

GIVING COMPLIMENTS IN TONIGHT SHOW NET TV AND THE TONIGHT SHOW STARRING JIMMY FALLON: CROSS-CULTURAL PRAGMATICS

Ainia Arum Novitasari ^{1*}

¹ Master of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University,
Indonesia

* Pos-el: ainiaarumnovitasari@mail.ugm.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki pemberian pujian yang digunakan oleh pembawa acara Tonight Show Net TV dan Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon dalam pragmatik lintas budaya. Penelitian ini akan membandingkan dua budaya yang berbeda dari budaya Amerika dan Indonesia. Indonesia mengikuti budaya Timur, sedangkan Amerika menganut budaya Barat. Kedua budaya ini menjadi subjek penelitian yang menarik tentang pemberian pujian. Peneliti memilih teori pemberian pujian dari Searle (1979) untuk menetapkan strategi mana yang telah digunakan oleh kedua budaya tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Peneliti menemukan, setelah menerapkan teori pada data, bahwa ada perbedaan antara kedua budaya ini dalam bentuk pemberian pujian. Akan tetapi, Indonesia dan Amerika memiliki hasil yang sama dalam memberikan pujian seperti penggunaan kata sifat seperti 'beautiful', 'fantastic', 'great', 'good', 'nice', 'excellence', dan 'amazing'.

Kata kunci: Pujian, Pragmatis Lintas Budaya, Talk Show

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate giving compliments used by the host of the Tonight Show Net TV and the Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon in cross-cultural pragmatics. This study compares two different cultures, American and Indonesian cultures. Indonesia follows the Eastern culture, while America holds the Western culture. These two cultures are fascinating subjects of research on giving compliments. The researcher chose the theory of giving compliments from Searle (1979) in order to establish which strategy had been used by both cultures. This study used the descriptive qualitative method. After applying the theory to the data, the researcher discovered that there was a difference between these two cultures in their form of giving compliments. Indonesia and America, however, do have similar results in giving compliments such as using the adjectives words such as 'beautiful', 'fantastic', 'great', 'good', 'nice', 'excellence', and 'amazing'.

Keywords: Compliments, Cross-Cultural Pragmatic, Talk Show

A. INTRODUCTION

Language as a communication tool plays a vital role in expressing and comprehending utterances. In conveying messages, individuals from one cultural background may have differing perspectives than those from another. These differences must be investigated to minimize the misunderstanding in many contexts ranging from home, hospital, workplaces, international business, etc. Furthermore, cross-cultural communication is the field of study to know how people from differing cultural backgrounds communicate, whether it is similar or different among themselves, and how they endeavour to communicate across cultures.

Individuals communicate in diverse ways, with each group developing its unique approach to expressive speech acts. These ways are the adaptation from their cultural background. Every community possesses its distinct language, culture, and speech habits. This means there is a different language code for each of the two countries; there are differences in the use of lexicons, grammar, and codes (Wierzbicka, 2003).

The cultural background of the speaker is inseparable from their cultural aspects. This paper examines cultural aspects and language variations, focusing on pragmatics study. Pragmatics study deals with the contextual meaning conveyed by the speaker so the hearer can get the meaning. Thus, this study discusses one of the pragmatics features: the speech act. The speech act focuses on specific events in the spoken language. Saying such words as compliments, apologies, denials, requests, complaints, greetings, and disagreements are the speech acts that received the most attention.

Tonight Show Net TV is an Indonesian television talk show. This show has become popular as they invite many guest stars from Indonesia and overseas. This program is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday at 9.30 p.m. This show has four hosts to lead the program: Vincent, Desta, Enzy, and Hesti. They do interview the guest star humorously. In addition, usually, they invite the guest star to play various games. On special occasions, they do exclusive interviews with overseas guest stars such as Alan Walker, Simple Plan, Katy Perry, Lewis Capaldi, etc. Unlike the usual day, the host will speak a hundred percent in English. Then, the exclusive interview segment will be uploaded to the Tonight Show's YouTube channel.

Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon is a popular American talk show. This TV program is scheduled on weeknight at 11:35/10:35c on NBC. On YouTube, this tv program has 31.1m subscribers with 8,9k videos and millions of viewers. In addition, Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon has invited many popular artists from America, such as Justin Bieber, Charlie Puth, Taylor Swift, Selena Gomez, and other broadly well-known artists worldwide. Therefore, the program also invites artists from other countries who have become so popular in the world, such as Suga BTS or BTS members, Lalisa or Black Pink members, and more. This TV program has only one host, Jimmy Fallon.

Several studies have been conducted in the scope of the compliment or compliment responses used in cross cultural practice such as Rahmayani (2020); Yusof & Hoon (2014); Fujimura-Wilson (2014); Agustiyani (2020); Boroujeni (2016); Czerwionka, L., & Dickerson, S. (2022), Tran (2007); Chen (2010) including America, New Zealand, South Africa, British, English-speaking cultures, German, Spanish, Polish, Chinese, and Japanese. All those investigations are not only talking about giving compliments, but they carried out the response of the compliments. The investigation of two different cultures, especially in university students, have different ways of giving compliments and their responses of it (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001); (Herbert, 1991); (Barnlund and Araki, 1985); (Saito and Beecken, 1997); Wolfson (1981); Holmes (1995).

Herbert (1986) compares different cultures to see how South Africa and New Zealand give compliments and their response to it. The result reveals that university students in South Africa and Britain had similar ways to respond to compliments, such as agreement responses and non-agreements. Another research has been done by Herbert and Straight (1989), to compare compliments produced by Africans and Americans. Africans regard compliments as less necessary than Americans, so they tend to reject compliments as they avoid self-praise.

German and New Zealand ways of compliment responses are addressed differently. Holmes (1995) stated that New Zealanders tended to accept compliments (60%), deflections with approximately 30%, and 30% is the form of rejections. Furthermore, in German, the native speaker accepted compliment responses by saying 'Yes' instead of 'Thank You' (Golato, 2002). They also did not disagree with the compliments they received; Golato (2002) added.

Despite these findings, this research explores cultural differences in compliment-giving between Americans and Indonesians, highlighting the gap in studies comparing these strategies in media like talk shows. This study aims to investigate giving compliments used by the host of the Tonight Show Net TV and the Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon in cross-cultural pragmatics. This study compares two different cultures, American and Indonesian cultures. Both cultures have similar and different ways of giving compliments.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics involves understanding a speaker's utterance meaning in a particular context, often called "speaker meaning" (Yule,2010). Thus, Yule (2010) stated that the definition of pragmatics can vary. First, pragmatics examines the study of contextual meaning, which requires consideration of the way the speaker structures their intended message. Second, pragmatics is about catching the implicit meaning from the speaker's utterances to the hearer. Third, pragmatics definition is the study of the expression of a relative distance. Moreover, pragmatics, according to Leech (1983), is the study of meaning that correlates with speech situations. It can be concluded that the definition of pragmatics is the way to understand both the speaker and the hearer to solve the problem in communication.

2. Speech act

The definition of speech act, according to Austin (1962), is the action performed by saying something that performs various “acts”: illocutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Those are mainly interested in the speaker’s intentions but the illocutionary force of utterances. In addition, all linguistics communication implicates speech acts and becomes the basic thing in communication (Searle, 1969). Searle (1979) divided speech acts into five types, those are:

