

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

Women tend to give compliments to each other on appearance, but men, by contrast, prefer to give compliments to each other on possessions or skills. Gender determines how people make use of compliments and reply to compliments. Many researchers studied the distribution of compliments between women and men. Holmes (1995) did a study in New Zealand that examined differences in the way men and women use compliments. She found that New Zealand women gave and received significantly more compliments than men did. Compliments between males were relatively rare.

One of the reasons to select this topic is due to fact that the speech act of complimenting has received a lot of scholarly attention, especially in the West but based on researcher's observation, there are still less research being conducted in non-western setting especially in Indonesia with its dynamic cultural social diversity. There are some related studies of compliment responses conducted but only on common people ground. Moreover, the lack of empirical study to make distinction between the different responses made by Indonesian male and female figures has also become very obvious. For these reasons, the present study attempted to investigate the different patterns of compliment response made by Indonesian male and female public figures.

This also attempts to address the compliment given to public figures that have strong self-image. The responses might be considered an appropriate way of

establishing or maintaining relationship between public figures and their fans. However, some public figures may face difficulties or problems in responding to the compliment given by their fans which be influenced by their background and the topic raised. Moreover, some people particularly in Asian setting has been found to live by the value of modesty and avoid to be pompous or boastful to possessions they have.

Compliments also vary cross-culturally (Herbert 1989). Previous researches have concluded, for examples, studies on speakers of East and Southeast Asian Languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Malay and Thai by Chen (1993) and Daikuhara (1986) that the speakers tend to avoid accepting compliments rather than rejecting them compared to English speakers. Non-native speakers of English such as from Asian countries tend to reject to compliments because they seem to have difficulties in responding to compliments in an appropriate way.

Despite the heartfelt - effect of having complemented, some problems may arise on the ground of the complement response strategies or topics employed. For example, men may perceive compliments as a face-threatening act (Holmes, 1988). They can also be used to express sarcasm or disapproval, to put someone down or to insult someone. Besides, the problem may appear from the failure of showing modesty in giving responses to the compliment. If one fails in responding, it will imply that one is perceived as an arrogant or overconfident type of individual especially in a cultural context like in Asia setting. Holmes and Brown (1987) furthered put forward three broad categories of how a receiver

responds to compliments: accept, reject and deflect. Holmes also reported compliment topics that dominated were possession, characteristic, skill, etc.

This present study will fill the gap of previous researches on compliment as they collected and elicited responses through interview, recordings, and Discourse Completion Test (DCT) format. Laboratory methods such as DCT are used to research compliment strategies, patterns of compliments, and compliment responses. DCT, according to Yuan (2002), is a written questionnaire that contains a number of hypothetical scenarios or situations used to elicit a certain speech act. Participants are required to supply, in writing, what they would say in real life if similar situations happen to them. Data of interaction in a conversation can also be obtained from other means such as chat rooms and social networks because the data can be considered more natural as it appears as a public chat between users simply like a publicly shown text messages. Public figures usually receive much compliment regarding their skills, appearance, personality and performance from their fans or communities. Therefore, it is important for them to be thoughtful in accepting the compliments in order to maintain friendly bond with fans or communities. At the same time in accepting the compliment though, the celebrities must not appear to be arrogant because they have to reflect themselves as a good role model to the public (Yusof & Hoon, 2014).

Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets". Tweets, which may include hyperlinks, are limited to 140 characters, due to the constraints of Twitter's Short Message Service (SMS) delivery system. Anyone can search

tweets on Twitter, whether they are a member or not. Twitter is a popular platform used by a good number of public figures all around the world to establish good affinity with audiences, supporters, fans and communities. Most big names artists in entertainment or other public figures establish interaction by making tweets or replying to their followers. Obama, Jokowi, Tony Abbot, Dalai Lama or SBY have been active members of Twitter. They usually update on their latest activity or comments on some current world news.

Compliments and its responses in Twitter is a common display especially between public figures and their fans or supporters. It is an avenue for them to share their support and show solidarity towards their inspiring figures. The compliments can be varying in topics or functions. However, it is not all public figures that are active in replying or tweeting. Some of them rarely respond to their fans' tweets of compliments. Furthermore, it seems those who are active in tweeting and responding are those who are having a current program or launching their albums, films or books. These following examples show that compliments and its responses serve many different functions and topics that are part of the problems researched. It is also more diverse and delightfully-rich compared to other data platform.

For example; **Compliment:** *Bang ternyata lo lebih ganteng, putih, tangan lo juga halus banget” (Bro, You are apparently more handsome, white-skinned and your hand is really smooth)*

Compliment Responses: *“Iya aku perawatan terus”* (Yes, I do a frequent treatment)

Compliment: *Teteh, tadi cantik banget di Dashyat pake hijab”*
(You look beautiful wearing hijab)

Compliment Responses: *“Makasihhh “(Thanks)*

Compliment: *Polling menunjukan Menteri Susi mendapatkan penilaian memuaskan. Congratz bu Susi”* (Poll shows that Minister Susi got a satisfying evaluation. Congrats)

Compliment Responses: *Thank you, all because KKP team and because we love Indonesia*

Compliment: *album in love aransemen ulangnya bgus bgt* (the music arrangement in love album is really good)

Compliment Responses: *Alhamdulillah..Tq berat jika bermanfaat. Jabat erat! Buat Annisa”* (Thanks God, Thanks if it’s beneficial for you)

Those preliminary data are quite various and authentic compared to other compliment responses studies especially knowing that this is written speech where the absence of the two speakers is undeniable. It can be deemed as a weakness element of this data compared to the previous ones. The public figures can respond in so many different ways from a simple ‘thank you’ to a long acceptance comment or a return compliment to the addresser. This is a very interesting thing

to see as they possess some strategies. It is also a good platform for many social media users or fans, as it enables them to connect to these popular people directly. This use of Twitter is also found to be quite common among many Indonesian public figures. Therefore, it is found that using Twitter as corpus sources will be interesting as it allows the researcher to garner an abundance of compliment and compliment responses across gender in Twitter account of Indonesian public figures.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The research questions investigated are:

1. What compliment responses are found on the Twitter account of male and female public figures?
2. How are the compliment responses pragmatically expressed by Indonesian public figures with reference to their gender as seen on Twitter?
3. Why are the compliments responses expressed in the ways they are?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of the study are:

- 1) to find out the types of compliments responses across gender found on Twitter accounts of Indonesian public figures.
- 2) to describe the compliment responses expressed by Indonesian public figures with reference to their gender as seen on Twitter.

3) to describe the reasons of Indonesian public figures to use the compliment response

1.4 The Scope of the Problem

This study is limited on compliment responses in Twitter accounts. These addressers are non-public figure who are usually deemed as the fans or supporters. Public figures are deemed as the addressee who will be responding to their fans' tweets. The compliments will be only taken from the non – public figures. This study concerns on analysis of compliment response strategies employed by Indonesian public figures according to their genders.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are expected to be useful theoretically as the information regarding compliment topics, syntactical pattern, and compliment response strategies of gender found in the study will enrich the sociolinguistic, discourse and politeness theories. Besides, it is hoped to be enriching state of the art of this field of study which can be useful for further studies. Practically, it will provide an additional procedure for those researchers who are interested in comparing different people reactions to compliments according to their gender in Indonesian context, which can be employed as personal guidelines of better responds to compliments in social interaction. These findings can also be used practically to Indonesian speakers and interlocutors in order to avoid a social-deprived communication strategy especially in giving or receiving compliments.

The results may also have further teaching implications and communication praxis for students who are currently studying English.



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