexually *pure*. Regarding the second trend I observed, the majority of the insults referencing licentiousness target the male characters. However, the male characters are not insulted on their licentiousness more than the girls because they are expected to be more licentious, but rather because they portray more licentious behavior. Thus, the correlation between licentiousness and masculinity is only detected in the insults because it is displayed in the boys' behavior.

5.2 My contribution

As this study explores an intersection of various areas of linguistics, I believe it has been a contribution to several fields: discourse analysis, gender studies, and language attitudes. Because of the qualitative aspects of my methodology and the limited scope of my analysis, I cannot make any sweeping generalizations from my results. However, I hope this thesis has provided valuable insight into a previously unexplored area of discourse analysis and fictional discourse research, in particular in relation to how television series reflect gender stereotypes in other ways than through the characters' accent use and general behavior.

Moreover, my results show that not all traditional gender stereotypes were reflected in the characters' evaluative behavior, such as men being more intelligent and women being more creative (cf. 2.4.2). This can potentially suggest that some stereotypes might be becoming less notable in the American society or perhaps that they have not been as prominent as suggested by previous research.

Additionally, my research shows the importance of including sexual orientation as a factor, in addition to gender, when researching language use. My study clearly shows that the heterosexual male characters and queer male characters in these series do not display the same evaluative behavior, particularly in relation to Physical traits compliments (see section 4.2.2). This suggests that gender alone is not sufficient when exploring people or characters' speech, but sexual orientation should also be considered. In other words, my results indicate that it is not the case that males are males and females are females, their speech and behaviors are dependent on other factors too, such as sexual orientation.

5.3 Further research

As there are no previous studies on evaluative moves in television series, hopefully, this thesis will inspire others to conduct similar studies in the future. An interesting approach to the present topic could be to investigate the use of evaluative moves in different genres of movies or series, such as those meant for children. Furthermore, as this thesis focuses on evaluative moves given to and from teenage characters, research on the evaluative behavior of adult characters, potentially in light of politeness theory, would provide further insight into the topic. Additionally, because the compliment and insult category creation is influenced by the researcher's subjectivity, it would be interesting to see a similar study conducted, but with different categories. Moreover, because of the very limited number of queer characters in the episodes analyzed, particularly female queer characters, I have not been able to draw any

conclusions regarding their evaluative behavior specifically. However, this could be an interesting approach for future research on evaluative moves in fictional discourse. Lastly, as this thesis only concerns fictional discourse, the aspects shed a light on in this study would be interesting to explore with authentic speech data.

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