1. Assertives/representatives: deals with the utterances that report a statement of fact verifiable as true or false (e.g., I am old enough to vote; Columbus discovered America in 1492; Water freezes at zero degrees centigrade)
2. Directives: types of utterances that intend someone to do something (e.g., Stop shouting; Take out the garbage).
3. Commissive: Utterances that contain of committing someone to do something (e.g., I promise to call you later; I’ll write your letter of recommendation tomorrow)
4. Declarations: Utterances bringing about a change in the state of affairs (e.g., I now pronounce you husband and wife; I hereby sentence you to ten years in jail)
5. Expressive: Utterances expressing speaker attitudes (e.g., That’s a beautiful dress; I’m sorry for being so late)

The form of speech act can be explicit or implicit, direct or indirect, and literal or non-literal. Speech act deals with the theory of (Meyer, 2009) that explores how language is used to perform actions rather than merely convey information. Explicit in speech act means it will contain a performative verb and has a very specific structure. Speech acts can also be either direct or indirect. A speech act is direct if its intent is clearly conveyed by the words and structure of the utterance; speech acts can be literal or non-literal. Many figures of speech in English are non-literal in that the speaker does not really mean what he/she says.

3. Expressive speech act

Searles (1969) argued that expressive speech act is about the utterances expressing the speaker's attitudes (e.g., that’s a beautiful dress; I’m sorry for being so late). Expressive speech acts, according to his book, can be in the form of compliments or apologizing. Moreover, an utterance, which can be classified as an expressive speech act, is when the speaker expresses his or her attitude (Meyer, 2009).

4. Compliments

In conversation, compliments are frequently exchanged. Compliments are used to negotiate solidarity with an addressee to make other individuals feel good about something (Herbert, 1986). Compliments are part of the speech act and correlate with the theory of linguistic politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson

(1978). In addition, according to Holmes (1986, 1995: 117), compliments are part of a speech theory that contributes, whether it is explicitly or implicitly, credit to someone who has some 'good' things such as (possession, characteristic, etc.) which the speaker and the hearer positively value. Compliments allow speakers to show appreciation and admiration for the performance or abilities of others (Golato, 2005) and reinforce desired behaviour (Manes, 1983) or even flirt (Campo & Zuluaga, 2000). Compliments in terms of appearance (e.g. *You look absolutely beautiful*), performance (e.g. *Your presentation was excellent*), and personally traits (e.g. *You are so sweet*) (Knapp et al., 1984; Nelson et al., 1993).

A. Giving a compliment

When giving compliments, individuals have unique styles for conveying positive evaluations, yet there is a common pattern characterized by the frequent use of specific verbs, syntactic structures, and adjectives (Manes & Wolfson, 1981). Henceforth, giving a compliment refers to the act of expressing admiration, approval, or praise towards someone in a culturally appropriate manner.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The study examines the difference between Tonight Show Net TV and Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon in terms of giving compliments, which is seen from a cultural pragmatics perspective. Therefore, the descriptive qualitative method was suitable for this study to observe the result of giving compliments used by Tonight Show Hosts Net TV and Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon. Qualitative research explains social phenomena (Hancock, B, E. Ockleford & Windridge., 2007). The qualitative research in this research is descriptive qualitative, which is intended to examine a scientific activity carried out intensively, in detail, holistically, in-depth, and naturally regarding programs, events, and activities to gain in-depth knowledge about an event (Rahardjo, 2020).

The sources of data were taken from the Tonight Show Net YouTube Channel and Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon. The data is from the Tonight Show's Host's utterances in several interviews on Tonight Show Net's official YouTube channel. Henceforth, this paper focuses on the host's utterances in interviewing the guest stars. For example, in Tonight Show Net TV, the hosts interview Raisa Adriani (singer), Brisia Jodie (singer), Gisela Anastasia (singer & actress), Iqbaal Ramadhan (actor and singer), Gabriel Prince (celebrity), Dennis Lim & Aa Gym (Islamic preacher). Therefore, Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon's guest stars such as Nicole Kidman (actress), Taylor Swift (singer), Dakota Johson (actress), and Ariana Grande (singer).

In collecting the data, the researcher does several ways. At first, the researcher transcribes several videos of two YouTube channels, Tonight Show Net TV and Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon. Second, the researcher focused on the utterances, which contained compliments from hosts. Then, the conversation is analyzed using Searle's theory of giving compliments (1979).

D. RESULT AND FINDINGS

The result of the study uses the theory of giving compliments in speech acts proposed by Searle (1979). Therefore, the researcher also combines it with the theory of Manes and Wolfson (1981). The results of this study are categorized into two groups. The first group focuses solely on the American talk show, “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon”. The second group examines the Indonesian talk show, “Tonight Show Net TV”. Additionally, the researcher compares the two talk shows to explore how cultural factors influence their way of giving compliments.

| No | Giving compliments | |
|-----|---|--|
| | Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon | Tonight Show Net Tv |
| 1. | You made a great – a fantastic decision. | <i>kalau dilihat dari foto-foto itu memang cantik ya raisa tu yaa</i> ‘If it can be seen from those pictures, she is so beautiful ya Raisa’ |
| 2. | You look beautiful welcome back to the show | <i>Iqbal, cakep banget yaa</i> ‘Iqbal, you are a handsome boy’ |
| 3. | It was a beautiful foot | <i>Suara kamu bagus juga yaa, empuk gitu</i> ‘Your voice is good, yeah? It is so soft’ |
| 4. | I love you sang ‘Dream Weaver’ | <i>Kamu orang yang romantis ya</i> ‘You are a romantic person’ |
| 5. | It’s a beautiful film | <i>Udah cantik dan menjelaskannya gamblang</i> ‘She is beautiful and her explanation so clearly’ |
| 6. | Track is good | <i>Makin kesini makin cakep aja</i> ‘Now, you are even more beautiful’ |
| 7. | This is great | <i>Aa Gym itu adem banget gitu ngomongnya</i> ‘Aa Gym is so soft when he is speaking’ |
| 8. | This is fantastic | <i>Enak ya ngomongnya, santai</i> ‘His speaking style is nice, relax’ |
| 9. | It is so good | <i>Tampilannya fresh, trendy gitu</i> ‘You look so fresh, that’s trendy’ |
| 10. | That’s really good | <i>Wah perpaduannya bagus ya</i> ‘Wow, that’s a good combination’ |
| 11. | This is excellent | <i>gue nggak fokus, kamu cakep sih emang ya</i> |

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| | | 'I can't focus, you are indeed handsome' |
| 12. | That was amazing | <i>Matanya bagus banget</i> 'His eyes are so good' |
| 13. | It's great to see you | <i>Dia ini emang paket komplit ya</i> 'He has a full package yeah' |
| 14. | You look fantastic | <i>Suaranya emang bagus</i> 'His voice is nice' |
| 15. | <i>That was really nice guys</i> | <i>Pinter sekali dia ini</i> 'He is so smart' |

From the table above, it shows that there are two differences between the way American culture and Indonesian culture giving compliments. As what have been stated by Wolfson (1981: 20), it can be seen that American compliments reveal lack of originality and include many repetitions, such as in the data 2, 3, 5 which says 'beautiful'. Then, in data 6, 9, and 10 shows that there is adjective 'good'. On data 1, 7, and 13 contains of the adjective 'great'. 'nice' occurs only once in data 15. Therefore, on data 1, 8, and 14, the compliment is 'fantastic'. The rest of the data, using the adjectives like excellent and amazing. In giving compliments, the frequently used verb is 'look'. American Talk show uses simple syntactic features to give compliments, and all the data uses positive verb such as 'look' and 'love'. Lastly, American talk show tend to add auxiliary verb in giving compliments.

Tonight Show Net Tv as Indonesian culture showed that the adjectives words such as Cantik, cakep, and bagus. The utterance which contains of giving compliments cantik can be seen on data 1 & 5, data 2, 6, and 11 on the adjectives bagus, then on the data 3, 10, 12, 14 show that they used adjectives bagus to give compliments. Therefore, the result also shows that Indonesian culture have many ways to give compliments with nice words such as romantic, adem bgt, enak, pinter paket komplit, perpaduannya bagus, tampilannya fresh dan trendy, and pintar. on data 4, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 15. As Indonesian culture shows that the verb in the utterance doesn't directly mention. The hosts are focused on the object of the compliment such as 'suaranya, matanya, tampilannya, perpaduannya, ngomongnya, penjelasannya, and tampilannya. Moreover, Indonesian speakers gave compliments on possession, which accounted at least 7 data on data 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 14.

E. DISCUSSION

The study of two different cultures in viewing compliments has been widely conducted as habits and cultural background truly influence the way of giving compliments and responses to compliments. For example, the western (England) and the East (Indonesian) are different in responding compliments (Mukminatien, 2005). Therefore, the study of the cultural differences has frequently been conducted to avoid cross-cultural miscommunication that might be occur among

speakers (Chick, 1996; Herbert, 1986, 1991; Holmes, 1986; Saito and Beecken, 1997).

This study proved that American way of giving compliments is lack of originality and include many repetitions as in line with what has been stated by Wolfson (1981: 20). This suggests that Americans frequently rely on formulaic or standardized expressions when offering compliments, such as "You look great!" or "Good job!" These patterns may be attributed to cultural norms that emphasize positivity, encouragement, and ease of social interaction. This study also supports the argument that Western countries such as America tend to use compliments more than Asian countries like Indonesia. In fact, American talk show often gives compliments more than Indonesian talk show.

Both American and Indonesian talk shows use humour in giving compliments, but they do it differently. In American talk shows, humour often involves exaggerating compliments to make them funny and memorable (Holmes, 1986). In Indonesian talk shows, humour in compliments is more about easing tension or showing humility. Compliments are often playful or self-deprecating, ensuring that neither the host nor the guest seems overly proud (Rahmayani, 2020).

The result of this study is along with what Mukminatien (2005) and Rahmayani (2020) which stated that the Eastern culture especially Indonesia is be humble and minimize things that have content of praise expression humility. Nevertheless, Western culture (America) tends to receive and respond to the compliment and even providing further information on what was discussed, it means that they are always open in responding to keep on communication ongoing.

When giving compliments, individuals must carefully choose how to express their praise to suit the specific context, ensuring that the interaction fosters solidarity and mutual understanding. The way compliments are interpreted and given can vary significantly between cultures and speech communities. For instance, what might be seen as a genuine compliment in one culture could be perceived differently in another, highlighting the importance of cultural nuances in communication. This difference highlights the importance of understanding a new culture when learning a language. By learning the culturally appropriate ways to give compliments, speakers can create deeper connections and prevent misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication.

As it is observed in this result of the study, the implication of these differences are understanding how to give compliments appropriately is essential for learners to develop communicative competence, enabling them to adjust their speech to fit the cultural norms of different communities. This understanding helps ensure that interactions are harmonious and respectful, aligning with the values of the society they are engaging with.

F. CONCLUSION

The study about cross cultural pragmatics between Indonesian and American on the talk show can be seen differently and similarly in giving compliments. The American tended to use the positive verbs like 'love' and auxiliary verb to describe adjectives, such as 'beautiful', 'fantastic', 'great', 'good', 'nice', 'excellence', and

'amazing'. Then, Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon in one episode can contains many praised to the guest stars more often than Tonight Show Net TV did. Moreover, Indonesian talk show in giving compliments, they use the adjectives like cantik, cakep, and bagus. In addition, they also use nice words such as romantic, adem bgt, enak, pinter paket komplit, perpaduannya bagus, tampilannya fresh dan trendy, and pintar. It can be concluded that the adjectives words both talk show are often the same, such as great good, beautiful, and nice. Therefore, the researcher found that in one episode of the Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, he often says more than five compliments for the guests. However, in Tonight Show Net TV which have four hosts, they gave compliments to the guest stars not as many as what American talk show did as they have many topics to discuss to the guests because they have huge number of hosts than Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon. Indonesian talk show in giving compliments tend to focus on specific thing about appearance, such as the outfit, the guest' eyes, about the voice, and the brain or more focus on the possession of the guests. Therefore, in American talk show Jimmy Fallon as the host directly mention that someone is outstanding by mentioning the look. To sum up, the way American and Indonesian talk show in giving compliments is different, because in Indonesian talk show, the hosts can give various ways of compliments, then American talk show did.

REFERENCES

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words: Second Edition*. In Oxford At the Clarendon Press.
- Agustiyan, M. (2020). Compliment Strategies Used by The Judges in Indonesian and American Idol 2019: A Cross-Cultural Pragmatics Study. *Script Journal: Journal of Linguistics and English Teaching*, 5(2), 55-69.
- Boroujeni, A. J., Domakani, M. R., & Sheykhi, S. (2016). Comparative cross-cultural analysis of compliments in English and Persian series. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 3(2), 177-187.
- Czerwionka, L., & Dickerson, S. (2022). Spanish and English compliment responses in discourse: An investigation of cross-cultural and L2 pragmatic norms. *Study Abroad Research in Second Language Acquisition and International Education*, 7(1), 88-115.
- Fujimura-Wilson, K. (2014). A cross-cultural study of compliments and compliment responses in conversation. *English and American Literature*, 49, 19-36.
- Herbert, R. (1989). *The ethnography of English compliments and compliment responses: A contrastive sketch* (Contrastiv; In W. Oleksy, Ed.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Herbert, R. K. (1998). *The Sex-based differences in Compliment behavior* (Jenny Ches). New York: Oxford University Press.

- Herbert, Robert K. (1990). Sex-based differences in compliment behavior. *Language in Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500014378>
- Holmes, J. (1986). Compliment and Compliment Responses in New Zealand English. *Anthropological Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/30028355>
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Ishihara, N. (2003). Giving and responding to compliments. *Teaching pragmatics*. Washington DC: Office of English Programs, US Department of State. Retrieved on November 28th, State.gov/education/engteaching/pragmatics. htm.
- Ishihara, N. (2010). Compliments and responses to compliments. *Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues*, 26.
- Jalilifar, A., & Hoseini, M. (2021). Cross-Cultural Study of Compliment Responses: A Pragmatic Analysis of a Persian and English Speech Act. 109-81, 5(12)
- Lin, C. Y. (2020). Exploring judges' compliments and criticisms on American, British, and Taiwanese talent shows. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 160, 44-59.
- Rahmayani, F. A. (2020). Cross Cultural Pragmatics: Compliment Response Strategy Used on the British and Indonesian Talk show. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 8(2), 384-397.
- Yusof, S. Y. A. M., & Hoon, T. B. (2014). Compliments and compliment responses on Twitter among male and female celebrities. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 22, 75-96.
- Han, C. H. (1992). A Comparative Study of Compliment Responses: Korean Females in Korean Interactions and in English Interactions. *Working papers in educational linguistics*, 8(2), 17-31.
- Mahmood, J. A., & Ali, O. M. (2018). The Complimenting Behavior of Iraqi College Students: Same-Gender Study. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(5), 238.
- Matsuura, H. (2004). Compliment-giving behavior in American English and Japanese. *Jalt Journal*, 26(2), 147-170.
- Mukminatien, N. (2005). Respon Pujian Dalam Bahasa Indonesia Oleh Dwibahasan Indonesia-Inggris. *Bahasa Dan Seni*, 33(2).
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. England: Cambridge University Press.
- Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language (Fourth Edition)*.
- Zatulhimmi, Z., & Muslem, A. (2022). The strategies used by English department students in giving and receiving compliments. *English Education Journal*, 13(1), 12-31.